

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Cedar Falls Council Chambers

March 21, 2022

The City Council held a work session at City Hall at 5:10 p.m. on March 21, 2022, with the following persons in attendance: Mayor Rob Green, Gil Schultz, Susan deBuhr, Daryl Kruse, Simon Harding, Dustin Ganfield, Dave Sires, and Kelly Dunn. Staff members attended from all City Departments and members of the community attended in person.

Mayor Green introduced the first item on the agenda, Collaborative Opportunities with UNI (University of Northern Iowa). He introduced City Administrator Ron Gaines, UNI's Finance and Operations Senior Vice President Michael Hager, and Board and Governmental Relations Chief of Staff Andrew Morse. City Administrator Gaines stated tonight's goal is to open a dialogue between Council and the University. Mr. Hager stated the relationship between the University and the City is very good. He stated UNI's February 2022 payroll was \$14.4 million, and the money funnels into the Cedar Falls economy; further, students funnel in money through rent, groceries, utilities, etc. He stated enrollment is down but graduation rates are up and UNI's retention rate is 10-12% higher than peers across country. Mr. Hager stated there is an initiative with community colleges including Des Moines community college, Hawkeye Community College, and 3 others are upcoming. He referenced a new general education program which changed and lessened the number of credits/hours leading to earlier graduation and being easier to add a major/minor. He stated the UNI Foundation has fundraised 39 million for FY20 and 43 million for FY21. Mr. Hager referenced capital projects including: roof replacement of the UNI Dome; expansion and renovation of the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center; the final phase of renovation for Noran Hall; renovation and renaming of the Industrial Technology Center (will be the Applied Engineering Building). Mr. Morse stated UNI is the state's only regional comprehensive university; UNI provides personalized and industry relevant educational experience while driving economic growth and quality of life. He stated there is a soon-to-be launched addition to work at Tech Works in the old John Deere Foundry. He stated UNI provides hands-on educational experience through academic programs and 92% of undergrads study an academic discipline in alignment with at least 1 high growth/high demand industry in Iowa. Mr. Morse stated UNI is launching two new baccalaureate programs: Automation and Engineering Technology; and Data Analytics. He stated UNI collaborates with the Waterloo Career Center and Hawkeye Community College for a program called Degree Links for secondary students to take a full year off the time taken to earn a high school diploma, associate's degree, and baccalaureate degree in either: construction management, manufacturing, or graphic technologies. Mr. Morse stated UNI partners with Cedar Falls Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) program to provide internships. He addressed UNI's role in the College Hill Revitalization plans and expressed the goal to build a warm and welcoming business environment on the Hill. Mayor opened to Council discussion. Councilmember Dunn stressed the importance of the City and UNI's collaboration for the community and College Hill. City Administrator Gaines stated Fire Protection is the largest shared

service between the City and UNI, and they work together frequently at all levels of staff; Mayor Green and Mr. Hager stated the UNI Campus Police are state level with additional certification, and Cedar Falls Public Safety and the Campus Police each other. Councilmember Harding stated College Hill is a vital link and asked what vision UNI sees for College Hill and what can the City and Council do to support that; Mr. Hager responded they encourage more economic development, and have heard from recruiting employees and students the Hill is “not helping”; Mr. Morse praised the walkability from UNI to College Hill and appreciation of the effort to add natural landscaping; Mr. Hager stated there had been previous discussion of developing 22nd Street into the Hill, it would be a natural progression to the parking deck. Mayor Green stated the tennis courts have shared use between UNI and the City; Mr. Hager stated also by the Cedar Falls Schools and the Gaming Commission provided a grant due to the collaboration. Councilmembers Schultz and Sires mentioned previous businesses on the Hill and expressed desire to see those elements again; Mr. Hager stated UNI sees a lot of people for events and they do utilize hotels in town but proximity to the Hill would be ideal, he noted requirements needed to host NCAA events. Mayor Green stated Council’s goal setting document has action items for College Hill including to promote learning, service, and internship opportunities to elevate intentional community, business, and university engagement for increased UNI enrollment, and asked about community engagement; Mr. Morse stated the last strategic plan created an Office for Community Engagement led by Dr. Julianne Gassman to give students direct engagement with non-profits, local community organizations, and business to volunteer and intern and stated 95% of students have at least one career-relevant experience before leaving UNI; Mayor Green stated the Community Engagement Fair at UNI is April 22, 2022. Councilmember Dunn expressed the importance of collaboration among the City, UNI, and the Cedar Falls Schools and asked how does economic growth and incentive happen for College Hill like it has for Downtown; Mr. Morse stated the City’s goal setting document, the College Hill Vision Plan, and the UNI strategic plan have goals, now to take the next step. Mayor Green noted that UNI is rated a #1 military friendly campus and at goal setting Council worked on opportunities and incentives for the Governor’s Home Based Iowa program to attract separating/retiring military personnel. Councilmember Ganfield asked about tuition cost trends; Mr. Hager responded a regional comprehensive university is usually about \$2500 less than a research one institution, and UNI has the lowest tuition of the three state universities; Mr. Morse noted UNI has begun accepting AA and AS degrees outright from community colleges which has created a new transfer environment and draws a more competitive student population while still delivering a high quality education. Mayor Green thanked UNI staff for participating on the City’s various boards and commissions; he invited UNI student representative Zachary Zippe to speak regarding College Hill. Mr. Zippe expressed his interest in the City’s intentions towards the Hill, and noted that most students start by visiting the Hill but gravitate towards downtown; he stated revitalizing the Hill would be incentive for students to stay near campus. Councilmember Dunn asked Mr. Zippe what he’d like to see on the Hill; he responded the new business Golf Lab in Downtown would be a draw, and other businesses like that. Mayor Green stated it’s important to make new students feel welcome and that he and Waterloo Mayor Hart have done videos for welcome packets; he noted that Code Enforcement is important to

ensure properties maintain standards, and stressed the importance of making sure students know that some issues are between the landlord and the City, not the students; Councilmember Dunn agreed with the importance of making sure students know their rights as renters. Councilmember Kruse asked about updates on two housing properties on UNI Campus; Mr. Hager stated UNI did a space analysis and no need was found on campus for housing and they've requested permission to raze the two properties, the board tabled the issue in November 2021. Mayor Green stated these joint meetings are to be held when "timely" and requested to continue the joint meetings at least annually; Mr. Hager and Mr. Morse agreed.

Mayor Green introduced the second item on the agenda, Downtown Zoning Changes (continuation of previous discussion). Mayor Green introduced Planning and Community Services Manager Karen Howard. Ms. Howard referenced a slide with concerns to be discussed as a continuation of a past Work Session including: questions about missing middle housing; questions about accessory dwelling units; and vinyl siding decisions and requirements. Mayor Green requested discussion begin with missing middle housing and expressed concern that home ownership in Cedar Falls can be difficult with high price points. Councilmember Dunn expressed concerns about affordability of housing; not everyone wants a huge yard on a cul-du-sac, but they still want to build wealth through home ownership. Mayor Green asked if the current character district code for Downtown meets the vision plan for affordable, missing middle housing; Ms. Howard stated the community expressed interest in diversity of housing options near downtown, concern about housing density, and the old code lacked standards needed to provide opportunity for redevelopment as appropriate. Mayor Green stated he recently heard the term "a-third-able", the idea that no one should spend more than 1/3 of their monthly income on housing, either renting or owning and this will be assessed in the Housing Needs Assessment; Mayor Green asked for consensus as this being enough information if a Councilmember wants to make a referral; consensus reached. Mayor Green reviewed the three options for vinyl siding: leave as Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) recommended; add allowance for vinyl siding on new single-family dwellings; add allowance for vinyl siding on new multi-family dwellings less than 7 units. Councilmember Dunn asked what is allowed in the new code that wasn't previously; Ms. Howard stated in the previous CBD overlay, vinyl was not allowed for commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family residences with more than six units; she stated current code continues the previous prohibition and extends to any new single or multi-family residential dwelling, and it allows vinyl siding on all existing single-family dwellings and any existing buildings that have vinyl siding including additions. Councilmember deBuhr asked about the cost of siding versus other options; Ms. Howard responded she didn't have those cost figures, the market is fluctuating and there have been supply chain issues; Councilmember deBuhr stated she'd like to see it as a recommendation to not use instead of a prohibition. Councilmember Ganfield asked if cottage courts were considered single- or multi-family; Ms. Howard responded that multiple is more than one unit per property, so even if they are sold individually, it would be considered multi-family. Councilmember Ganfield asked about the rationale behind the prohibition on vinyl on new construction if existing structures can continue to use it; Ms. Howard stated the discussion centered around

longevity and sustainability of materials, that vinyl siding can be recycled but it's difficult and often ends up in landfills, and it burns at a lower temperature (fire hazard); she stated the discussion was summarized in the decision matrix provided to Council members; Councilmember Dunn stated the nearest facility to accept vinyl siding for recycling is in Minnesota. Councilmember Ganfield stated it doesn't make sense to allow vinyl siding on existing buildings but not new ones, it should apply to all or none, and removing the restriction lowers cost for new construction; Councilmember Kruse stated he is in favor of reverting to the previous code regarding vinyl siding; Councilmember Sires agreed. Councilmember deBuhr asked how current zoning and vinyl siding code compares to the boundaries of the previous CBD overlay; Ms. Howard responded it doesn't track exactly. Mayor Green asked if Council had enough information to make a referral at the Council meeting if desired; Council responded yes. Mayor Green addressed the third item, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Councilmember Kruse asked what happens when a property is sold or the owner wishes to convert the dwelling into a rental and can rental properties have an ADU; Mayor Green stated he sees the owner-occupied restriction as helping maintain the character of the neighborhood and not create density; Ms. Howard stated it's not a dwelling unit if there's no kitchen, so taking out the kitchen elements would allow the property to be sold as or converted to a rental; she stated there would be a process for approving ADUs including something in the deed regarding selling requirements, but it hasn't yet been requested. Councilmember deBuhr asked how ADUs compare to rental size requirements; Ms. Howard stated it's basically a one-room apartment; Councilmember Sires asked if it would require additional parking; Ms. Howard responded limited occupancy would make the on-street parking impact minimal, so no requirement; Mayor Green stated if parking became an issue Council could address it at that time. Councilmember Kruse requested clarification of "daylight basement"; Ms. Howard stated it's the idea that instead of the entire space being underground, a significant portion is above ground; Councilmember Kruse stated concern with not allowing ADUs to apply to rental properties as well as owner-occupied properties and enforcing this; Mayor Green stated he does not see it as problematic to enforce; Councilmember Dunn stated she does not see this as an issue and thinks it could be a good idea for taking care of family members, and if ADUs become a problem they can be addressed at that time. Councilmember Ganfield asked about the investment of creating the ADU and the return upon sale; Councilmember Harding stated the units could help owners gain an additional income source. Councilmembers deBuhr and Schultz asked about building requirements and lot restrictions; Ms. Howard stated all current code must be met for accessory buildings and the buildable area of the lot. Mayor Green asked if Council had enough information to request a referral if desired; Council responded yes.

Mayor Green and the Council held a brief discussion about the scope of the Downtown zoning and the effect it may have on other sections of the City; it was determined there would be additional discussion at a future meeting.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 6:53 p.m.
Minutes by Katie Terhune, Administrative Assistant