

CITY OF MUSCATINE
IN-DEPTH CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m. – June 9, 2016

Mayor Broderson called the City Council meeting for Thursday, June 9, 2016, to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers present were Fitzgerald, Natvig, Saucedo, Bynum, Harvey, and Spread.

Tonight's presentation was an update on the Merrill Hotel site plan.

City Engineer Jim Edgmond stated tonight's presentation would be focusing on a proposed lease of public right-of-way on Mississippi Drive and an agreement for the Chestnut Street right-of-way. He stated the hotel design includes a two-lane drop-off area in front of the hotel which means it would extend into the public right-of-way. He stated the developers of the hotel feel that in order for this to be a first-class facility, a two-lane drop off in front of the hotel is an absolute necessity. He stated that in order to accommodate the use of the public right-of-way for this purpose, a long-term lease agreement will be necessary. He stated the Mississippi Drive Corridor Project could accommodate this configuration. He showed the site maps for both the Mississippi Drive and Chestnut Street areas.

Mr. Edgmond, speaking in reference to Chestnut Street, stated the hotel has a strong desire to bring traffic from the two-lane drive in front of the hotel right onto Chestnut Street. He stated that with this traffic configuration, it will be necessary for the city to acquire private property on the west side of Chestnut Street to allow for a 10' to 12' right-of-way. He stated the property is privately owned but would be dedicated to the city to use as the public right-of-way.

Mr. Edgmond stated a Memorandum of Understanding with the hotel developers would be necessary to clearly show they will be responsible for that area which would include a special events traffic plan when traffic is busy at the hotel.

Councilmember Fitzgerald, speaking in reference to the map showing the front of the hotel, asked what the red dots along the two-way lanes were for.

Mr. Edgmond stated those dots indicate there will be some type of visible barrier between the two-lane drop off and Mississippi Drive.

Mr. Edgmond stated it was his understanding these two items will be submitted at a future City Council meeting for City Council's consideration. He stated one of those items will be the proposed long-term lease agreement for the use of public right-of-way for the two-lane drop-off configuration in front of the hotel and the second will be a proposed dedication agreement for the Chestnut Street right-of-way.

Councilmember Saucedo asked why two drop-off lanes were necessary.

Mr. Edgmond stated two lanes are necessary in order for the hotel to receive the rating the developers are hoping for.

Councilmember Saucedo voiced his concerns about taking away from the roadway.

Councilmember Harvey stated he does not necessarily agree with what is being proposed. He then asked if the property being proposed for use as the right-of-way on Chestnut Street is private property.

Mr. Edgmond stated it is private property and that the transfer of the right-of-way has not happened yet but is expected to.

There was discussion concerning the length of the proposed right-of-way.

Councilmember Fitzgerald, speaking in reference to snow removal, asked if the hotel will be responsible for removal of snow from its property, and Mr. Edgmond answered yes.

Councilmember Saucedo asked Mr. Edgmond if he was comfortable with this proposal.

Mr. Edgmond stated he believes the proposed lease agreement represents a compromise between the city and hotel developers and is the best negotiated settlement to accomplish what needs to be done for the hotel and still meet the needs of the Mississippi Drive project. He stated it also addresses safety concerns on Chestnut Street and requires special events planning by the hotel.

Councilmember Harvey asked for larger copies of the maps being looked at, and Mr. Edgmond stated he would provide 11x17 copies to City Council.

There was further discussion concerning parking issues.

Councilmember Fitzgerald stated that tonight's discussion only concerns the proposed long-term lease agreement for the use of public right-of-way for the two-lane configuration in front of the hotel and the Chestnut Street right-of-way.

Councilmember Saucedo asked about the length of the proposed lease agreement.

Both Councilmember Fitzgerald and Acting City Administrator Nancy Lueck stated that a similar agreement is 75 years in length but the term for the proposed lease has not yet been determined.

Mr. Edgmond stated it is the hotel's desire to have a long-term lease so they do not lose their front door.

Councilmember Fitzgerald stated the last thing we need to do is put barriers up on this project.

Mr. Edgmond stated he needs to know tonight if staff is on the right track for bringing the proposed lease agreement forward for action by City Council.

There was discussion concerning the street configuration on Mississippi Drive in front of the hotel.

At this point, Councilmember Saucedo and Mr. Edgmond privately reviewed the street maps for further clarification.

There was discussion concerning the Site Plan Review Committee and the review of the preliminary plans for this project.

Speaking in reference to the proposed widths of Mississippi Drive, Councilmember Fitzgerald asked about the lane widths on Park Avenue.

Mr. Edgmond stated he believes they are approximately 10' in width.

There was discussion concerning how traffic will exit out of the proposed underground parking garage as well as allowing traffic to perform u-turns to reach the hotel.

Speaking in reference to the need for the u-turn, Mr. Edgmond stated it was determined that a u-turn would be the safest solution for vehicles to get to the hotel.

Mr. Edgmond stated he would like to stay focused on the two items presented tonight.

There was a consensus from City Council to bring these items forward for action at a future meeting. Five Councilmembers indicated they would support the site plan changes with one Councilmember (Harvey) opposed.

Under comments, Councilmember Harvey reminded everyone that the first Second Saturday event will be held this Saturday in downtown Muscatine.

Acting City Administrator Lueck reminded everyone that the conversion of 2nd Street from a one way to a two way takes place on Tuesday, June 14, 2016. She stated that pavement marking will be done Monday beginning at 10:00 p.m.

Mayor Broderson stated the next Coffee with the Mayor will be held on June 25, 2016 at the South End Fire Station. She then stated there will be a lip syncing contest tonight at the Missipi Brew beginning at 8 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the teen programs at the YMCA.

Councilmember Spread moved the meeting be adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Nancy Lueck, Acting, City Administrator