



Historic West Des Moines Master Plan Steering Committee – 2021 Update

Wednesday, April 20, 2022, 4:30 pm

MINUTES

- I. Chair calls meeting to order – called to order at 4:35 pm
 - a. Attendance
 - i. Committee members
 1. Nate Hon
 2. Meredith Wells
 3. Mark Veiock
 4. Steve Frevert
 5. Cleo Underwood
 6. Scott Hatfield
 7. Steph Trannel
 8. Julie Eliason
 9. Vicki Long Hill
 10. Renae Johanningmeier
 11. Rene Hardman
 12. Debbie Westphal Swander – via Teams
 13. Ralph Haskins – via Teams
 14. Mitchell Callahan – via Teams
 15. Vince Valdez – via Teams
 - ii. Staff Members
 1. Brad Munford
 2. Christine Gordon
 3. Clyde Evans
 - iii. Consultant

1. Mike Hoffman – Teska
2. Erin Cigliano – Teska - via Teams

iv. Guests

1. MJ Hoag
2. Nick Waage
3. Kevin Goodlaxson
4. Jack Hon
5. Helen Rodish
6. Loretta Hansen
7. Dina Bechman
8. Jennifer Hampton
9. Teena Shineflew
10. Lola Myers
11. Connie McGinn
12. Harold Thomason
13. Dan Murillo
14. Kelly Wilson
15. Tom Hyde
16. Brenda Clauseman
17. Kay Schiller – via Teams

- II. Committee Approves the Agenda – Motion by Steph Trannel, Seconded by Julie Eliason – all in favor
- III. Approval of March 30, 2022, Minutes – motion by Stee Frevert, seconded by Scott Hatfield – all in favor
- IV. Opening Statement is read for all in attendance – Read by Meredith Wells
 - a. Brad Munford – Gave an introduction for the new guests on our process
- V. Citizen Forum
 - a. Jack Hon – What is the vision for 5th Street & Railroad Avenue? He has asked that before but has not gotten an answer. Concerned the neighborhood will not have enough police protection with all the new people coming in. Did not get an answer on the number of stories along Railroad. Why are we picking on some areas and leaving other areas alone? Steph Trannel asked for an example – Jack said an area along Railroad and that has been excluded but did not give exact streets. Are we getting rid of houses? What is our vision?
 - i. Erin Cigliano – the design guidelines on page 12 have the overall vision for the area

- b. MJ Hoag – Teska has suggested a road diet for Railroad. MJ Hoag presented PowerPoint slides with ideas for a road diet along Railroad.
- c. Jennifer Hampton – Lives near Stillwell, empty strip mall near her. Can we focus on other parts of the area? Along Grand Avenue? Seems black and white – either you don't want any change, or you want this area to be an entertainment district. We don't know what your individual beliefs are. We want to know what it is going to look like. When you have two or three main owners in the area that is a problem. I don't want the rents to get too high in this area for small businesses.
 - i. Steph Trannel – She said we are staying within our purpose of this committee.
 - ii. Meredith Wells – We are setting guidelines to for the change and growth. We want to do it in a way that is conducive
 - iii. Vicki Long Hill – Let the guest know the boundaries for the area and they do go to Grand Ave. It is worth listening to concerns about areas beyond 5th Street.
 - iv. Meredith Wells – the scope of work does address other areas within Historic West Des Moines.
 - v. Steph Trannel – The guidelines will determine what the development looks like.
 - vi. Steve Frevert – Design Guidelines did not exist until February, and they exist now and were approved by City Council. The Committee has done their work on the Design Guidelines for Mixed Used Area. It is not an us versus them.
 - vii. Julie Eliason – When I hear concerns about modernized, I thought the guidelines addressed those.
 - viii. Renae Johanningmeier – As a resident and business owner concerns about the rents and that will push out small businesses. The City is incentivizing the big developers. How we got here is the City offered \$75,000 per unit to developers. Now we have these large buildings.
 - ix. Clyde Evans – explained the changes to the Property Improvement Fund, Regulatory Compliance Fund, Upper Story Housing Program, Historic WDM Housing Fund Programs.
- d. Nick Waage – Want to thank everyone for the discussion tonight. He and his wife bought their house in 1986. Nick Waage asked Debbie what was happening between 1986 & 1993. In 1993, their property value dropped \$20,000, but they didn't leave. The levy was built 1997 and their property value went back up. In 2002 to 2019, their property value went from \$60,000 to \$200,000 – that had nothing to do with the businesses down here – it is about affordable housing. The people who want to live here want affordable housing, millennials, and households who want to downsize. You want to rip out affordable housing in the transition area.
 - i. Mark Veiock – committees formed and a group of people wanting to start small businesses. Most of things were done with volunteers and grass roots efforts. He renovated 16 buildings in Valley Junction in his lifetime. It was all about the neighbors and small business owners

- ii. Debbie Westphal Swander – Main Street was designation in 1987
 - e. Connie McGinn – Remember when I could go to Lyric theater for 25 cents. You’re not going to be able to call it Historical anymore if we change everything. Keep it the same. It has changed too much.
 - f. Dan Murillo – You should reach out to the people whose property you are trying to take. I just found out about this 3 days ago yet you said this is the 17th meeting. I’m not going to let you take my property. Nobody’s taking my property. I did not get any postcards. I will die for what I believe in.
 - i. Rene Hardman – I’m doing more listening than speaking. We need to be really clear the City has said nothing about eminent domain or taking property. We have talked about guidelines. We are not talking about taking property.
 - ii. Meredith Wells – It is our job to tell our groups about these meetings. The future meeting dates are on the bottom of the agenda.
 - iii. Clyde Evans – State law prohibits a city from eminent domain and transferring that property to a developer.
 - g. Helen Rodish – How many houses have been put into the new zoning along 4th, 6th, and Railroad? Wants to talk about the industrial area. Parking lot along 3rd Street is a problems its black mold and won’t go away. The compliance officer cannot do anything about it. What about 5th and 6th house in from Railroad? Who is protecting them? The fences don’t do anything? And keep in mind what they look like years later. What I heard on channel 5, is there are big developers coming to town who are buying up houses and putting up buildings and that will affect the 5th and 6th house up.
 - h. Debbie Westphal Swander – The intention to communicate is there. The City is getting information out Debbie Westphal Swander – Pointed to all of the information available online through YouTube and websites. Lots of history and information. Strong emotions and that is a good thing. I think it is important to listen and take our time.
- VI. Discussion of the Design guidelines for the Transitional Area – Teska – Postponed to next meeting
- a. There are 116 addresses in the transitional area
 - b. Accessory Dwelling Units
 - i. Steph Trannel – Are ADU’s allowed in this area already?
 - 1. Brad Munford – is not a given they are allowed. Depends on the circumstances. Of all the neighborhoods in the City, Valley Junction is the most appropriate for ADU’s.
 - ii. Meredith Wells – Can ADU’s be short term rentals?
 - 1. Brad Munford – with new state law, the City cannot prohibit short term rentals
 - c. Nate Hon – What are the perks for the residents to do this? How would these places be zoned?

- i. Mike Hoffman – additional flexibility for owners with uses. We are proposing a Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlay for this entire area to allow for the approvals to change of use to meet City codes.
- d. Renae Johanningmeier – How is the property taxed?
 - i. Mike Hoffman – taxed based on current use
- e. Nate Hon – Can the property be transitioned back to residential from commercial?
 - i. Clyde Evans – yes, the property can go from Commercial to residential without City approval. It cannot go the other way – that requires city approval
- f. Steve Frevert – will any of the new programs assist with ADU's?
 - i. Christine Gordon – the current and new programs would not be appropriate to assist ADU's.
- g. Debbie Westphal Swander – what are the best and worst case scenarios for this area based on these designations?
 - i. Mike Hoffman – This area – depends on how it is currently zoned. North end of 5th street suggesting zoning back to residential, other areas the new zoning would expand the options on those pieces. Worst case – could, but highly unlikely, that all 116 units are transferred to commercial uses.
- h. Vicki Long Hill – Asked for a map to be put on the screen to show
 - i. Brad Mumford – went through the map
- i. Nate Hon – Has anyone door knocked on the doors in the 500 block to see what they want? He hears that people in that block want it to be straight residential. We should be asking them what they want and not assuming. And we should be asking all of the houses in the transitional area what they want.
- j. Vicki Long Hill – We are moving this area from Commercial to Transitional which eliminates the chance for a larger business going in there.
- k. Julie Eliason – what says that we need this transitional area?
 - i. Mike Hoffman – currently there is only 1 available space in the Main Street District for business to rent.
 - ii. Meredith Wells – Many business owners are getting nervous about rents and available spaces – that offices will come in and outbid them on the prime spaces. The Transitional District can take the pressure off the 5th Street and side streets for businesses that need the foot traffic.
 - iii. Julie Eliason – let's document why we need this area
- l. Nate Hon – There needs to be a balance between residences and businesses.
- m. Steve Frevert – This area does allow for a softer move from commercial to residential.
- n. Julie Eliason – Can you combine properties?

- i. Clyde Evans – Yes, you can combine but limited to 4 units per structures.
- o. Steph Trannel – What keeps someone from having a business in your home now?
 - i. Mike Hoffman – It can be done today as a single employee – but if you want to have people and meetings then you need the different zoning.
- p. Debbie Westphal Swander – referring to the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. What is the possibility of a combination of lots? Is it possible each of these lots could have 4 units? What are the consequences? If a developer comes in and uses opportunity zones
- q. Nate Hon – Do these new housing programs keep building from turning these properties into commercial uses?
 - i. Clyde Evans – each program has restrictions on years that a person must live there.
- r. Vicki Long Hill – Concerned about commercial next to residential? We are allowing businesses in Railroad Area. Seems we have plenty of businesses, but not thinking of residential. Need to consider the residents and how the business will affect abutting them.
- s. Steve Frevert – what happens if we do nothing? Send notice to all addresses in the yellow area to discuss at next meeting.
 - i. Mike Hoffman – rents will continue to rise in Main Street District. Need to address 500 block of 5th Street. Missed opportunity to keep rents at reasonable level.
- t. Jennifer Hampton – are there limitation on the type of businesses that could be allowed? What is there was a specific area that had ADU's or tiny homes for new owners or people aging out.
 - i. Clyde Evans – yes, certain uses will be allowed and some will not
- u. Vicki Long Hill – agrees with Steve that we should let everyone in the area know about this discussion
- v. Brenda Clausman – Does the City have plans to offer incentives to developers to build 4 plex housing? Offer to put door hangers on people's houses
- w. Kelly Wilson – Signs were not mentioned when we talk about these uses
 - i. Clyde Evans – they were mentioned in the presentation
- x. Nick Waage – 4 unit max attached – what's to keep someone from building on 101 4th Street and putting 4 units on those lots? Is there anyway to stop the townhome? It takes away from the historic nature of the neighborhood. One building, one lot. Need to send mailers to people across alleys who touch yellow area, not just within yellow area.
 - i. Brad Munford – Current Comprehensive plan allows for these. Nothing is currently stopping them.
- y. Jennifer Hampton – love the look of the large houses into apartments – could be built to look that way. Doesn't look like mass housing – looks neighborly.

VII. Meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm

Handouts

- Power point slides dated April 20, 2022

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Master Plan on Website: <https://www.wdm.iowa.gov/government/community-economic-development/historic-west-des-moines-master-plan>

Project website: <https://historicwdm.com/>

Future Meetings:

June 1, 2022 – Steering Committee Meeting