City of Cedar Rapids
Flood Control System Committee
Council Chambers – City Hall
Thursday, October 19, 2017
11:00 am – 12:00 pm

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

City Staff: Sandi Fowler (Asst City Manager), Rob Davis (Flood Control Program Manager), and Jennifer Pratt (Community Development Director), Bill Bogert (Anderson-Bogert) and Mary Snapp (Stanley Consultants)

Media: Taysha Woods, KGAN

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

Committee unanimously approved the July 2017 meeting minutes with no comments added.

Rob Davis shared the September Financial Report. The Financial reports showed that starting in FY19, the maximum annual GRI revenue will level out at $15 Million. For the FY19 Budget, FCS staff will budget conservatively between $14M and $14.5M in case revenue growth doesn't achieve the fairly aggressive $2 million growth from FY18 to FY19. Overall, GRI growth has met every target to date for Cedar Rapids, so staff is not overly concerned with this. Other items…..The Financial Report shows high level of funds being spent on the West side of the river, despite little construction to date. This is due to property acquisition, particularly in the Time Check area with Cooper’s Mill and Hubbard Ice. Residential properties continue to come forward voluntarily as well. Construction on the Czech Village Levee is next on the construction list, which will move Czech Village expenditures closer to Time Check. Overall NewBo neighborhood leads the east side expenditures.

Rob Davis presented the Grant Log that gives an overview of all grants that have been applied for since 2015 until present. Most recently, a FEMA Hazard Mitigation grant will be submitted in early November in the amount of $600,000. It has a low chance of immediate approval, but this action, will get the City “in line” for funds should there be left over disaster money in Iowa.

Bill Bogert, Anderson-Bogert presented the Quaker Oats floodwall aesthetics. During the July 27th meeting the Council Members Gulick, Russell and Shields suggested possibly a brick looking wall like Quaker’s building would be an appropriate look or a wall similar to the Floodwall at the Sinclair site would look good. The FCS team made the decision to construct Quaker’s Floodwall to match the Sinclair wall to help tie everything together. All FCS Councilmembers agreed they liked the new aesthetics that were shown.

Rob Davis informed the FCS Council Committee that the contractor has poured the footings for the NW Gateway Plaza’s arch over O Avenue, of October 19th. Construction on the plaza itself will begin in spring, 2018 with a May 25th completion date for the 10-year anniversary of the
2008 Flood and a ribbon cutting ceremony in June 2018. Rob Davis also showed the FCS Council Committee two (2) boards that will be display at the plaza indicating the history of the neighborhood.

Rob Davis gave an update that the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be coming in roughly a month for consultant designer(s) needed on the 8th Avenue Bridge replacement project. The adjacent 8th Avenue Pump Station’s commercial/community building portion now has Community Development leading the effort to determine appropriate Market Analysis and design. Councilmember Gulick asked if a river trail would be included. Rob Davis responded yes and followed that details are being worked out on how to get the trail from the dry to wet side of the levee. Councilmember Russell asked what the cost estimate is for the 8th Avenue Bridge. Rob Davis stated that the structure is currently budgeted for $27M and $10M for approaches. While this project would be GRI eligible, the FCS team would like to apply for grants once design is further along, perhaps in 18-24 months.

Rob Davis presented the proposed permanent restroom and storage building for the Amphitheater. The FCS team has been working with Venue Works on the amount of storage space needed in order to remove the trailers that are currently stored at the Amphitheater. With a permanent structure in place, this would eliminate the need for port-a-potties for events under 2,000 patrons. The FCS team is moving into the conceptual design and budget for this project. Councilmember Shields asked what the reason was for not using the Knutson Building to help support the Amphitheater. Jennifer Pratt was able to explain that a number of items played into the decision of not using the Knutson Building at this time beginning with a financial agreement could not be reached, the spaced needed does not exist and the distance between the Amphitheater and the Knutson Building was too far. Councilmember Gulick asked if the ADA ramp shown in the photo provided would eliminate the need for an elevator. Rob Davis responded “yes”.

Bill Bogert, Anderson-Bogert presented on the North Industrial Alignment. Moving forward with the study of the alternative route, with an additional 86 properties that would be protected. McLoud Run has a large drainage area so it is important to protect that area from future flooding. The next step is the stakeholder and public involvement process, followed by the state process with Iowa DNR and federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

Discussion followed on regulation of water elevation in Cedar Lake, which will be controlled with controls on inlet and outlet pipes as well as a pump station. Should the Cedar River be flooding the Cedar Lake would be pumped out to the Cedar River because the outlet pipe will be shut off with a gate. The alternative alignment does not change the water level in Cedar Lake. The Army Corps of Engineers is not objecting to this revised alignment, acknowledging the additional 86 properties may need to be considered in their Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR). FCS staff did not have assessed values on those 86 properties at the meeting, but noted the cost to extend the system to McLoud Run would be at least $25 million.

Jim Halverson, of HR Green, presented the modification of the FCS Master Plan at Czech & Slovak Museum stating that option C – Terraced Yard was the final choice by the Czech & Slovak board members. Option C is the most consistent, desirable and cost-effective option, which will eliminate to roadway gates and the removable wall in the FCS Master Plan, while providing the same level of flood protection. FCS Staff asked for the Committee’s concurrence
to move forward with design and include a change of concept in the next FCS Master Plan update. Councilmember Russell believes this to be a good plan, and moved to approve the change, which was confirmed by FCS Council Committee by a 3-0 vote.

Rob Davis presented on the most recent grant application to FEMA for Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation. This action will put the City in line for mitigation funds, which become available after there are unspent disaster recover funds from a federally declared disaster in Iowa. FCS Staff feels the application is strong, because there is a good “bang for the buck” in disaster prevention with storm sewer shut off gates from the Cedar River, but the program is not currently funded. The East side of the river has smaller gates than the west side, which makes only the east side a competitive application. FCS staff will continue to work on East and West side gates, with or without FEMA funding. Council Committee voted 3-0 to recommend approval of the application to the full City Council.

No public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 am.

Respectfully,

Mandee Beardsley
Administrative Assistant I
Public Works