



APPROVED by CD Commission 1-30-07
MINUTES
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, November 28, 2006, City Council Chambers

Call to Order: After a brief discussion, the Community Development (CD) Commission agreed that Commissioner Silvis would serve as Acting Chairperson. She called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Roll Call: Connie Eldridge called the roll. A quorum was present.

Commission Members Present: Chris Diana, Joy Ready, Anne Heinze Silvis, Umesh Thakkar,

Commission Members Absent: Fred Cobb, Theresa Michelson, Dennis Vidoni

Others Present: John Schneider, Kelly Hartford, and Connie Eldridge, Community Development Services

Approval of Minutes: *Acting Chairperson Silvis asked for approval or corrections to the October 24, 2006 minutes. Commissioner Diana moved to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Ready seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Petitions and Communications: None.

Staff Report: Mr. Schneider distributed a staff briefing memorandum and provided a brief update on Lakeside Terrace Redevelopment. On November 13, 2006, staff requested City Council guidance for the project. Brinshore Development, L.L.C., the developer, had applied for tax credit financing in March 2006; however, the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) denied the project due to density. The developer is proposing to re-apply with a less dense plan (70 units), which would allow for more green space, plantings, etc. The modified proposal means that 65 units would be affordable to families with incomes at or below 60% of Median Family Income, with 18 of those 65 units being public housing units. After discussion, City Council approved this request contingent upon funding being earmarked for a specific use, such as making the project more energy efficient (such as geothermal).

Brinshore Development is requesting an additional \$50,000 in assistance from the City of Urbana for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007-2008. The City has already committed \$150,000 to the project in the Lakeside Terrace Redevelopment Plan. The FY 2006-2007 Annual Action Plan (AAP) allocates \$50,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and \$50,000 in HOME funds. Mr. Schneider anticipates a similar allocation in the FY 2007-2008 AAP.

Acting Chairperson Silvis asked if the new requirements for energy efficiency would send the project back to the drawing board. Mr. Schneider answered no; this is a general site concept. After the developer receives financing and tax credits, the architect creates the building design. Mr. Schneider believed the design concepts would allow geothermal to be incorporated.

Acting Chairperson Silvis mentioned past design options that considered density. Mr. Schneider said the updated site plan did not include any preliminary elevations. After the City approved the site plan, the developer would apply for tax credits. Mr. Schneider anticipated that after the developer receives funding, it would take approximately one year to get the project underway.

Referencing the green walk in a green space along the Saline Branch, Commissioner Diana commented that the term “along the Saline Branch” could imply a green space would run the entire length of the Saline Branch. The site plan shows the green walk running along the border with the Saline Branch. The green space is an isolated area on the Saline Branch but not necessarily along it. Mr. Schneider said the Urbana Park District is contemplating a green walkway and bike path immediately adjacent to the Saline Branch. Commissioner Diana stated that terminology can be a sticking point. Both a green walk and a green space along the Saline Branch would take a lot of footage out of the project. His concern was implying that green space would be along the entire length of the Saline Branch. Mr. Schneider said the green space appeared to be only near the circular area, with the green walk running along the Saline Branch. Commissioner Diana cautioned about making assumptions about green space.

Referencing the original plan to replace 80 public housing units, Commissioner Ready asked how many units have been replaced to date. Mr. Schneider replied that there have been no changes since the January 2006 memo. Homestead Corporation has completed some affordable housing units; however, City Council’s intent was for replacement public housing units. Staff is still working on this. This was one issue with the Housing Authority’s request for Certification of Consistency with the Consolidated Plan. The Housing Authority agreed to include the language concerning the 80 replacement units, which will be scattered site.

Commissioner Ready asked how this will be accomplished. Mr. Schneider answered that the City will work closely with the Housing Authority. If the Housing Authority’s Annual Plan is not consistent with the City’s Consolidated Plan, the City can address those issues. Mr. Bland, the Executive Director of the Housing Authority, had indicated that it takes a lot of funds to produce replacement housing units. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been reducing funding for cities and housing authorities. Mr. Schneider mentioned the Housing Authority’s inventory of hard units, federal funding, and Section 8 homeownership. He anticipated these units would be replaced little by little. Acting Chairperson Silvis added the Section 8 vouchers have replaced the hard units. Mr. Schneider understood that City Council had wanted to insure the number of hard replacement units. This will not happen immediately, but it can be tracked. Urban League is another resource, and it continues to expand affordable housing opportunities.

Mr. Schneider reviewed the schedule for the FY 2007-2008 Annual Action Plan. He asked for permission to reschedule the regular January CD Commission meeting to January 30, 2007. This will give staff more time to hold public hearings, accept applications for funding, and prepare a review. Also, agencies will present their requests for funding to the CD Commission on that date. The CD Commission will review the draft AAP at its February meeting, and it will hold a public hearing on the AAP and approve the AAP at its March meeting. The schedule allows time for City Council to review and approve the AAP, which is due at HUD on May 15. There was consensus on holding the CD Commission meeting on January 30, 2007.

Commissioner Thakkar asked if other meetings will be needed. Mr. Schneider answered it is critical that the Committee of the Whole review the AAP at its April 9, 2007 meeting. Commissioner Thakkar inquired about the need for a CD Commission meeting in December. Mr. Schneider did not anticipate the need for a special meeting; however, an action item might come up. There was discussion on whether another meeting would be needed. Mr. Schneider anticipated the December 26, 2006 meeting would be cancelled.

Mr. Schneider anticipated that Congress would provide CDBG funding at about the same level and HOME funding with a small increase. However, the City's share might be smaller due to five new entitlement communities receiving CDBG funding.

Commissioner Diana commented that once the CD Commission approves and forwards the draft AAP, City Council may revise it. Mr. Schneider understood the CD Commission was an advisory board. Council typically accepts the CD Commission recommendations, but it may choose something different. Mr. Schneider mentioned the Consolidated Social Service Funding presentations are not part of the AAP process. The CD Commission approves the amount of funds for public service, and it later amends the AAP to include the agencies that received funding. Commissioner Diana's point concerned the parliamentary process of recommending approval for something that has already been approved. Mr. Schneider reviewed the AAP process.

Commissioner Diana remembered in the past the CD Commission participated in joint meetings or study sessions with the Plan Commission and City Council. Acting Chairperson Silvis added there were several joint meetings in preparation for the Lakeside Terrace Redevelopment. Commissioner Thakkar suggested a study session with City Council before the March 27 public hearing. Commissioner Diana noted other issues later in the year would require more study than the AAP. Mr. Schneider discussed the Consolidated Social Service funding process as it related to the City's budget.

Mr. Schneider reviewed the updates and activities in the staff briefing. Staff is working on changes to the FY 06-07 AAP and previous years' AAPs.

Commissioner Diana asked if there were any new properties for the City to acquire. Mr. Schneider answered that the City has conveyed most properties that could be developed to Homestead Corporation, Ecological Construction Laboratory, and Habitat for Humanity. Staff is continuing to look for new properties; however, some owners do not want to sell. Another problem is the amount of tax and mortgage liens on some properties. Commissioner Diana commented the projects would be fewer, but more expensive.

Old Business: None.

New Business: **Neighborhood Organization Grant (NOG) – An Ordinance Approving a City of Urbana Agreement (United Citizens and Neighbors (UCAN) – Project No. 0607-NOG-01)** – Kelly Hartford stated that in April 2006 City Council passed a resolution approving the City of Urbana and Urbana HOME Consortium Annual Action Plan FY 2006-2007. Funding for UCAN was included in this resolution. This agreement provides \$1,250 of Neighborhood Improvement Funds (NIF) to UCAN.

Commissioner Diana inquired if UCAN has provided better tracking on its actual capacity building. He remembered that this issue was raised during a program review in the past. Mr. Schneider answered that earlier NOG funding was provided from CDBG funds. However, NIF funds are city rather than federal. Mr. Schneider noted that UCAN helps with the public input process and provides the most public input during the Annual Action Plan public hearings. Also, Mr. Schneider believes that UCAN produces a neighborhood newsletter on a quarterly basis.

Commissioner Diana supported the agreement as long as NIF funds did not have the same requirements as CDBG funds. In the past, there were concerns about funds being used for normal operations versus capacity building. Mr. Schneider responded that this is not a concern because of this funding source. NIF funds actually came out of this neighborhood. UCAN has a history of producing projects over several years. Staff will work with UCAN to better quantify this.

Commissioner Diana moved to recommend to City Council approval of an Ordinance Approving a City of Urbana Agreement (United Citizens and Neighbors – Project No. 0607-NOG-01). Commissioner Thakkar seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment: Acting Chairperson Silvis adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Recorded by Connie Eldridge

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