



Approved

MINUTES
CITY OF DUBUQUE LONG RANGE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION

5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 16, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and mandates for social distancing, this meeting was conducted virtually.

Commissioners Present: Chairperson John Pregler; Commissioners Ronald Collins, John Krayer, Tyler Stoffel, and Alan Vincent.

Commissioners Excused: Michael Peroski.

Commissioners Unexcused: None.

Staff Members Present: Wally Wernimont, Chris Happ Olson, and Jason Duba from Planning Services. Jill Connors and Ian Hatch from Economic Development.

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

MINUTES: Motion by Vincent, seconded by Stoffel, to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2020 meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye –Collins, Krayer, Stoffel, Vincent, and Pregler; Nay – None.

ACTION ITEM: Review of Urban Renewal Plan for the Radford Road Urban Renewal Area.

Economic Development Director Jill Connors introduced Ian Hatch, Assistant Economic Development Director. Hatch gave an overview of the process for this project. The City Council passed a resolution of necessity to hold a public hearing for this urban renewal plan, which is in keeping with Comprehensive Plan's goal of having affordable housing throughout Dubuque. The developer, Gardens of Dubuque, plans a 50-unit development.

Connors explained that the project needs urban renewal area designation in order for the City to provide necessary incentives to make the development viable. Two years ago, conversations about this started with the Housing Department. An urban revitalization area was established, but the incentives were not sufficient, so the City has negotiated to create an urban renewal area, which provides five more years of incentive. The proposal received a positive response from neighbors.

Members of the Commission then discussed their consideration of this project from two years ago. Chairperson John Pregler confirmed that this is the same developer and same location as before, but the current urban renewal area plan provides more incentives.

Planning Services Manager Wally Wernimont confirmed that they have received site plans, the land has been rezoned correctly for this use, the developers have enough lot area, and they are working with the Building Services Department.

Members of the Commission then discussed the proximity of this location to necessary services, such as grocery shopping. It was acknowledged that schools are close by, that some bus service is present, but that residents may need private vehicles. Connors reminded the Commission that their goal is to see if this aligns with Comprehensive Plan. She stated that this would be a mixed-income development with units for low-income, workforce, and market rate, and they assume all residents would have a vehicle.

Connors explained that the difference between this and the previous application is that tax abatement was proposed previously, whereas now it's a tax rebate. She also explained this project would help further integrate low-moderate income housing throughout the community, as there is currently little on the west end.

Pregler acknowledged that the Commission previously found this plan to comply with the Comprehensive Plan, so he expressed his wish to work with City staff to incorporate elements of the Comprehensive Plan, such as transportation and mobility. Wernimont acknowledged that proximity maps were not provided, but the location is close to most needs except a grocery store. He also pointed out that bus routes can be changed to accommodate new needs, and that other modes of transportation are available. Staff member Chris Happ Olson pointed out that the Jule transit Brown line running on Radford Road services nearby grocery, shopping and medical services.

The Commissioners then asked how many of the units will be affordable and what projected benefits the City would see from such a project. Connors did not have a defined number of low income units planned for this development. She explained how the incentives offered in this negotiation are standard tax increment finance incentives and that the value of the property will increase significantly, and that value will be realized by the City, County, and School District after the 15-year period. She noted that the County and School District are supportive of the project.

Commissioners then discussed other apartment complexes in the area, how affordable is defined, and what needs low income renters might have. Connors stated that this development is meant for a mix of incomes and to be family-friendly with two- and three-bedroom units. Commissioners wondered whether "affordable" units would be within reach of low income renters earning minimum wage. The previous source of income study also showed there was more need for three-, four-, and five-bedroom apartments. A suggestion was made that the urban renewal plan include an objective about the number

of low income units or units for Housing Choice Voucher recipients. Connors stated that it's currently an honor system for the developer to maintain commitments to low income units, but the City can deal with problems if they arise and can refuse further incentives, referencing two examples where this has happened recently.

Pregler sought clarification about whether and how the Commission could acknowledge that the urban renewal plan was compliant with the Comprehensive Plan and also propose that the project should meet other objectives, such as the number of Housing Choice Voucher units. Olson reiterated that the Commission's charge is to review the proposed plan for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. Pregler responded that they would make two separate motions.

Motion by Vincent, seconded by Collins, to find the urban renewal plan for the Radford Road Economic Development District consistent with the 2017 Imagine Dubuque Comprehensive Plan. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Collins, Krayer, Stoffel, Vincent, and Pregler. Nay – None.

Second motion by Stoffel, seconded by Vincent, to recommend that the City Council consider adding an objective to the urban renewal plan regarding number of low income units and Housing Choice Voucher participation. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Collins, Krayer, Stoffel, Vincent, and Pregler. Nay – None.

Connors stated that she had crafted an email to the City Attorney to see if they can include such an objective.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: None.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION: Discussion of upcoming elections.

Staff Member Chris Happ Olson described a situation where the Commission is not holding office elections at convenient times. She noted that normally election of offices, Chair and Vice-Chair, are held in January, while Commission member terms start and end in July, resulting in elections and terms being incongruent. This is compounded by having inconsistent meetings due to the nature of work coming to the Commission. She noted that Chairperson John Pregler will have served two years in October and the Commission had three options: to hold elections off-cycle in October, to wait until the election cycle in January, or to change the bylaws in order to align the elections with member terms, and then hold elections.

Pregler proposed that Planning Services staff investigate the process for changing bylaws, draft up new language, and hold elections at the next available opportunity for elections. The Commission was in consensus on the plan.

ITEMS FROM STAFF: Staff Member Chris Happ Olson took the opportunity to thank John Pregler for both his two years officially as Chair and also his prior leadership helping to create the Comprehensive Plan.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Collins, seconded by Stoffel, to adjourn the September 16, 2020 Long Range Planning Advisory Commission meeting. Motion carried by the following vote: Aye – Collins, Krayer, Stoffel, Vincent, and Pregler; Nay – None. The meeting adjourned at 6:30.

Respectfully submitted,



Wally Wernimont, Planning Services Manager

10-21-2020

Adopted