

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF DUBUQUE LONG RANGE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR SESSION**

5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

**Commissioners Present:** Vice Chairperson Beth McGrath; Commissioners Rick Merfeld and Mark Ward attended in-person. Commissioner Cliff Conrad attended virtually.

**Commissioners Excused:** Chairperson Michael Rabagia, Tyler Stoffel

**Commissioners Unexcused:** None.

**Staff Members Present:** Wally Wernimont and Jason Duba.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Beth McGrath at 5:40 p.m.

**OATH OF OFFICE:** Rick Merfeld joined the commission as the representative from the Housing Commission.

**MINUTES:** Motion by Ward, seconded by McGrath, to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2023 Long Range Planning Advisory Commission meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Conrad, Merfeld, Ward, McGrath; Nay – None.

**ACTION ITEMS:** None.

**ITEMS FROM PUBLIC:** None.

**ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:** None.

**ITEMS FROM STAFF:**

**Imagine Dubuque update:** Assistant Planner Duba and Planning Services Director Wernimont led a review of selected progress updates about Imagine Dubuque recommendations. One selection was made from each of the plan's seven categories.

**Economic Prosperity: Housing:** Progress on housing development was discussed, including increased financial incentives from the City that are motivating new development. Commissioner Ward asked about a timeline for the Fox Hills apartment

complex, and Wernimont stated they are planning to break ground this spring. Wernimont reviewed several other developments that are in progress.

**Sustainable Environment: Clean Water:** The commission discussed the recent award of funding to help replace the gates and pumps that are part of the Bee Branch Watershed Flood Mitigation Project. With the anticipated FY25 budget, construction could begin this summer. Additional green (pervious) alleys are also being constructed this summer.

**Social + Cultural Vibrancy: Green Building + Historic Preservation:** Duba reviewed the update stating that the HEART Partnership has more than doubled capacity by adding adult vocational programs in partnership with NICC, the City of Dubuque, and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. He stated this is beneficial both for those learning building trades and for Dubuque's large stock of historic homes and buildings in need of maintenance.

**Housing + Livable Neighborhoods: Livable Neighborhoods:** The commission discussed a proposed ordinance related to tents on private property, and Commissioner Merfeld asked for more information about the ordinance and its timeline. Wernimont stated it is directed to private residents who may be letting additional people live on their property in tents.

**Community Facilities:** Duba reviewed two updates in which the Coordinator stated that a recommendation is no longer a priority. The police chief stated that a police substation is no longer being considered as modern policing treats the squad car as a mobile office. The library director stated that a West End library branch is no longer a priority following their space needs assessment. Duba indicated those are examples of recommendations that might not remain following a future update of the plan.

**Transportation + Mobility: Automobile Travel:** The commission discussed the RAISE planning grant the City received and the implementation grant it is applying for to construct a railroad overpass at 14<sup>th</sup> Street and construct related improvements in the area. Merfeld asked if this would allow the trains not to blow their horns, and a discussion of the Quiet Zone Study followed, including the need to upgrade safety features at 14 at-grade crossings.

**Land Use: Parks:** Duba reviewed updates related to parks, including a purchase of additional land at Four Mounds, a multi-department effort for grassland birds, and an increase in pickleball facilities to meet growing demand.

Duba stated the intention to provide the commission with Imagine Dubuque updates on a quarterly basis coinciding with Coordinators' updates in AchieveIt.

**Future Land Use Map update:** Wernimont led a discussion of the City's Future Land Use Map, how it helps the City make decisions about land use, and how the existing map was developed. He stated the City Engineering Department is conducting a

sanitary sewer asset management plan that uses the Future Land Use Map to help make assumptions about future development. The existing map has numerous inconsistencies that needed to be revised, such as residential land being marked as open space. He stated that some additional revision will occur and then the commission will review the map to recommend it for adoption.

Merfeld asked about collaboration with the City of Asbury, given that it is adjacent to Dubuque. Wernimont discussed several of the ways that the cities cooperate.

Ward asked about how this affects zoning and whether property owners would be notified and have a chance to provide feedback before these changes are made. Wernimont noted that the Future Land Use Map is a guide, whereas zoning has legal ordinance enforcing it. He explained that some cities revise their Future Land Use Map concurrently with their zoning map.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Ward, seconded by Merfeld, to adjourn the February 21, 2024 Long Range Planning Advisory Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Conrad, Merfeld, Ward, McGrath; Nay – None.  
The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Director

July 17, 2024

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Adopted