

**Community Development Authority of the City of Neenah
October 16, 2023 - 4:00 PM
Third Floor Conference Room, City Administration Building**

Present: Board Members: Ald. Lee Hillstrom, Grant Birtch, Pete LeCompte, John Ahles, Michelle Bauer, and Ald. Tami Erickson. Also Present: Executive Director Chris Haese, Attorney David Rashid, Deputy Director Brad Schmidt and Community Development Specialist Samantha Jefferson.

Approval of February 6, 2023 meeting minutes:

MSC Hillstrom/Birtch, the CDA to approve the meeting minutes of February 6, 2023. All voting aye.

Public Appearances: None.

Overview of the Downtown Plan:

Deputy Director Schmidt gave an overview of the Downtown Plan that was completed in early 2023. RDG completed the plan with help from the steering committee, online suggestions, and focus groups. The plan is comprised of four sections: Connectivity Options, Development Options, Waterfront Options and Neighborhood Options. The plan is a vision document – it can be used to help plan for the future and to help when working with developers to imagine what is possible for the downtown.

The Connectivity Options section deals with ideas for expanding connectivity between destinations. Major ideas in this section include the following:

1. Cycletrack Retrofit (Main and Wisconsin) and Pedestrian Connections.
2. Align Columbian Avenue to Millview Drive.
3. New Street Connection from Millview Drive to Smith Street.
4. New Parking Structure.
5. Intersection Enhancements.
6. Railroad Pedestrian Crossing Improvements.
7. Arrowhead Park.
8. Add Sidewalk.
9. Corridor Enhancement for Commercial Street.
10. Build Pedestrian Connections to Hewitt Island and Menasha.
11. Tactical Mobility Enhancements.

The Development Options section details a collection of specifically designed areas that help drive the downtown towards increased strength and unity. Further, it encourages partnerships to aid in larger scale projects and to maximize options for housing and commerce.

The Waterfront Options section's main focus are ideas for leveraging the waterfront for activity and investment. A major part of this is the development of Arrowhead Park along with its connectivity to the downtown. Hewitt Island, the Neenah Trestle Trail and Shattuck Park are other points of interest in this portion of the plan.

The Neighborhood Options section is all about strengthening neighborhoods by utilizing a number of methods. Methods explored are home loan programs, building incentives, and maintenance programs.

The plan also helps with implementation strategies and a market review was supplied. The full plan can be found on the Community Development page of the City of Neenah website.

Consideration of Distribution Easement at 716 Harrison Street (Harrison Street Pond):

The city is running three-phase power to serve the warehouse at 716 Harrison Street. Because of this, We Energies has asked that the CDA allow a service distribution easement to be placed along the right-of-way along Monroe Street. Staff has approved easement but is requesting endorsement by the CDA.

MSC Birtch/Bauer, the CDA to approve the request for a service distribution easement at 716 Harrison Street. All voting aye.

Redevelopment Project Updates:

110 W. Cecil (Former Donaldson's Property):

The CDA continues to work towards the acquisition of this property. The ultimate plan is to work with the owner of Cranky Pat's Pizza on an agreement that would allow the development of additional parking for Cranky Pat's while improving aesthetics and safety concerns along S. Commercial Street. Staff have had numerous discussions with DNR representatives on this and are near a point that this project can move forward. A recent stumbling block has been the need to commission environmental consultants to ensure parking construction is completed in proper fashion and that all necessary paperwork is filed correctly with the DNR. The estimated cost for this service is in the range of \$25,000 - \$50,000 dollars. The City has no funds to cover these costs and the owner of Cranky Pat's has not reacted positively in assuming these additional costs. The City would be willing to continue to own the property with Cranky Pat's paying \$1 annually for rent in exchange for completing the parking lot work. Staff is working with the Donaldson's and will continue to work with the owner of Cranky Pat's on an emendable solution.

2405 Schultz Drive (Former Lorens Salvage Yard):

Acquisition and removal of all salvage material from the site has been completed. A Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was completed, the cost of which was covered by a grant awarded to the CDA by the State of Wisconsin. The Phase II work identified several areas of concern which were further investigated on behalf of the CDA by Stantec.

When the CDA acquired the property, an escrow of \$100,000 was set aside by the seller for the purpose of addressing any environmental remediation that may be required. The escrow provided the CDA up to 18 months to complete this work *once all items were removed from the site* by the seller. We were recently contacted by the seller's attorney requesting closure of the escrow. However, staff has documented that as of at least April of 2023, salvage material remained on the property, extending the timeline to complete remediation work well into 2024.

Staff was given estimates for environmental work a few hours before this meeting and will be reviewing these in the coming weeks.

Downtown Parking Structure:

Conceptual plans and estimated cost estimates have been prepared for a new downtown parking structure. With the current reduction in downtown parking demands, and due to the estimated price tag of \$18 million, the City is evaluating the steps to move the project forward. Currently, staff is recommending moving forward with site acquisition and detailed design of the structure. Upon completion of those

steps, the bidding and construction of the structure will be dependent on a more stable and predictable parking environment.

Director Haese said there are two reasons for the construction of a ramp 1) to deal with current obligations and future demands and 2) many targeted redevelopment sites in the downtown are currently surface parking lots. Spaces lost by this redevelopment would need to be recovered.

Millview Warehouse, 135 Millview Drive:

Staff continues to have discussions with the owners of the warehouse as well as prospective developers. The owners currently have an asking price of about \$2.6 million, making redevelopment of the site very challenging. Staff will continue to work towards an ultimate solution for this site.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m. **MSC Hillstrom/LeCompte. All voting aye.**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Samantha Jefferson".

Samantha Jefferson
Community Development Specialist