



# Approved

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

5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 13, 2018  
City Council Chamber, Historic Federal Building

**Commissioners Present:** Chairperson John Pregler; Commissioners Ron Collins, Charlie Winterwood, and Michael Wright.

**Commissioners Excused:** None.

**Commissioners Unexcused:** Alan Vincent.

**Staff Members Present:** Laura Carstens, Alexis Steger and Crenna Brumwell.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Pregler at 5:34 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 Wright, seconded by Collins, to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2018, Long Range Planning Advisory Commission meeting as submitted. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye –Collins, Winterwood, Wright and Pregler; Nay – None.

### **ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:**

**Review of Proposed Urban Revitalization Plans:** Staff Member Carstens noted that there were many questions from Commissioners at the October meeting regarding the review of the two proposed Urban Revitalization Plans, so staff prepared the enclosed background information to respond to those questions prior to the Commission considering each case. She introduced Alexis Steger, the new Housing and Community Development Director, and Crenna Brumwell, City Attorney.

Chairperson Pregler summarized that at the previous meeting their questions centered around the Housing Choice Voucher Program and Source of Income, and how they would be addressed within a collective impact model when many programs are in separate silos. Staff Member Carstens noted that one role of the Commission is to

review proposed urban revitalization plans for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff Member Carstens explained the City's Urban Revitalization Program for the revitalization of residential properties in the community's older neighborhoods offers a 10-year property tax exemption for new improvements made to qualified residential properties and limited commercial properties. She added that housing developers requesting Urban Revitalization Designation to support quality, affordable housing developments must submit a petition for designation to the City.

Staff Member Carstens explained that the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program (also called Section 8) is the federal government's major program to assist families and individuals in finding decent, safe, and affordable housing in the private sector. She noted the program is administered and funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). She added that the HCV provides participants with choice of housing, and that HUD allows the City to have exception rent areas to have more housing choices on the south and west sides of town.

Staff Member Carstens explained that eligible applicants for the HCV program must earn no more than 50% of the Average Median Income (AMI) for Dubuque according to the Eligibility Guidelines set forth by HUD. She noted that the HCV program is the primary way the City provides affordable housing options for low income (<50% AMI) and very low income (<30% AMI) households in Dubuque, but there are not enough vouchers for all the households in need. She noted the City of Dubuque is entitled to 1,072 vouchers, but HUD estimates there are about 5,600 households in Dubuque below 50% Area Median Income, who would income qualify for housing assistance.

Staff Member Carstens reviewed the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program is the largest source of new affordable housing in the US. She noted it does not provide housing subsidies, but rather tax incentives. She explained the developers build the housing and agree to rent the housing at an affordable rent that is usually below market, such as >20% of the units occupied by tenants at <50% AMI, or >40% of units occupied by tenants at <60% AMI. She also noted that the LITC program is an important partnership method for the City to provide affordable housing options for low income (<50% AMI) and very low income (<30% AMI) households throughout Dubuque.

Staff Member Carstens reviewed Iowa's LIHTC program has an extensive application process that includes consideration of a project's proximity to community services. She explained Iowa's LIHTC program also identifies opportunity areas as part of the State of Iowa's Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. She referred to a series of maps that show the locations of affordable housing projects in relationship to various community services and opportunity areas. She explained the City of Dubuque now requires housing developers to accept HCV participants in conjunction with approval of an affordable housing development agreement related to an urban revitalization plan.

Staff Member Carstens explained that the Dubuque community's vision for the future is found in the 110 recommendations included in *Imagine Dubuque 2037: A Call to Action*, the City of Dubuque's new Comprehensive Plan that are based on over 12,500 ideas from 6,000 participants. She reviewed the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations that relate most closely to the affordable housing projects under consideration are found in Chapter 3 - Economic Prosperity, Chapter 6 – Housing, and Chapter 9 - Land Use.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

Creation of Radford Road Urban Revitalization Plan (Tabled): Staff Member Carstens introduced Richard Sova from Landover Corporation. She reviewed that on August 24, 2018 Landover Corporation submitted a request to the City to consider designating 1895 Radford Road an Urban Revitalization Area. She noted the developer is proposing new construction of a 52-unit affordable multifamily housing apartment community. She added that Landover Corporation plans to apply to the Iowa Finance Authority for Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) for this project, and a requirement of this application is that the project is in an Urban Renewal or Urban Revitalization Area.

Staff Member Carstens reviewed the staff recommendation is that this development would provide affordable, quality housing units for families through partnership with a private developer outside an area of concentrated poverty; the project would accept low income residents, including HCV participants; the project site is in proximity to community services and opportunity areas and in a suitably zoned location; and the project is consistent with housing-related Economic Prosperity, Housing and Land Use recommendations in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioners discussed the HCV program and incomes for people at the 80%, 50% and 30% AMI levels. Housing and Community Development Director Steger confirmed current AMI levels, and then explained the Radford Road project would have HCV rents at 40% AMI and a set-aside for units at 30% AMI. She noted these are rent restrictions that are monitored by the State of Iowa. She said that actual rents would be different when the project opened from the current rents. She also explained that rental rates are based on the number of bedrooms, i.e., rent with all utilities included of \$400 for a one-bedroom unit and \$500 for a two-bedroom unit for households at 30% AMI. City Attorney Brumwell added that HCV participants have an annual review and HCV developers have an annual certification.

Commissioners discussed the proposal further with staff, especially as the proximity to community services. Commissioner Wright expressed concern with access to transit. Housing and Community Development Director Steger noted that the project site was within a ½-mile of a transit stop, and that the site's transit route provided connections to the nearby grocery store and industrial park. Commissioner Wright was concerned about the length of time for bus riders on this route. Staff Member Carstens noted changes in Jule Transit service had been made in August 2018 to reduce travel times.

Motion by Winterwood, second by Wright, to remove the request from the table. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye –Collins, Winterwood, Wright and Pregler; Nay – None.

Motion by Winterwood, second by Collins, to recommend approval of the Radford Road Urban Revitalization Area Plan as consistent with the City of Dubuque Comprehensive Plan. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye –Collins, Winterwood, and Pregler; Nay – Wright.

Creation of Alta Vista Urban Revitalization Plan (Tabled): Staff Member Carstens reviewed that on May 15, 2018 Horizon Development Group, Inc. submitted the enclosed request to the City of Dubuque to consider designating 1225 Alta Vista Street as an Urban Revitalization Area. She noted that the developer is proposing new construction of a 60-unit affordable senior housing apartment community. She added that this is the same private developer of Applewood I – IV senior housing projects on Pennsylvania Avenue. She noted that Horizon Development Group, Inc. plans to apply to the Iowa Finance Authority for Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) for this project, and a requirement of this application is that the project is in an Urban Renewal or Urban Revitalization Area.

Staff Member Carstens reviewed the staff recommendation is that this development would provide affordable, quality housing units for seniors through partnership with a private developer; the project would accept low income residents, including HCV participants; the project site is in proximity to community services and Opportunity Areas and in a suitably zoned location; and the project is consistent with housing-related Economic Prosperity, Housing and Land Use recommendations in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

Jim Gonyier, 935 Oxford Street, Dubuque, Iowa, asked about the project's setbacks and impact on two mature pines on the corner of University Avenue and Alta Vista Street. Staff Member Carstens clarified the conceptual site plan would not impact the trees as access was off Nevada Street with a front yard setback like the adjacent structures.

Commissioners discussed the proposal further with staff and found it appropriate.

Motion by Wright, second by Collins, to remove the request from the table. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye –Collins, Winterwood, Wright and Pregler; Nay – None.

Motion by Winterwood, second by Wright, to recommend approval of the Alta Vista Urban Revitalization Area Plan as consistent with the City of Dubuque Comprehensive Plan. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye –Collins, Winterwood, Wright and Pregler; Nay - None.

**ITEMS FROM PUBLIC:** None.

**ITEMS FROM COMMISSION:**

Update on Comprehensive Plan Implementation: Staff Member Carstens provided the Commission with their requested update regarding the implementation strategy for the Imagine Dubuque Comprehensive Plan. She noted the loss of the two staff members assigned to the Comprehensive Plan had restricted implementation to just post-adoption marketing strategies. She noted the City Council approved funding to retain a consultant to develop a collective impact model to implement the plan, and a contract with Teska Associates to provide that service was underway. She also noted that the new Assistant Planner would start on November 26.

Chairperson Pregler said the Commission's questions at the previous meeting revolved around the inventory of affordable housing and how we are providing affordable units. Staff Member Carstens reviewed how mandated use restrictions on rents keep units affordable, such as at subsidized senior housing communities.

Chairperson Pregler encouraged the Planning Services, Economic Development, and Housing and Community Development Departments to work together to encourage new housing developments to include affordable housing units within those developments. City Attorney Brumwell noted that the City is looking at ways to track where people are moving from within the community to see if that is freeing up housing for low income households. Housing and Community Development Director Steger stated that the City is striving to get people into right-priced housing and will be working with the Dubuque Area Landlords Association to look at local rents. Chairperson Pregler encouraged these efforts, noting that the programs are there but they are in separate silos.

**ITEMS FROM STAFF:**

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Collins, seconded by Winterwood, to adjourn the November 13, 2018 Long Range Planning Advisory Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye –Winterwood, Wright, Collins, and Pregler; Nay – None.

The meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager

2-25-19  
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Adopted