

# PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION

PZ AF 02-08-2021

Chairperson Andersen called the regular meeting of the Plan and Zoning Commission to order at 5:31 p.m. on Monday, February 8, 2021, in the Council Chambers of the West Des Moines City Hall, located at 4200 Mills Civic Parkway, in West Des Moines, and Electronically through Zoom.

Roll Call: Andersen, Conlin, Costa, Crowley, Drake, Hatfield, Southworth..... Present

## **Item 1- Consent Agenda**

### **Item 1a – Minutes of the meeting of January 25, 2021**

Chairperson Andersen asked for any comments or modifications to the January 25, 2021 minutes.

Moved by Commissioner Costa, seconded by Commissioner Drake, the Plan and Zoning Commission approved the January 25, 2021 meeting minutes.

Vote: Andersen, Conlin, Crowley, Drake, Hatfield, Southworth..... Yes  
Costa.....Abstained  
Motion carried.

### **Item 2 – Public Hearings**

There were no Public Hearing items.

### **Item 3 – Old Business**

There were no Old Business items to address.

### **Item 4 – New Business**

There was (1) New Business item.

### **Item 4a – Review of proposed University Avenue Corridor Urban Renewal Area for Conformity with the General Plan (Comprehensive Plan)**

Development Coordinator Linda Schemmel introduced the proposal and was joined by Business Development Coordinator Rachel Wacker from the Community and Economic Development Department. Ms. Wacker summarized the proposal as detailed in her staff report, noting that this is the creation of a new Urban Renewal Area which will promote redevelopment and infrastructure along the University Avenue Corridor, and facilitate a development agreement with ClaimDoc, LLC.

Commissioner Crowley questioned the timing of the proposal, given the current economic downturn for office and retail development. Ms. Wacker stated that they do anticipate a lot of redevelopment in this area, and the schedule being proposed is to facilitate the development agreement for Claim Doc. Commissioner Crowley commented that they seem to be rushing for the sake of Claim Doc. Ms. Wacker responded that she didn't feel they are rushing, but that this is a timely planning for the future of the area, aligning well with where the study itself is progressing to.

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Commissioner Costa asked if there are any imminent plans for Valley West Mall. Ms. Wacker responded that there are some proposals being considered, including an indoor golf/entertainment venue, however there is nothing concrete at this time.

Commissioner Drake questioned whether the development agreement for the Claim Doc area would not exceed \$10 million. Ms. Wacker responded that the cap applies to the whole urban renewal area. Commissioner Drake questioned the timing of the projects slated for 2021. Ms. Wacker stated that the funding will not occur until the development is approved. The urban renewal proposal is putting the plan in place for the future.

Commissioner Crowley responded that he would rather this go the other way, as there isn't any market demand for this project at all right now in commercial real estate terms of retail and office development. Ms. Wacker responded that it is timelier to put the plan in place now rather than to amend later with expensive legal assistance. She added that it would only be done if the economic need and development is there.

Commissioner Crowley asked about the development of Westown Parkway. Ms. Wacker replied that the realignment of the Westown Parkway is mostly pertaining to the Valley West mall site, at this point it is merely conceptual. The timing of the Valley West Mall redevelopment is unspecified at this time; however, conversations are ongoing and a redevelopment study is taking place now. As far as designations for the Iowa Reinvestment District, which they would like to see the projects all aligned with, should the City be fortunate enough to receive it, they are looking at 2022 before anything really gets started.

Commissioner Costa asked if projects have to get designated for IRA before they can be submitted as a project to the City. Ms. Wacker stated she didn't believe so, and that many communities are applying for the Iowa Reinvestment District designation at the same time, and several projects have already been established, the Merle Hay Mall being one of them, the Des Moines soccer complex is another. Planning is moving forward, whether we get the designation or not.

Chairperson Andersen asked if anyone from the audience would like to speak to this item, seeing none, asked for continued discussion or a motion.

Moved by Commissioner Hatfield, seconded by Commissioner Costa, the Plan and Zoning Commission approved a resolution recommending finding of conformity with the General Plan.

Vote: Andersen, Conlin, Costa, Drake, Hatfield, Southworth.....Yes  
Crowley..... No  
Motion carried.

Commissioner Crowley was asked for comment. He stated that he did not believe this was the best timing for this proposal.

### **Item 5 – Staff Reports**

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 22, 2021.

### **Item 6 – Adjournment**

Chairperson Andersen adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

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Erica Andersen, Chairperson

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Jennifer Canaday, Recording Secretary