

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

City Hall – Council Chambers

April 5, 2021

The Committee of the Whole met at City Hall at 5:20 p.m. on April 5, 2021, with the following Committee persons in attendance: Mayor Robert M. Green, Frank Darrah, Sudan deBuhr, Kelly Dunn, Simon Harding, Daryl Kruse (via video conference), Mark Miller, and Dave Sires. Staff members from all City Departments and members of the community attended in person and teleconferenced in.

Mayor Green called the meeting to order and introduced the only item on the agenda, College Hill Vision Plan. Karen Howard, Planning & Community Services Manager introduced Ms. Mary Madden and Mr. Geoff Ferrell with Ferrell Madden. Ms. Madden and Mr. Ferrell introduced the Imagine College Hill draft. This process kicked off January 2020 with a priority-setting session with City Council, followed by a public workshop, stakeholder interviews, focus group sessions, and a study of the existing character of the study area, the market, and transportation network. The Visioning process consisted of the executive summary, project introduction, analysis, charrette week, the vision, next steps and the appendix. The College Hill area is comprised of several sub-areas: 1. Heart of College Hill, 2. General College Hill, 3. University Neighborhood, 4. Seerley Park & Clay Street Park Neighborhoods, 5. Main Street Corridor (18th Street to Seerley Boulevard), 6. East of Main Neighborhood, 7. Fairview Neighborhood, 8. Southwest Neighborhood, and 9. College Hill Gateway Seerley Boulevard at Main Street. Ms. Madden addressed more in depth the issues that were discussed during a Planning and Zoning meeting regarding reaching out for feedback from black and indigenous persons and the plan to address parking issues in the area. Ms. Howard recommended the College Hill Vision plan be placed on the City Council agenda for April 19th. Mayor Green opened the meeting for council discussion. Councilmembers expressed concerns about the vision plan covering too large of an area, financial impacts to the University of Northern Iowa, reduction in parking requirements and if there would be a need for resident parking, and discussion of receiving and filing this plan and then approving one portion at a time. Ms. Howard and Ms. Madden responded to council questions: the goal was to have a larger boundary; the University of Northern Iowa is very supportive of this development; this is a 20 year process and will be developed over time. Ms. Madden commented that 21st St. is planned to be reconstructed and would like to include this in the vision by moving the plan forward. Some areas at this time don't have sidewalks, trees are dying and the store fronts look tired. Ms. Howard explained this College Hill Vision plan is here to guide the decisions into the future. Ms. Howard stated if the paid parking is implemented as stated in the parking study this will address some of the free parking that is occurring at this time. Coordination of parking with UNI and the City will be a key component to this vision. Ms. Madden suggested a parking management district as a future option; a multifaceted approach after the redevelopment.

Mayor Green opened it for public comment. Kathryn Sogard, Executive Director of College Hill Partnership, commented that the College Hill Partnership supports this vision and they need this to move College Hill forward, promote and revitalization.

Eashaan Vajpeyi, 3831 Convair Lane, stated developers will make money on developments, but will not offer parking. Mr. Vajpeyi stated that it's difficult to park, college students have cars and he suggested working to implement the recommendations from the parking study completed two years ago. TJ Frein, 1319 Austin Way, stated the plan for the future looks awesome and College Hill needs an upgrade. Mr. Frein asked about lowering the requirement for bedrooms and if this will affect parking spots and those spots available for residents to visit the College Hill area, and will off campus housing affect the University's income. Mr. Frein suggested one parking spot per bedroom. Ms. Howard stated UNI is very supportive of the vision and students do better if they are in high density areas close to/on campus. If neighborhoods are stabilized this will relieve some of the pressure if there's more housing next to the campus, and result in opening up affordable housing for residents, and not just students.

Mayor stated the College Hill Vision Plan may be placed on the April 19th City Council agenda.

There being no further business, Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Minutes by Kim Kerr, Administrative Supervisor