

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

City Hall – Council Chambers

December 7, 2020

The Committee of the Whole met at City Hall via teleconference at 5:20 p.m. on December 7, 2020, with the following Committee persons in attendance: Mayor Robert Green, Frank Darrah, Susan deBuhr, Kelly Dunn, Simon Harding, Daryl Kruse, Mark Miller, and Dave Sires. Mayor Green was absent. Staff members attended from all City Departments. Amie Rivers Wind from the *Waterloo Courier* and Grow Cedar Valley representatives Chris Fereday, Lisa Skubal, Aaron Jarnagin and Cary Darrah as well as members of the community teleconferenced in.

The Mayor Green called the meeting to order and introduced the first item on the agenda, Grow Cedar Valley Update. Chris Fereday current chair of Grow Cedar Valley made some opening comments on their partnership with the City of Cedar Falls. Lisa Skubal Vice President of Economic Development reviewed the external marketing and business growth for both new business expansion and expansion of current businesses. Ms. Skubal stated the pandemic has limited the in person meetings with contacts. She explained she worked with Shane Graham and interviewed Cedar Falls businesses for the Best of Iowa. Aaron Jarnagin Director of Marketing worked on the Live the Valley initiative. He stated they partnered with Iowa Economic Development Authority and worked with other communities in Iowa on Iowa's talent campaign. Cary Darrah, CEO for Grow Cedar Valley said they worked with the area schools on apprenticeships. She said they hold monthly meetings with business leaders on workplace equity and inclusion. A brief discussion was held.

Mayor Green introduced agenda item two the Annual Report of Cedar Falls Public Library. Kelly Stern Director of the Library reviewed the annual statistics from the past year. She stated usage is down due to the pandemic. She reviewed staff response to the pandemic; staff did planning for no contact curbside pickup, virtual programs, and expanding the E-materials collection. Ms. Stern said they went "fine free" earlier this year and obtained their re-accreditation Tier 3. She reviewed future plans for the library which include re-branding. A brief discussion was held.

The Mayor introduced the third item Subdivision Code Amendment. Karen Howard, Planning and Community Development Manager reviewed the current subdivision code. She stated the code doesn't address problems in developing the subdivision in phases and connectivity to existing street. She reviewed an older section of town, which was developed in a grid pattern and explained the problems that can exist in newer developments. Ms. Howard, stated poorly planned subdivision phasing, particularly when combined with excessively long block lengths and few connections between subdivisions create a very inefficient street network. She explained it can also cause lack of street connectivity within and between subdivisions have both short term and long term costs to the community in the form of increased commute times, increased traffic speeds, increased traffic congestion, safety concerns, increased emergency response times, and inefficient routes for utilities, refuse pick-up and snowplowing. She stated Planning and Zoning Commission discussed City staff recommendation subdivision code text amendments, which would establish a formal requirement for

submittal of a subdivision phasing plan at the preliminary plat stage and to establish a standard for final plat phasing that ensures that critical infrastructure connections occur in a timely manner and prior to less critical areas of a subdivision at three of their meetings and on October 28 Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval. The proposed standard will give flexibility to the developer to propose phasing that meets the pace of market demand, but give discretion to the City to determine if the final plat phase proposed can function as an independent development with all the necessary public improvements and infrastructure extensions; and most importantly will ensure that no essential infrastructure improvements are being circumvented or delayed. She said that each subdivision would be reviewed on its own merits and providing clear direction in the code will ensure rules are applied consistently and fairly. Ms. Howard stated staff will request to set a public hearing date for December 21 to consider the proposed amendments. Mayor Green opened it up for discussion from Council.

Mayor Green introduced the final item on the agenda Zoning Code Amendment: Adaptive Re-Use of Institutional Buildings in Residential Zone. Chris Sevy Planner I stated they received a request from an owner of a vacant church building in an R-1 residential district has inquired about alternative uses and wants to operate an event space there for wedding receptions. He stated currently the activity associated with that use may not be too different from that of a church and could be compatible with the neighborhood; however the zoning ordinance leaves few options for adaptively re-using existing vacant institutional buildings within residential districts. He stated to provide more flexibility to re-purpose defunct institutional buildings within residential neighborhoods, staff recommends adding a conditional use process where the Board of Adjustment would consider requests to adaptively re-use the buildings for specific other listed uses. Each case can be considered on its own merits at a public hearing where neighborhood concerns could be heard and the Board could deny, approve with conditions, or approve the proposal. Mr. Sevy stated the Planning and Zoning Commission discussed the proposed zoning code amendments at their August 26th and after further discussion at their October 28th meeting, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval. Mayor Green opened it up for discussion from Council. Ms. Howard answered questions with regards to the distinction between a conditional use process and spot zoning, she stated the Board of Adjustment would consider these requests at a public hearing where any concerns could be addressed.

There being no further discussion Mayor Pro Tem Darrah adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Minutes by Lisa Roeding, Controller/City Treasurer