



Approved

MINUTES
CITY OF DUBUQUE LONG RANGE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION

5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

City Council Chamber, Historic Federal Building

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Jim Prochaska; Commissioners Craig Beytien, Charles Winterwood, Chad Darter, and Dick Van Iten.

Commissioners Excused: Commissioners Alan Vincent and John Pregler.

Staff Members Present: Laura Carstens, David Johnson, David Heiar, and Phillip Wagner.

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

CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE: Staff presented an Affidavit of Compliance verifying that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Iowa Open Meetings Law.

MINUTES: Motion by Winterwood, seconded by Beytien, to approve the minutes of April 17, 2013 as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Prochaska, Beytien, Darter and Winterwood.

Commissioner Van Iten entered the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS

Amended and Restated Urban Renewal Plan for the Greater Downtown Urban Renewal District: City of Dubuque Assistant Economic Development Director Phil Wagner presented the proposed amendment to the Greater Downtown Urban Renewal District. He explained the amendment is for the Harrison Street subarea. He indicated the City has a prospect who is interested in potential expansion at this location. The prospect is interested in using economic development tools, such as tax increment financing. He reviewed City Council's findings and actions relative to the Plan amendment. He noted the consultation required by law with the Dubuque Community School District, Dubuque County, and other taxing bodies, will be held on May 17th.

Commissioner Beytien noted the need for urban renewal tools for the City of Dubuque. He also noted that tax increment financing in urban renewal areas impacts the taxes levied by the Dubuque Community School District. He noted that tax increment financing is one of the few tools for economic development within the community, and

that the long-term view is eventually the incentives will result in a greater tax base. Commissioner Beytien requested clarification on the terms for the districts. He explained he is not opposed and will vote in support of the amendment; however, it is important to keep in mind tax increment financing does have an impact on the school district.

Chairperson Prochaska requested additional information about the project. Staff Member Wagner clarified new tax increment financing districts are generally established for 10 years. However, they have the potential to be renewed.

Commissioner Van Iten asked if the data is tracked on the impact of the tax increment financing tools on the taxable base of the community. Staff Member Heiar stated data is collected for the six current districts. He noted that the City once had nine districts, and that some have expired. He explained the expired districts are now part of the tax base. He explained TIF districts terms are limited to 20 years, while slum and blight districts do not expire.

Staff Member Heiar noted some districts will be at their expiration in a few years, such as the Technology Park. He explained that it is possible for expiring districts to renew. He stated in the case of the Technology Park, there are a number of undeveloped sites that would benefit from tax increment financing. He explained ways in which urban renewal districts can be renewed.

Motion by Winterwood, seconded by Van Iten, to recommend expanding the Greater Downtown Urban Renewal District to include the Harrison Street subarea as the plan is consistent with the 2008 Dubuque Comprehensive Plan. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Prochaska, Beytien, Van Iten, Darter and Winterwood; Nay – None.

LIAISON/SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Enterprise Zone Commission: No report.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: None.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:

Election and Term of Office: Chairperson Prochaska noted his term as chairperson will expire July 1, 2013. He reviewed the current terms of office for all commissioners. Staff Member Johnson noted that Commissioners Prochaska and Van Iten are both serving out their second consecutive terms as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. He explained Commissioners are not allowed to serve more than two consecutive terms in any one office. Chairperson Prochaska requested commissioners begin considering interest in an officer position in anticipation of term expirations.

ITEMS FROM STAFF:

Comprehensive Plan Update Channel Analysis: Staff Member Carstens reviewed the channel analysis process and results. She reviewed the channels for engagement and noted potential barriers and solutions that were identified.

Staff Member Johnson reviewed the channel analysis for the public awareness and marketing campaign. He explained what it can be used for and how it should be used to gather and share information. He explained the timing for this particular level of engagement has already begun this spring. He reviewed the target audiences and barriers to past participation. He explained about social media, on-line resources, and face-to-face meetings. He noted community partners can help with the translation and facilitation. He noted time and resources as being a significant internal barrier; however, community partners can again help to overcome the concern.

Commissioners discussed the table of channel analysis and various general public and special events. Commissioners discussed a public relations campaign. They noted a survey or presence at community festivals and summer events as a means to get people interested in participating. The Commission suggested focus group meetings and on-line surveys. Staff discussed the need to reach people where they are. Commissioner Beytien noted that the Rotary Club has faculty-sponsored groups at all three local high schools to help engage youth. Staff and the Commission discussed handing out business cards with links to the City's website, mind mixer and QR codes.

Commissioner Van Iten reviewed the reaction to the Smart Plan in Dyersville. He noted many people in that community did not have an understanding of planning or a positive reaction to planning efforts in the community. He noted many viewed planning as a loss of their freedom and an attempt to take over property. He stated it is critical that the City of Dubuque understand how the community views planning. He suggested explaining to people what has come of the previous plans to counter this view.

Staff Member Johnson noted the early efforts in the education and marketing campaign as well as the structure of the input sessions will help inform people of the importance of planning, and dispel those fears.

Commissioner Beytien explained the Dubuque Community School Board learned from the facilities planning process that it is important to break subject matter down into more manageable and relevant elements for public meetings. He explained once they did that, they saw greater participation.

Commissioner Winterwood suggested asking what community members want to see in Dubuque in the next 10 years. Staff Member Carstens suggested the Dubuque County Smart Plan was successful on this level.

Commissioner Van Iten agreed that subject matter needs to be broken down into simple and relatable elements. He noted a fundamental error that took place in Dyersville was that there was too much technical discussions and data. He noted it caused people worry and is irrelevant to many people. Staff Member Carstens noted another issue with the Dubuque County Smart Plan as well as other local government-based efforts in that you will always have certain people who will wait to the end of a process to voice concern or objection, rather than taking part in the discussion and process. Commissioner Van Iten noted it has become fashionable to have negative views on government and many people are suspicious. Commissioner Beytien stated it is important for the City to frame the discussion and clearly communicate what problem we are trying to solve as the context for that conversation.

The Commission further discussed developing an editorial piece on what is planning and why it is important. The Commission and staff discussed the timing of it, noting it may be more effective if it were published closer to the public meeting date scheduled to begin in January 2014. The Commission discussed developing an editorial for every pillar. Staff Member Carstens noted a media plan would be important to this effort and similar media plans were effective for the Envision and Census processes.

The Commission and staff discussed mind mixer and its capabilities and benefits. The Commission discussed the use of social media. The Commission and staff discussed having a presentation on mind mixer at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager

Adopted