



WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

Approved October 12, 2020

MINUTES

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

September 14, 2020 7:00 P.M.

The Development Committee meeting of September 14, 2020 was held part remotely and partly in person due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Mayor Pineda has determined that in-person meetings are not practical and prudent.

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of a Quorum.

Alderman Stout called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

All Aldermen in attendance were present remotely. Roll call found Aldermen Melissa Birch Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Matthew Garling (in person), Jayme Sheahan and Rebecca Stout (in person) present. Alderman James Beifuss joined the meeting remotely at 7:04 P.M.

Also in attendance was Community Development Director, Tom Dabareiner (in person).

2. Approval of Minutes.

A. July 13, 2020.

Alderman Garling moved and Alderman Birch Ferguson seconded a motion to approve the minutes. Voting Aye: Aldermen Birch Ferguson, Ferguson, Garling, Sheahan and Stout. Voting Nay: 0.

3. Public Participation. None.

4. Items for Consent. None.

5. Items for Discussion

Development Committee Minutes
September 14, 2020

A. City Comprehensive Plan Contract Award – MUSE Community Design LLC is recommended to prepare a comprehensive plan for the City of West Chicago. Of four consultants submitting proposals, MUSE was deemed most responsive to the City's needs.

Tom Dabareiner provided a staff update. The City's Comprehensive Plan is 25 years old and the land use map is 14 years old. The typical timeframe for cities to update these types of Plans is every 5 years. Updating is needed to ensure it is current with goals and trends. Besides being a tool for planning, it provides legal protection when defending land use decisions. In addition, some grant applications require Plans that are more recent as part of the qualification process. The City received four proposals and Muse Community Design came out on top as they took the time to learn about West Chicago. They have an experienced planner from Mexico who will assist with the outreach and provide translation services. The Founding Principal, Courtney Kashima, will serve as the project lead. Their project cost is not to exceed \$123,160.00. The City already had budgeted for this project over two years, but it will have to adjust its budget for next year. The project will be completed by the end of 2021. He introduced Courtney Kashima, who was attending the meeting virtually to answer any questions for the Members.

Alderman Beifuss recognized the need to update the Comprehensive Plan. He asked Mr. Dabareiner about the expenditures for this year. Mr. Dabareiner replied they have \$50 K budgeted for this year and perhaps 25% of that would be used. Alderman Beifuss asked Ms. Kashima about her firm's philosophy with respect to preparing a Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Kashima introduced herself and stated she has 20 years of experience in the field. Her firm's approach is to create documents that need to evolve in order to guide policies. They look to create Plans that are ready to be put to work in performing analyzes and making recommendations. They are also a firm that is inclusive, diverse by nature, and therefore interested in a process that is bilingual and bicultural. Alderman Beifuss asked if her firm had looked at the City's current map, and she replied they had considered it. He also asked where they are based out of, and Ms. Kashima replied Chicago. He asked whom they would look to talk to, and Ms. Kashima responded that they see this as an opportunity to engage the community. They will design their activities relevant to everyday life, conducted in both Spanish and in English and include both community partners and individuals as well. Not knowing when people can come together again, she stated they are good with both virtual and in-person tools and are ready to pivot to meet demands at any moment and still obtain rich feedback.

Alderman Garling asked Mr. Dabareiner about the other finalist firm considered, and Mr. Dabareiner replied they interviewed two firms. The other one was Teska Associates, who although very capable, staff thought Muse Community Design was stellar in their interview. Alderman Garling asked Ms. Kashima how Antero group would be involved. Ms. Kashima replied that they are a comprehensive engineering and planning firm. They would be responsible for anything related to engineering, like open spaces, and market analysis. They would subcontract with them. Alderman Garling stated that with COVID going on and budget cuts for next year, he is hesitant to embark on something like this where they would have to spend more than budget for the next two years. He suggested putting off the project for a few months until they have a better picture of what is happening in the COVID environment and from a budget and planning perspective. He asked his fellow members to consider this.

Mr. Dabareiner replied there are grant applications that could bring additional revenue into the community, but without a more recent Plan, they cannot meet the requirements. He also cautioned about being sued with an outdated Comp Plan. Staff thinks it is important to start this process now. It would not be much more than budgeted for this year. They run the risk of changing contract amounts if the contract date slips. He mentioned he was a consulting planner for 10 years and he has never seen a Comprehensive Plan this old.

Alderman Stout confirmed that staff is looking for recommendations from the members at this time. Alderman Birch Ferguson stated that looking over the scope of their proposal, she is impressed with the amount of planned engagement with their community. She then read aloud many of those proposed engagements. She thinks they should move forward and start working on it now as it will take until the end of next year to get this done.

Alderman Birch Ferguson moved and Alderman Sheahan seconded a motion to approve Item for Discussion 5.A. Voting Aye: Aldermen Beifuss, Birch Ferguson, Ferguson, Sheahan and Stout. Voting Nay: Alderman Garling.

B. Mosaic Shopping Center TIF Disbursement – The owner seeks Tax Increment Financing reimbursement for a portion of their costs for repaving and other repairs to the parking lot.

Tom Dabareiner informed that members that the owners of Mosaic Crossing have entered into a 10-year lease agreement with Planet Fitness, who would occupy the former Hobby Lobby space. As part of the lease negotiations, the tenant obtained a promise that improvements to the parking area and aisles located in front of the space would be made. He then described the scope of the parking lot repairs, stating the repairs were already completed at the cost of over \$200 K. The City's approved budget for this TIF District is \$100 K. This budget did not earmark specific improvements, but TIF funds are generally used to update property or buildings rather than perform routine maintenance. The parking lot was allowed to deteriorate over time. The owners were invited to attend tonight's meeting, but they have not done so. Staff is recommending covering 20% of the total cost, or just over \$58 K. This leaves additional TIF funds for potential use in upgrading Mosaic Crossing for other possible tenants. Staff also recommends adding two conditions: 1) proof of a lease with Planet Fitness and 2) upon approval of the first associated building permit for Planet Fitness.

Alderman Garling asked Mr. Dabareiner for clarification if the owner came to the City for funds after the improvements were made in order to gain a lease. Mr. Dabareiner replied that the owner knew TIF funds were available and he wanted all of them. However, staff believes to do so would be rewarding an owner who should have been done a better job with the parking lot upkeep. In addition, the parking lot work already completed represents only a small portion and there is still much work to be done. He added that the parking lot repairs were made because Planet Fitness asked him to do so. Alderman Garling stated that his opinion is that the owner should have come to the City ahead of time to ask for funding before making the repairs. He would rather not approve any TIF funds and save them for plans made in advance and not retroactively.

Alderman Beifuss stated Alderman Garling raises an interesting question. His initial understanding is that the funding was to be provided upon completion. In actuality, it would be rewarded once the requirements are met. He asked Mr. Dabareiner to review the conditions for

the members, which Mr. Dabareiner did. Alderman Beifuss stated that because the asphalt work has already been done, it puts it in a different light. He then asked Mr. Dabareiner what would have happened if the property owner had asked for the funding prior to starting the work, and assuming the two conditions were met. Mr. Dabareiner replied that the request would still have needed to go through this process, but they would have tried to settle on some amount that rewards a new tenant coming.

Alderman Beifuss moved and Alderman Garling seconded a motion to table Item for Discussion 5.B. until the conditions recommended by staff are met. Voting Aye: Aldermen Beifuss, Birch Ferguson, Ferguson, Garling, Sheahan and Stout. Voting Nay: 0.

C. Draft Economic Development Plan – Staff drafted the City of West Chicago Economic Development Plan, which will be distributed and introduced only. Discussion will occur at future meetings.

Tom Dabareiner provided an overview of this Item. The first Action Item of the City's Strategic Plan requires that a 5-year economic strategy be drafted and adopted. The Economic Development Plan is very data-heavy and technical by nature. Staff wishes to introduce the Plan tonight and then hold discussions next month. The Plan was drafted prior to COVID-19 and there no recent models on how pandemics affect economic development. However, staff will continue to monitor this and bring it to light when and if it does. Then Mr. Dabareiner provided a quick overview of the Plan. It includes sections on residential, manufacturing, and retail aspects. As for residential, little land remains in West Chicago for development. In terms of demographics, the City continues to experience some population growth and has a younger population. This is in contrast to the State, which is losing population and has an aging population. Residential development is an important component to any economic development plan and the City plans to bring as many as 1,000 new residences to the downtown area. He then touched on manufacturing, noting that it is a key strength in West Chicago. It provides 25% of the jobs for West Chicago residents, whereas only 11% in DuPage County. They would hope to have policies in place to embrace and support manufacturing in the next five years. As for retail, it is challenge for many communities nation-wide because of online purchasing. COVID has only increased online purchases. West Chicago has been able to experience a modest increase in sales tax revenue since the Great Recession, but only up until this year. Much of the City's retail building stock is dated and functionally obsolete. There are policies that could be considered to address those difficulties.

Mr. Dabareiner continued that once the information has been gathered, there are points of decision making that follow. The first is a SWOT analysis (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats). Staff performed this analysis, but they additionally want the Development Committee's input. The second point is the ultimate outcome, which is to create a set of tasks to meet the City's economic development goals. An example of one such task is to create an economic development task force or committee. Staff has provided some suggestions of other tasks to be created, but they look for the Committee's input before sending the Plan to City Council for final approval. This document, once completed, would be turned over to Muse Community Design for their use.

Alderman Garling thanked Mr. Dabareiner and his team for putting this together. One of the most important components is the creation of the Economic Development Task Force. He commented

that the idea of reaching out to community members from specific sectors such as manufacturing, real estate, etc. should be one of the first steps to take. It does not cost much and it would broaden everyone's horizons. He asked about the timeline and whether the five-year plan would be dated 2020 or 2021. Mr. Dabareiner said it is a good suggestion to make it 2021.

Alderman Stout asked the members to review the document for next month's meeting when they will discuss it further.

6. **Unfinished Business.** None.

7. **New Business.** None.

8. **Reports from Staff.**

Tom Dabareiner reported that Amazon is open and Frank's Automotive was granted occupancy. There is quite a bit going on as DuPage Business Center continues to close on land, and the projects are keeping staff busy.

9. **Adjournment.**

Alderman Birch Ferguson moved and Alderman Garling seconded the motion to adjourn the Development Committee meeting at 7:48 p.m. Voting Aye: Aldermen Beifuss, Birch Ferguson, Ferguson, Garling, Sheahan and Stout. Voting Nay: 0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Burke