

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

5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

**Commissioners Present:** Chairperson Michael Rabagia, Vice Chairperson Beth McGrath; Commissioners Cliff Conrad, Aaron Miller, and Mark Ward.

**Commissioners Excused:** Rick Merfeld.

**Commissioners Unexcused:** None.

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

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Rabagia at 5:30 p.m.

**MINUTES:** Motion by Rabagia, seconded by Conrad, to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2024 Long Range Planning Advisory Commission meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Conrad, McGrath, Miller, Ward, and Rabagia; Nay – None.

**ACTION ITEM**

- Chaplain Schmitt Island Development Plan – Review and Recommendation

Alex Dixon, CEO of Q Casino and DRA, presented to the commission on the Chaplain Schmitt Island Development Plan. He stated that this represents an advancement of the 2014 master plan, that it provides a business strategy for realizing some of the recommendations from that plan. This plan looks at costs, budgets, and constraints to propose an economic analysis for investment. He talked about the proposed change to provide 75-year leases on the island, which would allow developers more assurance when making investments.

He said the goal is to enhance the amenities on the island following stated preferences that the community has expressed. He noted the unique opportunity to provide increased access to the riverfront, including with residential apartments. He also discussed enhancements to the natural environment of the island and the opportunities for outdoor recreation and trails.

He noted that the plan has included multiple departments working with a consultant and reaching out to developers. He stated that City Council will need to adopt the plan

following public engagement and review by this commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The commission responded with several questions. Ward asked if any zoning changes would be necessary before this plan could be implemented. Wernimont stated that an amendment allowing residential use would need to be made to the PUD ordinance, but before 2017, it had been an allowed use.

Miller asked if the floodplain was a concern for potential development on the island. Wernimont showed a floodplain map and explained the different flood designations on the island. He also explained how analysis of recent flooding has given a better picture of realities on the ground. He noted that they collaborate with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. He said that action can be taken to make development more flood resilient, such as raising the base level or putting parking on the ground floor with apartments above.

McGrath asked if residents at the proposed location would be able to travel to and from their homes during a flood. Dixon stated that improvements would need to be made to the road. Wernimont said that there are various approvals to get before development could proceed. Conrad noted that this is a preliminary plan that would get much more detail before implementation.

Miller asked about the RAISE grant that is designed for the area. Wernimont noted that the City has received both planning/design and implementation grants to make street improvements in this area, most significantly an overpass above the railroad on 14<sup>th</sup> Street.

Ward asked about the baseball fields on the island and whether development was considered for them. Dixon explained that the requirements of the grant funding that was used to build them would require comparable facilities to be built elsewhere, but that possibility is under consideration because it's valuable land. He said that it's a matter of community priorities, of which another possibility is a second sheet of ice. As the property owner, the City needs to state how they want the island to develop. He reminded the commission that one-third of DRA profits go back into improvements to the island.

McGrath asked about commercial space on the island for potential future residents. Wernimont noted that there are possibilities for retail nearby such as along Kerper Boulevard or at the Pack site. Conrad noted that stores could be placed in locations on the island that don't have beautiful views.

Wernimont concluded by stating the 2014 Master Plan is still in effect, and this Development Plan gives additional details.

Motion by Conrad, seconded by Miller, to recommend approval of the Chaplain Schmitt Island Development Plan as it is in substantial alignment with the Imagine Dubuque

Comprehensive Plan. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Conrad, McGrath, Miller, Ward, and Rabagia; Nay – None.

**ITEMS FROM PUBLIC:** None.

**ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:** None.

**ITEMS FROM STAFF:**

- Imagine Dubuque Update

Duba presented a select update from each of the seven categories, following the most recent quarterly updates from Imagine Dubuque coordinators:

Economic Prosperity: Business, 1.3.2: Kennedy Mall

Sustainable Environment: Neighborhoods, 2.3.2: Tree grant

Social + Cultural Vibrancy: Recreation, 3.7.1: Parks & Recreation Plan

Livable Neighborhoods + Housing: Livable Neighborhoods, 4.1.1: Ordinance review

Community Facilities: Infrastructure, 5.1.1: Sanitary sewer expansion

Transportation + Mobility: Complete Streets, 6.1.3: Bike lanes and trails

Land Use: Parks, 7.7.1: 897 Central and Millwork District Parks

- Unified Development Code Update

Wernimont explained the status of the Unified Development Code update and let the commission know that there will be opportunities for input.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Rabagia, seconded by Miller, to adjourn the November 20, 2024 Long Range Planning Advisory Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Conrad, McGrath, Miller, Ward, and Rabagia; Nay – None. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Manager

February 19, 2025

Adopted