City of Cedar Rapids
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
Cedar Rapids City Hall, Council Chambers
Tuesday, February 19, 2019
8:00 a.m.

The meeting was brought to order at 8:01 a.m.

Present: Councilmember Vanorny; Councilmember Poe; Councilmember Hoeger; Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director; Bill Michele, Community Development Assistant Director; Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner; Sara Buck, Housing Programs Manager; Eric Pate, Community Development Planner; Adam Lindenlaub, Community Development Planner; Lauren Freeman, Community Development Program Coordinator; Sylvia Bochner, Community Development Planner; Jillane Gilmour, Community Development Administrative Assistant; Angie Charipar, Assistant City Manager; Sandi Fowler, Deputy City Manager; Jeff Pomeranz, City Manager; Jim Halverson, City Planning Commission Chair; Jane Gilmour, Mt. Mercy University; Ellen Kleckner, Iowa Ceramics Center and Glass Studio Executive Director;

1. Approval of Minutes
Councilmember Hoeger motioned to approve the minutes from the January 15, 2019 meeting. Councilmember Vanorny seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Presentation
   a. City Flag
Angie Charipar, Assistant City Manager, shared a presentation about the current City flag and plans to engage residents on a new design. The City flag was chosen in 1962 after a design contest was held among Cedar Rapids high schools, and was featured in a TEDx Talk in 2015 that provided suggestions on how to improve City flag designs. Ms. Charipar shared the five, basic principles of flag design from the North American Vexiliological Association:

   - Keep it simple
   - Use meaningful symbolism
   - Use 2 or 3 basic colors
   - No lettering or seals
   - Be Distinctive or be related

Several communities featured in the same TEDx Talk have pursued the opportunity to redesign their flags, and City staff will reach out to these community leaders to discuss what their successes were in the redesign process. Ms. Charipar stated that local stakeholders will be an important part of the process, and open houses will be held to engage artists and citizens. The estimated timeline for this project is approximately one year.

Councilmember Hoeger shared that he would like to see high schools invited to participate.
Ms. Charipar stated that the City would engage community members, including high schools, on what they would like to see in the new design.

Councilmember Poe stated that she would like any verbiage on the flag to be very clear.

Ms. Charipar shared that verbiage on the flag would likely be discouraged in order to keep the design simple and distinctive.

3. Recommendation Items
   a. Shifting Ground – Outro Chao

Bill Micheel, Community Development Assistant Director, shared background on the Shifting Ground – Outro Chão project. City staff and the Visual Arts Commission (VAC) became aware of this project in during the December 13, 2018 VAC meeting, and invited Ms. Gilmor and Ms. Kleckner to attend the VAC meeting in January to give a formal presentation to the Commission.

Jane Gilmor, Mt. Mercy University Emeritus Professor of Art, and Ellen Kleckner, Iowa Ceramics Center & Glass Studio Executive Director, shared a presentation on their project Shifting Ground – Outro Chão. Ms. Gilmor shared that this is a social outreach project involving recent East African immigrants to Cedar Rapids and to Evora, Portugal. Elements of art making will be used as a vehicle for learning about one another, past and present, and finding a sense of place within a new culture while retaining pride in one’s original heritage. A series of two-week workshops with groups of immigrants and community volunteers will be held in the summer of 2019 in Cedar Rapids, and 2020 in Evora. Each workshop will have an element of storytelling based on immigrant histories, communicated through a visual vocabulary working with clay as a fundamental material of everyday life. Ongoing outreach for the project will include a website, social media, publication of a bilingual book, participation in international conferences, and publication of four, scientific articles.

Ms. Kleckner shared that the City’s contribution of $2,500 helps support the summer 2019 workshop.

Councilmember Hoeger asked if they have conversed with the Eastern Iowa Arts Academy to involve children as well.

Ms. Kleckner stated that they have not discussed this opportunity with the Eastern Iowa Arts Academy, but would be a great idea to converse with them.

Councilmember Vanorny motioned to approve the City’s support of the project. Seconded by Councilmember Hoeger. The motion passed unanimously.
b. Neighborhood Association Work Plans
Eric Pate, Community Development Planner, shared a presentation on the Neighborhood Association Work Plans, that allow the opportunity for neighborhoods to help achieve their goals. The Neighborhood Service Delivery Initiative is the formal City structure used to provide funding to Neighborhood Associations. In order to be eligible, have to meet either of two grouping requirements, Certified or Registered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit an annual registration application (due by 4/30)</td>
<td>Up to $3,000 available for eligible neighborhood activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit an annual registration application (due by 4/30)</td>
<td>Up to $10,000 available for eligible neighborhood activities.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate continuing capacity through attending City-designated training workshops</td>
<td>Streamlined application and reporting process, regardless of funding source, for activities identified in neighborhood work plan.</td>
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<td>Perform outreach twice a year</td>
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<td>Hold a minimum of 4 meetings per year</td>
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<td>Create and submit an annual work plan</td>
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<td>Submit quarterly reports</td>
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In addition, both Registered and Certified Neighborhoods receive the following:
- City staff team assigned to each neighborhood
- City staff liaison attends all regular NA meetings
- Opportunity to participate in annual capacity building workshops based on topics identified by neighborhoods

Mr. Pate shared work plan summaries for Cleveland Area, Harbor, Northwest Neighbors, Kenwood Park, Taylor Area, Moundview, Wellington Heights, and Westdale.

Councilmember Poe asked how the City is actively engaging Neighborhood Associations to become registered or certified.

Mr. Pate stated that it can be dependent on the volunteer network and capacity supporting the Neighborhood Association. By allowing flexibility, they can work in a capacity that works best for their situation. The option is always available for Neighborhood Associations to move up a step. The City continues to reach out to Neighborhood Associations that might not be registered to keep lines of communication open.

Councilmember Poe asked how Neighborhood Associations are recruiting volunteers.
Mr. Pate shared that it depends on the neighborhood, some use social media marketing and outreach, while others walk door to door to introduce themselves.

Councilmember Poe asked if there is any opportunity through the Communications team for outreach.

Jennifer Pratt, Community Development Director, shared that workshops are held with the Neighborhood Association Presidents to bring resources to them in order to build capacity and providing available resources when they are ready to become registered or certified.

Councilmember Vanorny motioned to recommend the Neighborhood Association Work Plans to City Council. Seconded by Councilmember Hoeger. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Section 8 Administrative Plan
Sara Buck, shared a program overview of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program.
  • Funded through U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)
  • Serve as Public Housing Authority (PHA)
    • Both Linn and Benton Counties
    • Administered program approximately 42 years
  • Provides rent assistance to very low-income families
  • Ensures decent, safe, and sanitary housing
  • Housing is provided by private owners and rental agents
  • Approximately $6 million in rent assistance payments are paid directly to Linn and Benton County landlords

Ms. Buck shared who benefits from the program, as well as Section 8 Household Demographics:
  • 14% of families are persons 62 and over
  • 47% of families have a head of household member with a disability
  • 72% of active households have an annual income of under $15,000
  • Average length of time a family is on the program is 3.75 years

Ms. Buck shared PHA 5-year and annual goals, 2018 accomplishments, proposed changes, and key dates:
5-year goals:
- Maximize the number of families assisted with available resources.
- Encourage program participants to explore units outside of high poverty concentration areas.
- Partner with community organizations to increase the knowledge of community resources available to participants.
- Outreach to potential landlords and participants.
- Continue to support families working towards self-sufficiency.

Annual Plan Goals:
- Effectively screen Section 8 HCV applicants and participants to increase owner acceptance of the program.
- Continue to offer the Section 8 Landlord Orientation.
- Continue to improve program quality by utilizing the program’s software capabilities and streamlining internal processes.
- Continue to work with community resource providers and non-profits to make referrals to those on the waiting list.

2018 Accomplishments
- Collaborated with Building Services, SAFE-CR, and Iowa Legal Aid, to provide a comprehensive Landlord Orientation training.
  - Will continue to hold these on an annual basis and look for additional ways to collaborate.
- Designated as a High Performer by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in our annual audit.

Proposed Changes
- Administrative Plan Changes
  - Regulatory
    1. Smoke Detectors – update policy to comply with new State requirements
    2. Housing Quality Standards – update policy on space standards per HUD regulation
  - Discretionary
    1. Terminiations/Denial of Assistance – update policy to reduce barriers to access housing assistance
    2. Local Preferences/Targeted Funding – clarify policy on how applications using targeted funding will be pulled from the waiting list
    3. Changes in Household – clarify policy on reporting changes in household composition and requests to add household members
    4. Determining Family Unit Size – update policy on unit size based on family composition
    5. Tenancy Approval – update policy regarding tenant/owner relationship and clarify policy regarding verification of legal ownership of property
    6. Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program Plan
      - Remove 3-month delay in rent increase due to increased income
      - Limit number of early escrow withdraws
      - Clarify language regarding compliance with FSS Contract
      - Contract termination due to untimely promissory note payments
      - Update Program Policy Committee board representation
Key Dates
• January 15, 2019 – Section 8 Resident Advisory Board
• February 26, 2019 – Motion Setting Public Hearing for March 12, 2019
• February 19, 2019 – Development Committee Presentation
• February 20, 2019 – April 5, 2019 – Public Comment Period
• March 12, 2019 – City Council Public Hearing & Resolution
• April 17, 2019 – Deadline for submission to HUD
• July 1, 2019 – Effective date of approved changes

Councilmember Hoeger asked for an update on the waiting list. Ms. Buck stated that the waiting list has been closed for two years, and have over 1,000 applicants waiting. Approximately 1,300 applications were taken two years ago.

Councilmember Hoeger asked how lowering barriers for those convicted of felonies to access the program affects other applicants who are not convicted of a felony. Ms. Buck shared that applicants are not qualified until they are ready to be pulled from the list. As applicants are pulled, City staff find that they are denied because of certain barriers. By reducing barriers on the City’s end, it does not guarantee that they will be successful in securing a lease.

Councilmember Vanorny stated that she would like to see the conversation opened up between the City and landlords regarding barriers.

Councilmember Poe asked how many landlords are participating. Ms Buck stated approximately 400-500.

Councilmember Poe asked how are we engaging with landlords. Ms. Buck shared that there is an opportunity for landlord training four times per year, with one of them being longer and more broad in nature. Staff also provides information at the Landlord Registration trainings conducted by the Building Services Department.

Councilmember Vanorny motioned to recommend the Section 8 Administrative Plan to City Council. Seconded by Councilmember Hoeger. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Updates
a. Zoning Advisory Group
Seth Gunnerson, Community Development Planner, shared an update on the zoning code implementation and establishment of the Zoning Advisory Group (ZAG). City staff have identified corrections and clarifications that will go before City Council in March, and currently addressing non-policy related issues. With the updated code, new Urban Form Zones replaced the Design Review Overlay Districts, therefore, eliminating the need for Design Review Technical Advisory Committees (DRTAC). As part of ReZone, a code overview committee was proposed.

The Zoning Advisory Group will assist in identifying issues with the code and provide input on code options. The group will consist of five members, one from the Board of Adjustment, one from the City Planning Commission, and three appointees within the group that can provide a broad spectrum of views within the community. It will be a working group to assist in screening common issues. Approval of amendments will not change, and the CPC will still review and recommend items to City Council. The meetings will be based on anticipated semi-annual updates, but may be more frequent to start.
Next Steps:

- February 26
  - Establish ZAG
  - Resolutions dissolving DRTACS
  - Set Public Hearing for Code Updates in March
- March 12
  - Public Hearing and 1st Reading on Code Updates
- Spring/Summer 2019
  - Next round of code updates

5. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Councilmembers Vanorny and Hoeger adjourned the meeting at 8:57 a.m. with unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Jillane Gilmour, Administrative Assistant
Community Development