

MINUTES
Community Improvement Action Team
Tuesday, December 20, 2011 – 3:00 p.m.
City Hall – Lower Level Conference Room

Members Present: Gary Wieskamp, Gary Carlson, Bill Phelan, Steve Boka, Richard Klimes, Laura Liegois, Dyann Roby, Ann Meeker, Gregg Mandsager, and Sarah Lande.

Members Absent: Mayor Dick O'Brien, Brenda Christensen, Rochelle Conway, and John Beckey

Guests Present: City Planner Andrew Fangman, Jeff Boldt, Barb Christensen, and DeWayne Hopkins.

Gary Wieskamp called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Wieskamp presented the minutes from the November 15, 2011 meeting for approval.

Gary Carlson stated that the minutes should reflect in "Members Present" that John Beckey and Sarah Lande were at the meeting. He also stated that Holly Thomas has resigned from CIAT.

Bill Phelan moved to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Laura Liegois. All ayes; motion carried.

There were no comments from citizens.

Under comments from the Mayor, DeWayne Hopkins, who will officially take office as Mayor on January 1, 2012, stated he has been asked if the CIAT will continue. He stated he feels in should stay intact because it is a major link between a lot of other groups in Muscatine.

Mr. Wieskamp stated they would start off with Item #6 pertaining to the Mississippi Corridor Project.

Steve Boka stated he would like to take this opportunity to get input from CIAT concerning the project. He stated the group could take the information that was passed out with them and bring it back at the next meeting or they could take the time after today's presentation to provide their input on the project. He stated the Hershey Avenue/Green Street options include the following:

- 1A 4-leg roundabout
- 1B 3-leg roundabout
- 1C Sweeping curve roadway
- 1D Conventional intersection
- 1E Conventional intersection with no impact on Puritan Ice property

Mr. Boka stated there is also the IDOT's required "No Action Alternative".

Mr. Carlson stated Option 1E seems logical because of the historical significance of the Puritan Ice Company.

Mr. Boka stated the federal highway requires a 4F statement for consideration of historical structures. He stated the process for approval of the 4F statement could take six months to two years. He stated it his hope that if the 4F statement is required, it will be an abbreviated one.

He stated Option 1E might allow us to use the existing roadway and get around the TeStrake property; however he feels the 4F statement will probably still be required.

Mr. Boka asked everyone to score the two matrixes contained in the material that had been passed out. He stated that cost should not be factored in but rather what is good for the community.

There was additional discussion on the various options and the handling of Green Street.

Dyann Roby asked if we were still experiencing problems at that intersection with the new signage.

Mr. Boka stated it is a little better with the signage.

Ann Meeker, speaking in reference to the information on the matrixes, asked what operations meant.

City Planner Andrew Fangman stated he believes it has to do with the traffic flow.

Sarah Lande asked about bike lanes.

Mr. Boka stated pedestrian/bike traffic would be better with a protected intersection like what is there now.

Mr. Boka stated that on the last page of the handout are three profiles that address the issue of sidewalks. He stated there is no sidewalk from Hershey Avenue up Mississippi Drive to the downtown area. He stated he would like to get a consensus from the group on their preference.

Mr. Boka stated with the first option that there will be a 10' area available for a sidewalk on the river side of the roadway and 7' on the bluff side. He stated that on the bluff side a retaining wall would be needed to protect pedestrians from water and falling stones. He explained what would be done to accommodate a sidewalk on the bluff side.

Mr. Boka stated the second option would require placing the sidewalk closer to the railroad tracks. He stated the required retaining wall would require pilings for stability. He explained the benefits of this option.

He stated the third option would provide for pilings on the bluff side. He stated the pilings would need to go down below the bluff and there could be problems with rocks. He stated that if the sidewalk is placed on the bluff side, it will have to be ADA compliant with the placement of wheel chair accessibility every 60'. He wanted to make sure everyone understood this requirement.

Mr. Boka then stated another possibility would be the installation of a sidewalk on the bench along the levee.

Ms. Lande asked about the location of the bench.

Mr. Boka stated it is a low area on the river side near the railroad. He noted that a sidewalk along the roadway would require the relocation of high voltage utility poles which would be very costly.

Ms. Lande asked if questions have been raised about sidewalks, and Mr. Boka answered yes stating they were asked during the public meetings.

Mr. Carlson asked what option would cost the least.

Mr. Boka stated it would be the placement on the bench area along the railroad tracks.

Mr. Carlson asked if it would be about 10' away from the current sidewalk, and Mr. Boka answered approximately 10'.

Mr. Boka stated there is a "no build" opportunity here referring to the riverfront trail. He stated the high sidewalk is currently unsafe. He asked everyone to choose their favorite option, add the bench sidewalk, or the "no alternative" option.

Mr. Fangman stated it is possible people may continue using the street because they don't want to be on the other side of the railroad tracks.

Mr. Boka pointed out the trail may not be ideal on windy or rainy days.

Mr. Carlson stated the bench sidewalk would get pedestrians away from the levee.

Ms. Roby asked if the sidewalks have an effect on the width of the roadway.

Ms. Lande then asked for an explanation of the five-lane and three-lane configurations.

Mr. Boka stated five lanes would leave things as they are and three lanes would move things toward the downtown noting that some on-street parking would be lost. He stated this configuration will allow for better crossover points for pedestrians and will keep traffic away from the railroad corridor. He stated a bike path could be tied in as well.

He stated the original plan was to reduce the overall width of the corridor for safety reasons. He stated there are 542 parking spaces on the riverfront that people could use if they have a safe crossing. He stated we can provide free parking but we want people to safely cross the corridor.

Ms. Meeker stated it was her understanding that one lane would travel west, one east, and one would be a turning lane.

Mr. Boka stated she was correct.

Mr. Carlson stated that Mississippi Drive becomes a one lane at Mulberry Avenue so there really would not be much of a change. He stated we want to see people on the riverfront so this configuration would make crossing easier for our older citizens and children.

There was discussion about sidewalks with these options.

Mr. Boka stated the three-lane configuration would allow for green space on both sides of the roadway.

There was discussion on the difference between the two configurations.

Mr. Carlson asked about flood protection.

Mr. Boka stated the bench sidewalk or raised roadway would provide the necessary flood protection. He stated that with the proposed changes there should be fewer closures of the roadway during flooding.

Mr. Carlson stated he liked the fact that a berm won't take away the vision of the river.

Mr. Hopkins asked if the depth of the roadway would be suitable for truck traffic.

Mr. Boka answered yes. He stated the roadway will meet the standard thicknesses for commercial traffic. He stated he feels the safety of three-lane configuration is important.

He reminded everyone that at this point in time, cost is not floating the boat.

Ms. Lande asked what the next step would be.

Mr. Boka stated that Stanley's is putting forth a proposal concerning the TeStrake property. He stated that if a 4F is required, there is available funding. He stated he feels confident that with City Council's support we can move this project forward.

Mr. Carlson stated it is important to remember the work Steve has done in getting the federal dollars.

Discussion on the Blue Zones Project got underway.

Mr. Carlson stated that during the last two sessions, a lot of time was spent on putting together ideas and suggestions for the application. He stated that Mary Odell is using that information for the application. He stated that different people are working on different parts of the application. He stated the due date for submittal is January 4, 2012.

Jeff Boldt stated that part of the application process is community support. He stated something has to be done to get folks to go to the Blue Zones website to sign up because Muscatine is only at 2.03% participation. He stated he feels some type of effort is needed to get our community on board. He suggested setting up at various locations and getting people to sign up on the spot. He stated the application alone is not going to make Muscatine a Blue Zones community.

Mr. Carlson stated that at the last two meetings he has attended, there was discussion about businesses getting their employees to sign up. He stated that people are just not taking action to do something.

Mr. Boldt stated that many times people won't do anything unless they are pressured to do so. He stated he feels a drive could go a long way in getting the word out.

Places suggested included Hy-Vee, the library, Trinity Hospital, and the YMCA.

Mr. Hopkins stated the signup can be done on a cell phone.

Rich Klimes suggested the school system.

Ms. Lande stated that Megan Sweere from the high school was trying to get permission during first period to have everyone use their cell phones to sign up.

Mr. Fangman stated that in the application process it is not just the number of people but also if we have a plan to get people interested.

Mr. Carlson stated he felt texting would be much easier for folks.

Mr. Mandsager stated it would be great if someone could get into the high school to get them to sign up.

Ms. Lande stated the last day of school before the Christmas holiday is Thursday, December 22nd.

Ms. Roby stated it would be great if we could do a big push to get more folks to sign up.

Mr. Boka suggested a Blue Zones New Year's party. He stated everyone at the party could take a few minutes to use the text number and sign up.

Mr. Carlson stated we need to include today's ideas in the application. He asked Mr. Fangman if he could share this information with Mary Odell, and he answered yes.

Mr. Boldt stated we need people at various locations to get folks to text.

Mr. Hopkins stated he would be willing to set up somewhere and ask people to sign up by texting, and Mr. Boldt stated he would as well.

Mr. Carlson stated that folks volunteering thus far include Hoppi, Jeff Boldt, Laura Liegois, and Dyann Roby.

Ms. Roby stated she would talk with Brett Olsen at the YMCA and Ms. Lande stated she could talk to the Stanley Group.

Mr. Carlson stated these are both good ideas. He stated that Ms. Odell should be contacted about a push at Trinity.

Ms. Roby stated that once the texting information is received, it could be placed on Facebook.

Mr. Carlson asked Mr. Phelan if an e-mail could be sent out to Chamber members with the texting instructions, and Mr. Phelan answered yes.

Mr. Phelan stated he still thinks the school system is the place to go.

Mr. Mandsager stated he would talk with a school representative.

Mr. Carlson stated that Ann Meeker would be contacting Pam Collins and Jeff Canfield for use of their facilities for the final Blue Zones push, Hoppi and Jeff Boldt will be working at Hy-Vee, Dyann Roby would be contacting Brett Olsen at the YMCA, he would be contacting Mary Odell about Trinity, Andrew Fangman is working on the application, and Sarah Lande will be contacting the Stanley Group.

Mr. Mandsager stated he would talk to Pam at the library and will also call Bill Decker.

Mr. Klimes stated it was good that Ms. Lande was going to be working with Megan Sweere.

There was discussion about getting something on the public access channel as well as in MP&W's flier.

Ms. Roby stated that recently she had listened to the Iowa Public Radio station and there was an interesting discussion on Blue Zones.

Barb Christensen suggested contacting the Ministerial Association.

Mr. Phelan stated that we need to think about what will happen if the city is not selected. He asked if we were still going to focus on getting Muscatine healthy.

Under Action Team Reports there was nothing to report, and Ms. Lande handed out some trails information.

Under other business, Mr. Klimes stated the ice staking rink is on the riverfront and hopefully soon the required weather will arrive.

Ms. Meeker stated that during the Holiday Stroll there was an activity for the young people, which was a huge success.

Ms. Liegois stated Keep Muscatine Beautiful is in the process of planning a spring project. She stated that the citywide cleanup will be in April and will be followed by the Mad Creek cleanup.

Mr. Wieskamp stated the next meeting will be January 17, 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 4:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Donelson
Administrative Secretary