City of Cedar Rapids
Flood Control System Committee
Five Seasons Conference Room – City Services Center Building
Thursday, January 19, 2017
11:00am – 12:00 p.m.

Present: Council members: Ralph Russell (Chair), Justin Shields, Kris Gulick

City Staff: Sandi Fowler (Asst City Manager), Rob Davis (Flood Control Program Manager), Jennifer Pratt (Community Development Director), Steve Hershner (Utilities Director), Sven Leff (Parks and Recreation Director)

Media: KWWL and The Gazette.

Public: Dale Todd and Felicia Wyrick

Meeting called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Council member Russell.

Rob Davis began the meeting with the December Finance Report. For FY15 and FY16, the City’s GRI revenue has exceeded its revenue cap in its contract with the state. With the sales tax revenue exceedance of the cap being less in FY16 than FY15, City staff will monitor FY17 revenues carefully to identify any potential shortfalls. If revenue falls short of the cap, it cannot be made up in a future year when revenue exceeds the cap. It is essentially lost unless the City’s contract with the State is restructured, and that action would have to occur by June 30, 2017.

Rob Davis also asked the Council members if they would like the Financial Report to be simplified to the seven (7) segments of Flood Control that are currently set up with the state. Councilmember Russell agreed and requested the segments also include expenditures by fiscal year. Councilmember Russell asked Rob Davis if expenses in FY17 are in line to spend all the GRI revenue received. Rob Davis answered yes, noting NewBo Lot 44 Pump Station and the Czech Village Utility Relocation project that are currently in process.

Councilmember Russell asked Rob Davis about the overall matching requirement of funds the City must put up against the State GRI. Rob Davis stated it was $110 million, and $1 million has been matched so far.

Rob Davis showed Councilmembers the FCS Grant Log as of now. There are two (2) newer applications that have moved forward since the last meeting. The first being an approved Iowa DNR Brownfield which was a grant in the amount of $24,999.00 for the removal of asbestos at the Lang property on A St SW. The second is still under consideration and is the US EDA Grant application in the amount of approximately $1,500,000.00 for water main relocation around Quaker Oats. The money from the EDA is left over funds from the 2008 disaster relief.
Rob Davis presented the North Industrial Study which showed possible alternatives around Cedar Lake and Quaker Oats. Rob Davis explained to the Councilmembers there are many challenges with the US Army Corps adopted alignment upstream of Quaker Oats, including multiple railroad gates, Alliant power station foundation and beer caves at I-380. The Canadian National RR has requested the flood control alignment take a different route. Rob Davis indicated that the GRI staff pre-screened four alternative routes and scored them with criteria set by the FCS Steering Committee, which consists of City Directors. Only one of those options, Alternative 2 screened favorably relative to the US Army Corps alignment. This alignment will be studied in detail in 2017 and protects 93 properties around Coe College and Shaver Road versus 7 properties on the Corps route, because it encircles Cedar Lake with a levee running on the Cedar Lake side of the RR tracks and then up to Shave Road and I-380 on the south side of McLoud Run. Rob Davis explained the North Industrial evaluation will also help look at recreational uses and the cleanup of Cedar Lake. Rob Davis presented each alternative option to Councilmembers and showed the results from each proposed alternative, including costs. Upstream of Quaker, the Corps alignment and Alternative 2 were both in the cost range of $55 million to tie the system off to high ground, assuming flowage easements are included. The more detailed analysis is due for completion in fall 2017 and any potential change to the FCS alignment would be considered in first quarter of calendar 2018.

Councilmember Russell asked Rob Davis if the pump station that would be needed at Cedar Lake was factored into the cost estimate that was presented. Rob Davis stated that cost was already factored into what was shown. Councilmember Russell also asked if there would still be a connection from Cedar Lake to the Cedar River. Rob Davis responded yes, with a gate structure. Councilmember Shields asked if Cedar Lake is used as a detention basin would it need to be drained. Rob Davis explained it does have a natural detention basin but could also be drained to the lowest amount of 4-5 foot remaining depth to maintain fish habitat. The pumps would be designed to pump Cedar Lake over the levee when gates to the river are closed due to river flooding.

Councilmember Russell asked that the Flood Mitigation Board in Des Moines be asked to be involved to help look at these Cedar Lake alternatives. Rob Davis agreed. Councilmember Russell also wanted to know what kind of priority this project would have and when could the full council expect to see more. Rob Davis explained that scheduling would be part of the 2017 study and it may be fairly high as the US Army Corps has already expressed interest in starting at the upstream tie-off as their first segment, should they get funding.

Rob Davis presented the 8th Avenue Bridge online survey results that the public partook in December, 2016 through the City of Cedar Rapids’ website. The public had 5 different bridges to pick between. A total of 1,221 votes were placed and the Short Tower with Cables came in first place, the Arch above Travel way came in second place, the Arch below Travel came in third, the Steel Arch came in fourth and the Segmental Concrete bridge came in fifth.

Rob Davis currently indicated the City is undertaking a traffic study for both permanent construction and temporary detours when 8th Avenue is closed for reconstruction. Rob Davis indicated the City staff would like to add two subconsultants to the Shoemaker and Haaland prime contract on 8th Avenue bridge study: HDR, Inc. to further review feasibility of the top two preferred bridges and provide cost estimates and Substance Architecture to evaluate architectural options for a destination building combined with a proposed pump station at the
Festival Grounds on the west river bank. These two subcontracts would add approximately $65,000 to the $180,000 Shoemaker and Haaland contract. Rob Davis also explained the development ideas that go along with the reconstruction of the 8th Avenue bridge. Rob Davis showed an example from Des Moines’ Principal Riverwalk with the Hub Restaurant and the pump station which is close to the restaurant. This type of development may fit well in the Festival Grounds site. Rob Davis also noted the opportunity for redevelopment of the Parking Lot 44 space across from the Federal Courthouse. Both were received well by Council Committee Members.

Comment from Councillmembers: Councilmember Shields stated he was happy with the overall concept of the 8th Avenue presentation. Councilmember Russell asked about the piers in flood way on both bridge designs. Rob Davis stated that the Short Tower with Cables has two (2) piers but could possibly be taken down to only one (1) pier and the Arch above Travel Way has zero (0) piers but to also remember we currently have seven (7) piers on the existing bridge.

Rob Davis asked for an amendment to Shoemaker & Haaland Contract and to add Substance Architecture and HDR, Inc as sub-consultants. Councillmembers Russell, Gulick and Shields in favor.

Public Comment:
Dale Todd asked Councillmembers to expedite the Cedar Lake project and to please agree to select alternative 2 and move it along as quickly as possible.

Felicia Wyrick encouraged City staff to work with the Iowa DNR on Cedar Lake environmental issues as they have been studying it and have significant experience with it.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully,
Mandee Beardsley
Administrative Assistant I
Public Works