

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date: January 12, 2015
	Agenda Item No. 30 Roll Call No. <u>15-0043</u> Communication No. <u>15-015</u> Submitted by: Phillip Delafield, Community Development Director

AGENDA HEADING:

Approval of the Birdland Area Redevelopment Plan and authorization to initiate a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to dispose of select City owned lots in the Birdland project area.

SYNOPSIS:

Approval of the Birdland Area Redevelopment Plan, and adoption as an element of, and amendment to, the Des Moines’ 2020 Community Character Plan. Also, authorizing Community Development, Engineering, and Legal Departments to work together to develop a RFP process to dispose of select City owned lots within the Birdland project area. This disposition process should be initiated by spring 2015.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The planning process for the Birdland Area Redevelopment Plan started following the floods of 2008. The Union Park Neighborhood Association (UPNA) and the City of Des Moines wanted to create a comprehensive plan to establish a vision and process to revitalize the Birdland Area to coordinate and prioritize future improvement efforts in the area. To get this process started the UPNA issued a letter to the City of Des Moines requesting this planning process. This task was then turned over to the Parks Area Foundation to organize and manage with participation from the UPNA and the City.

The City issued a RFP to qualified planning firms and then hired MSA Professional Services to lead the planning process. Public participation was a critical element of this planning process. The Parks Area Foundation along with the UPNA appointed a Planning Committee to help guide this planning process and ensure that all draft documents were reviewed by the public, for reactions, modifications and approval. The planning committee assisted with outreach to business and resident stakeholders across the planning area. Stakeholder interviews and a public focus group collected input from interested participants from the planning area and neighborhood.

Summary of the Plan

The Birdland Area Redevelopment Plan is an Area Specific Plan focused on recommended land uses most appropriate for the area; recommendations on design and building forms that will complement the surrounding neighborhood; how these uses and design forms best transition to the surrounding uses;

analysis of existing infrastructure conditions; and recommendations for infrastructure upgrades necessary to support future development.

The Birdland Area is located north of downtown within the boundaries of the Union Park Neighborhood. The Birdland Area sustained flooding during the floods of 1993 and 2008. Flooding was caused by the levee along the Des Moines River being breached. Army Corp of Engineers rebuilt the levee to bring the flood protection for this area up to current standards. That work was completed in November 2011. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been working to certify the levee under the National Flood Insurance Program. This levee certification should be completed in 2015.

The property conditions in Birdland vary greatly with a number of well-kept homes intermixed with properties that are in varying states of disrepair. Establishing a plan and vision for this area will go a long way in helping the property owners, City, and other partners determine how best to reinvest in Birdland. The goal and the challenge of this planning process was to develop a community consensus on the outcomes that are most desirable and feasible, and by doing so creating a vision driven plan to be used by developers and decision-makers as a guide for future development and redevelopment of the Birdland Area.

City Property Disposition for Redevelopment

A number of voluntary buyouts occurred following the floods of 1993 and 2008. These properties were then demolished, leaving a number of vacant lots scattered throughout the study area. Local funds were utilized for these buyouts, therefore there are no development restrictions to hinder revitalization efforts. The plan calls for the strategic redevelopment of these lots with residential development. It is intended that an RFP would be released in the spring of 2015 to interested developers. The lots that would be released in this disposition process would be properties that are currently served by municipal utilities and located on fully paved streets. The RFP would establish a scoring and evaluation criteria to ensure quality development by capable developer(s).

Potential City Projects

- Explore options for installing sidewalk and trail connections within the area, such as from Guthrie Avenue to Birdland Park and to the Neal Smith Trail.
- Continue to address foreclosed and abandoned buildings in the neighborhood.
- Develop a process to dispose of the City owned lots in the area for redevelopment.
- Move forward with sewer separation plans, which will include neighborhood input, to upgrade the storm sewer system and other infrastructure improvements in the area.

Neighborhood Led Projects and Initiatives

- Work with potential developers and the City to ensure that any redevelopment project is done in a way that is in character with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Educate residents about tools available for home repair / improvement and improve NFC promotional efforts.
- Partner with Habitat for Humanity and/or Rebuilding Together to organize clean up and property improvement events.
- Work with local businesses to brand, market, beautify, and promote the area, consider establishing a Birdland Business Association.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Board: Plan & Zoning Commission

Date: December 18, 2014

Resolution Number: 21-2014-4.13

Action: Recommend amending the Des Moines' 2020 Community Character Plan to incorporate the Birdland Area Redevelopment Plan as an element.

Board: Neighborhood Revitalization Board

Date: December 3, 2014

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: Recommend approval of the Birdland Area Redevelopment Plan.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Individual projects requiring Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), or other funds will come before Council for approval.

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