The meeting was brought to order at 8:02 a.m.

Present: Councilmembers Hoeger, Poe, Vanorny, Overland, and Todd. Staff members present: Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; William Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director; Caleb Mason, Economic Development Analyst; Anne Russett, Community Development Planner; Adam Lindenlaub, Community Development Planner; Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner; Jillane Shultz, Community Development Administrative Assistant; Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance staff present: Jesse Thoeming, Executive Director.

1. Recommendation Items
   a. Paramount Lot RFP
      Caleb Mason, Economic Development Analyst, shared a presentation on background information, requirements for disposition, development objectives, evaluation criteria, recommendations, and next steps for the Paramount Lot RFP project. Mr. Mason stated that the objective of RFP is that the redevelopment would be consistent with surrounding buildings being no less than five stories. A stakeholder panel will review and evaluate the proposals after the proposal deadline.

      Councilmember Hoeger asked whether the City would control the entire site. Mr. Mason stated that the City owns the entire parking lot which is part of the RFP. The adjacent commercial buildings on the block are not owned by the City.

      Councilmember Vanorny stated that there is below market rate housing in this area and inquired about heat mapping studies. Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, shared that the City of Cedar Rapids typically receives deeper subsidies from low income housing credit projects. Ms. Pratt shared the City of Cedar Rapids is open to heat mapping studies and suggested the utilization of additional resources to aid in obtaining higher subsidies.

      Councilmember Poe stated that she is excited about the commercial aspect of this project and the added benefit a plaza area would provide to citizens. Ms. Poe agreed with the structure remaining consistent and felt that the City’s history would work in conjunction
with this plan. Councilmember Vanorny and Poe both agree that rooftop areas for citizens to utilize would be beneficial.

Councilmember Vanorny motioned the recommendation to move the Paramount Lot RFP to Council. Councilmember Hoeger seconded the motion with unanimous consent.

b. Downtown Vision Plan
Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, shared that growth in the Cedar Rapids downtown is continuing at a steady pace and excitement is generating about this project. The Downtown Vision Plan would be incorporated into EnvisionCR and included in the annual update.

Jesse Thoeming, Executive Director with the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, stated that this plan is a blueprint and meant to show what major ideas this project will strive to accomplish. Mr. Thoeming shared a presentation that describes the eight pillars of the plan: Investment, Energizing Trails/Improve 3rd Street Modality, Embracing River Recreation, Activating a May’s Island Event Space, Champion Urban Living/Affordable Housing, Creating a Culture Quad, Distinguishing Downtown, and Coordinating District Priorities.

Councilmember Hoeger stated he likes the idea of canals for river recreation.

Councilmember Vanorny stated that this plan has a lot of potential and wants Cedar Rapids to grow up by utilizing rooftop space and suggested eateries along the river. Councilmember Vanorny also suggested making lighting improvements and vertical gardens under the Interstate for visual interest. Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, shared that the Right of Way Specifications Plan will include lighting and other improvements.

Councilmember Poe stated that she likes the plan and that we need to embrace the river by bringing rapids in for canoeing and kayaking. She also noted the importance of water safety near the roller dam.

Councilmember Hoeger motioned the recommendation to move the Downtown Vision Plan to Council. Councilmember Vanorny seconded the motion with unanimous consent.

2. Updates
a. ReZone Cedar Rapids
Anne Russett, Community Development Planner, shared a presentation on recent and upcoming stakeholder outreach for ReZone Cedar Rapids. Ms. Russett stated that the public review draft is due next month and would like to meet with stakeholders again before the deadline.

Councilmember Poe asked Ms. Russet if there have been any road blocks for them.
Ms. Russet stated that there generally has been support for the direction of the project. Certain issues, such as parking setbacks, have raised concerns from some stakeholders, but other stakeholders have also expressed support.

Councilmember Poe stated that she would like Council to have the opportunity to meet with City staff for an update on the public review draft in order to have an opportunity to ask questions.

b. College District Area Action Plan
Adam Lindenlaub, Community Development Planner, shared a presentation on the planning program and focus highlighting the Mound View Neighborhood, B Avenue NE National Historic District, Uptown District, and College District Boundary. Mr. Lindenlaub stated he is working with an advisory group composed of individuals who live and work in the community. Past results from 2017 workshops/open houses were shared as well as a timeline for the plan.

Councilmember Hoeger shared a suggestion to make Oakland and Center Point Road a two-way to give it more of a neighborhood feel, opposed to a pass-through. Mr. Hoeger also stated that there are drainage issues at Franklin Field. Mr. Lindenlaub shared that the City is working with the school district on this issue.

Councilmember Vanorny asked whether the schools have a financial stake in transit and how service could expand if they shared the funding. Mr. Lindenlaub stated that this is something the City is looking at.

Councilmember Poe stated that she would like to see improved lighting to make students feel safe.

c. Neighborhood Finance Corporation
Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, stated that there is a great need for improved housing in our core neighborhoods. The City of Cedar Rapids would help NFC establish themselves, as a separate non-profit entity, under the NFC in Des Moines. Ms. Pratt shared the success of NFC Des Moines. NFC is an investment in the community and we have seen significant return on investment from the ROOT’s Program. NFC will be self-sustaining for their administrative costs after three years. Through private fundraising, the City has raised $600K of the $1M needed for the first three years of startup costs. NFC provides traditional mortgages through a local lender pool. $7M of the $8M local lending pool goal has been committed. NFC will also provide a forgivable mortgage of up to $10K for renovations. The City of Cedar Rapids is committing $1M each year for five years to NFC for the forgivable mortgages.

Councilmember Hoeger asked if we have extended an invitation for Linn County to participate. Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, stated that a request has been submitted to the Linn County Board of Supervisors.
Councilmember Poe asked how NFC determines which district can take advantage of the $10K forgivable loan. Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, stated that homes within low to moderate census tracts will always be eligible. NFC can also focus on additional core neighborhoods, such as Kenwood. Progress will be monitored in these targeted neighborhoods and new areas will be included in future years.

d. UFG/Cedar Rapids Collaborative Project
William Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director, stated that this project will be a public and private partnership to develop the property located at 209 & 213 2nd Street SE. Mr. Micheel shared that this will be a multi-use space used to activate this temporary lot through expanded seating from Cobble Hill as well as the addition of pavers and planters. There will be a decrease in cost by working with UFG on the project due to their interest in corporate expansion over the next five years.

Councilmember Hoeger asked if UFG will be responsible maintaining. Mr. Micheel stated that UFG will be responsible.

**Future Discussion Items:**

There was no discussion on future items.

**Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

Councilmembers Poe, Vanorny, and Hoeger adjourned the meeting at 9:28 a.m. with unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillane Shultz, Administrative Assistant II
Community Development