

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

5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Michael Rabagia, Vice Chairperson Beth McGrath; Commissioners Jason Davis, Aaron Miller, and Julietta Scott; Commissioner Cliff Conrad attended virtually.

Commissioners Excused: Mark Ward.

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.

Introductions were made for new commissioner Julietta Scott, liaison from the Housing Commission.

MINUTES: Motion by Rabagia, seconded by McGrath, to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2025 Long Range Planning Advisory Commission meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Conrad, Davis, McGrath, Miller, Scott, and Rabagia; Nay – None.

ACTION ITEM

New Urban Revitalization District: Cedar Cross Road Urban Revitalization District
Planning Services Director Wernimont explained the application of Callahan Construction and why this urban revitalization district is being created. He described the apartment complex and its proposed six 30-unit buildings, totaling 180 units. He explained that the applicant is seeking tax abatement of 100% for 10 years to pay for the off-site improvements that will be provided: a turn lane on Cedar Cross and an extension of the sanitary sewer main from Catfish Creek. He explained that this project falls under the category of housing creation. He displayed the vicinity map, conceptual plan, and 3D rendering of the proposed development, noting the locations of the buildings and amenities. He stated that the commission's task is to review the proposal for alignment with the Comprehensive Plan and make a recommendation to City Council.

Staff Member Duba reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and the proposed development's concurrence with it. He noted that the plan promotes infill and multi-family development. He referred to several recommendations in the plan that the proposed project would help to meet:

- Integrate future neighborhoods into Dubuque via access to trails, open space, and other recreational and educational amenities and connections to needed goods and services.
- Encourage a mix of housing affordable for all segments of Dubuque's populations throughout the community, including options for those who might be saving for their first home.
- Encourage new multi-family development in proximity to jobs to minimize transportation costs.

Commissioner Miller asked clarifying questions about traffic entering and exiting the property and traveling along Cedar Cross Road. Wernimont showed the concept plan and explained the entrance and exit from the property and the traffic study's conclusion that a left turn lane would need to be added on Cedar Cross Road, which would be one of the improvements the developer pays for. He also described general changes to Cedar Cross as more retail sales and service businesses get established along it and the City's goal to improve the street at some point in the future.

Commissioner McGrath asked whether there would be any other access points to the property. Wernimont explained that there was not another access due to the location along Catfish Creek and along a hill. He noted that the Fire Department approved this access per fire code with the condition that all buildings be sprinklered.

Wernimont gave an overview of the property's development history, its rezoning to PUD, and an explanation of all the aspects that were covered through that process.

Commissioner Scott asked about the makeup of the apartment units. Wernimont stated that he did not have the breakdown, but that it would be mostly one- and two-bedroom units with some three-bedroom units. He noted that developers seeking City incentives are required to accept applications from Housing Choice Voucher holders. He described Callahan's other developments around eastern Iowa, noting that he started developing in Dubuque after the passage of housing incentives by City Council to address the documented housing shortage of 1,100 units. Wernimont described other housing developments in Dubuque, some of which are also using these incentives. He noted that there are 2,400 units in various stages of review and construction.

Commissioner Miller asked about the tax incentive, and Wernimont explained that it's 10 years of tax abatement for the increase in property value above the current value, but the school district portion of the tax is still collected. He estimated the value of the development to be \$30-\$40 million. Commissioner Davis asked if the total 10-year abatement amount was known. Wernimont replied that he didn't have that number, and it was dependent on various factors, including whether all six apartment buildings would ultimately be constructed. Wernimont described the benefits to all parts of the housing

market when new housing of any type is constructed.

Commissioner McGrath asked about the phased approach of this development and what that means for the tax abatement. Wernimont explained that each phase would have its own schedule for tax abatement.

Wernimont described the difference between urban revitalization and urban renewal and how urban renewal allows the City to use part of the increment for affordable housing projects. He also described some of the other tax breaks that housing projects can utilize.

Commissioner Scott asked about acceptance of Housing Choice Vouchers and if there was a quota requirement. Wernimont described the amount of rent an HCV could potentially cover and there is no quota established.

Motion by Scott, seconded by McGrath, to recommend approval of the Cedar Cross Road Urban Revitalization District. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Conrad, McGrath, Scott and Rabagia; Nay – None; Abstain – Davis and Miller.

Note: Both Dave and Miller noted they would like to abstain from the vote until they know the total amount of tax abatement the development would generate.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: None.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION: None.

ITEMS FROM STAFF:

Imagine Dubuque Update

Duba explained that the Local Infrastructure Hub has asked to feature Imagine Dubuque among their Transformative Projects.

UDC Update

Wernimont noted that they are reviewing the Technical Report produced by the consultant, which will eventually be released to the public along with survey results. He noted some of the topics under consideration are parking, design guidelines, and the structure of the document.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Rabagia, seconded by Davis, to adjourn the March 19, 2025 Long Range Planning Advisory Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Conrad, Davis, McGrath, Miller, Scott, Ward, and Rabagia; Nay – None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Director

May 21, 2025

Adopted