

**DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Monday, October 25, 2021 – 4:45 p.m.
5555 Perimeter Drive
Council Chamber**

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Reiner called the October 25, 2021 Community Development Committee meeting to order at 4:45 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Reiner (Chair), Mr. Keeler, and Mayor Amorose Groomes

Staff present: Ms. O'Callaghan, Ms. Rauch, Ms. Noble, Mr. Stiffler, Ms. Blake, Ms. Gilger

Also present: Mr. Stang, Planning Next; Mr. Way, PZC; Mr. Kelley, Kelley and Associates; Mr. Starr, Crawford Hoying, Mr. Seckel

Minutes of the May 25, 2021 Meeting

Mayor Amorose Groomes moved to approved the minutes of the May 25, 2021 CDC meeting.

Mr. Keeler seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Keeler, yes; Mayor Amorose Groomes, yes; Mr. Reiner, yes

Minutes of the August 24, 2021 Meeting

Mayor Amorose Groomes moved to approved the minutes of the August 24, 2021 CDC meeting.

Mr. Keeler seconded the motion.

Vote: Mayor Amorose Groomes, yes; Mr. Reiner, yes ; Mr. Keeler, yes

Metro Center Visioning

Mr. Reiner expressed his appreciation for the time and expertise of the members of the Metro Center Visioning Team.

Mr. Stang provided an overview of where the group is in the visioning process. He reviewed what was covered in the foundations workshop and shared the focus for this evening's discussion: themes and structure. There will be an additional workshop following this one.

Mr. Stang reviewed the three main themes and explained that they will guide the purpose of the district. They reinforce the recommendations of the Dublin Corporate

Area Plan (DCAP) and help pave the pathway to reshape the district into the future by guiding future character and initiatives. This can be an opportunity to build something unique within the center of the City; the opportunity for a catalytic project on Frantz Road. The themes come from stakeholder interviews, benchmarking, and conversations with this group. The three themes are as follows:

1. Sustainability/Resiliency
2. Lifestyle/Entertainment
3. Cultivation/Exploration.

Mr. Stang shared the principles considered essential for the success of Metro Center. These were identified in DCAP in some way.

1. Increased density and intensity of development
2. Variety of new diverse housing types for the City
3. Amenities (restaurant and retail) complementing the district
4. Consolidate surface parking for redevelopment opportunities
5. Open space areas and/or greenways connecting the district
6. Pedestrian connections, sidewalks, trails, and alternative transportation that link to the citywide system.

Mr. Keeler asked about Cultivation/Exploration. Mr. Stang explained that all themes build off of something Metro Center has today. Cultivation/Exploration comes from the entrepreneurial side of the Metro Center area; being able to cultivate new business and growing them; being a key office district of the City and taking that step further.

Mr. Way asked about consolidating surface parking for redevelopment opportunities. Mr. Stang stated that each property operates with its own surface parking lot. They would recommend promoting shared parking as well as infill development in underutilized areas. Some surface lots are only used a limited amount. They will look at how to promote shared parking across developments versus each individual site having their own. Mr. Way stated that this does not go far enough. Other mobility options should be considered over consolidating parking. Mr. Stang stated that they can look at the next stage of mobility in the area.

Mr. Reiner stated that he is wondering about the amenities and the "wow factor". Mr. Stang stated that the themes will help move this forward. Mr. Way referenced the amenities and stated that it should not just be restaurants and retail. It would be nice to have language regarding other amenities. Mr. Stang stated that is what is going to be discussed within each of the themes. Mr. Reiner stated that the question is why would someone want to move here. As long as cash flow is coming in, business owners are not going to want to tear those down.

Mr. Stang stated that each theme has a central statement and four supporting principles.

Sustainability/Resiliency

Mr. Stang stated that the idea within this theme is an opportunity to pilot new initiatives, the relationship between nature and stormwater development to create a unique environment. This is supported by next generation stormwater systems that blend the natural environment with water treatment. Urban farming is listed as a supporting principle. Community gardens could become a possibility. Building materials can be considered in a new way. There could be opportunities for renewable energy. From a character standpoint, they would encourage buildings be brought up to Frantz Road and promote mixed-use development and different housing types. Stormwater could become more of an amenity for the area. He shared a rendering of how each of these ideas worked into the site. Mr. Kelley asked about the linkages for surrounding properties. Mr. Stang stated that they identify a number of new road connections that could be proposed. There are a number of pedestrian connections as well.

Mr. Way asked if the language could be changed to water management instead of stormwater management in order to not be limiting.

Mr. Keeler asked about the dashed lines on the drawing. Mr. Stang explained that those are potential connections for a water management stream connection. It could be a lazy river or a kayak river.

Lifestyle/Entertainment

Mr. Stang stated that this theme focuses on providing all the live/work/play within the district itself and providing new attractions for profession and personal life within walkable distance. This theme is supported by building attractions that have a regional draw. Another principle is looking at leveraging multi-use centers that provide year round activities. It also speaks to blending housing and workspace that offers flexibility for co-working with the comfort of personal services. He shared a visual for how that would work within the site.

Mr. Reiner stated that the repurposing of drainage patterns looks like a modern version of the San Antonio Riverwalk. It is a nice amenity. The thing that wouldn't work is making it an events center because of the parking. Mr. Stang stated that there are a lot of similarities between this and Bridge Park. We want to develop unique identities for each of the areas and not just build a Bridge Park here. Within all of these, there are aspects to pull to develop what is unique to Metro Center.

Cultivation/Exploration

Mr. Stang stated that this theme is building off of entrepreneurial spirit but building new innovations that line up with business growth. It looks at continued industry growth and providing makerspaces for growing artists to showcase the diversity of the community overall. A principle is technology piloted in a self-contained district. This can be an opportunity to test these within a metro loop.

Mayor Amorose Groomes asked if he envisioned single tenant spaces. Mr. Stang stated that he sees the opportunity to encourage multi-use spaces or to at least have the flexibility to be converted to fit the needs in the future. Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that it is important to maintain a lot of these spaces as revenue generators. This has been a tremendous revenue generator for in excess of 40 years and continues to be so today. She is interested in the updates and making it more green. The pandemic has shown that every place is live/work. She is not sure Dublin can continue to add amenities in every nook and cranny in the City. She is interested in how the water moves around the site. In these diagrams, there is urban farming. She stated that she does not know if this is the place for that. While some outdoor spaces are desirable, we do not want to recreate parkland in here. There are a number of places in close proximity that offer that. She stated that she would want to try to not be all things to all people.

Mr. Keeler noted that economic development is the number one goal to pursue. The amenities being presented would be alluring to businesses. It is a balance. While we don't want to turn the whole thing into a park, we have to figure out what amenities make sense.

Mr. Kelley stated that the question remains, Why do I want to live here? visit here? work here? There has to be something special and unique and mixed-use and lifestyle-driven. He asked if there is a way to take the best of what is there and build on that.

Mr. Stang stated that this is likely to develop in phases. That will need to be factored in.

Mr. Way asked if this is intended to be an incubator and is in competing with the west innovation district. He considered whether this could be an incubator for the west innovation district. Stang stated that it is offering the opportunity to stay within Dublin and is offering different tiers of business growth.

Mr. Starr stated that he does not want to limit what could happen. This does have to have a theme that is different than the rest of central Ohio.

Mr. Reiner stated that the idea of the water courses running through this is interesting. Dublin does not have any accessible water in Dublin. In Europe there was significant effort to repopulate urban corridors. They had an exposition, Internationale Garden Ausstellung (IGA) that was very interesting. They provided amenities that made you want to live there. He provided an example of a multi-sport facility where they had equipment from around the world.

Mr. Stang reviewed the Visioning structure itself. DCAP was built off of four pillars supporting the vision. Mr. Stang provided images of Frantz Road streetscapes and cross

images of what it looks like today and what it could look like. Illustrations show how that embraces and attracts people into the area. Renderings demonstrate bringing buildings forward to address the corridor itself. The drawings match the setback of the closest portion on east side. There is the opportunity to set back an upper story. Design is going to be a huge component of how this will interact with the right of way. The plan will encourage public spaces in between the building and the pedestrian realm. Mr. Stang shared visuals of housing character and some local examples of housing along with examples across the U.S. He asked the Committee for opinions on building character attributes.

Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that the most desired housing types are for empty nesters and they do not necessarily want anything overly contemporary but more like the high quality brownstone. She would like it to be of a more timeless architecture. They would be adjacent to walkable districts. She does not think we need a whole lot more of what we currently have.

Mr. Kelley stated that empty nesters and millennials are merging together. That is the lifestyle people want these days and not exclusive to one demographic. He does agree that they have to hit the empty nester market. Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that most emails she gets relative to housing are people that want very high quality housing that are very easy to live in. Even many millennials want it to be fairly quiet at night. They want to experience a more urban environment but want to reside in a less urban environment. Mr. Reiner spoke about housing on Gay Street near the cathedral as a good example.

Mr. Reiner asked who did the sketches. Mr. Stang stated that they used an architectural consultant. Mr. Reiner stated that he did a good job and painted a picture that they needed to see.

Mr. Starr stated that people are willing to pay for high quality homes. That is a wide thoroughfare. He asked if one of those lanes could flex to carry different modes of traffic. He like the different heights and density levels and could go either way. He suggested that maybe they ought to figure out the big idea first. Mr. Keeler stated that he could go either way with the scale. When it comes to height, if it is really tall, there is still the curiosity factor. He is not afraid of going tall as long as the statement is a big one. Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that she is not in favor of anything above three stories because of the single-family housing across the road. She suggested there be more density deeper into the development.

Mr. Way stated that acknowledging the wide right of way is important. It can handle density. He asked what the future is of Frantz Road. Right now it is not a street for retail. The west side of Frantz Road is a greenway and that is something that is unique and should be preserved. He thinks about it as a linear park that is a connector within

the community. Businesses can come out and interface with it. The scale shown with varying setbacks and heights is spot on. He would not be afraid of density and height. They may have been a little urban.

Mr. Seckel asked if the demographics on the eastern side are known. If something exciting is built, it may impact that. For a younger demographic, they would be fine walking across the street if it is exciting. Mr. Stang stated that they could pull some information but they currently have nothing specific to that right now. Mr. Starr stated that it is one of the more affordable neighborhoods as far as Dublin goes. Mr. Reiner stated that this could spark some urban renewal across the street. Mr. Keeler stated that Upper Arlington struggled with the same thing and they ended up going quite tall. It is not insurmountable. If there is enough setback on the road and green space, Mr. Reiner stated that he is amenable to more height. He agreed with the elevations on variable height. Mr. Stang stated that there is a lot of mature landscaping which is a benefit. That relationship is key to connecting to the east side but also to the attraction into the district itself. Mr. Reiner stated that planting trees on either side of the sidewalk is effective to get a green corridor. Mr. Kelley stated that multiple stories are required to create that impact and sense of something new. He asked about the identity of the Metro Center. Mr. Stang stated that they need to go back and look at the components of each theme and start to shape a new identity. Mr. Kelley asked about engineering and if the water idea is feasible. Mr. Stang stated that the engineering consultants need more detail on current systems but that will be incorporated when this comes back. Mr. Reiner asked if the ponds are clay lined. Mr. Stang stated that the engineering consultants looked at initial construction and capacity and as current standards go, it is not built to current standards. Mr. Seckel asked if Mr. Stang has enough information based on drawings and discussion, to go back and produce something more refined. Mr. Stang stated that the group is welcome to share anything after this meeting with staff, but they have what they need.

Mr. Stang shared the next steps. He stated that they will develop revised recommendations, refine illustrations, and identify revised area plan recommendations.

Mr. Reiner thanked consultants and staff. This is an exciting project.

Historic District Task Force Recommendations

Ms. Noble presented the Historic District Task Force Recommendations. This was before the Committee in May 2021. At the Committee's recommendation, the Façade Investment Program has been reinstated and its boundaries expanded to not only include commercial but residential properties. Staff has been working with legal to proceed with that.

Ms. Noble explained that the Historic District Task Force was created in 2019 and concluded in 2020 after a year process. The task force identified three objectives they wanted Council to consider.

1. Creation of updated historic district area plan;
2. Consider management options for the historic district; and
3. Support efforts that lead to short term successes.

Ms. Noble stated that Staff is focusing on updating the 2007 Historic District Area Plan. There are multiple tasks associated with updating the plan. Staff is seeking advisement on various tasks that the Task Force highlighted. Ms. Noble reviewed the following list of 12 task areas:

- Gateways
- Streetscape
- Parking
- Open Space and Parks
- Indian Run Corridor
- South High Street Vitality
- Diversity of Uses
- Preservation
- Proper Scale
- Connecting the District
- Wayfinding
- Arts and Culture.

Ms. Noble requested feedback from the Committee regarding the above list.

Mr. Reiner stated that there has been discussion of using upper stories for other uses. He asked if there was a conflict between that and preservation. Ms. Noble stated that it wasn't that specific. A lot of that discussion would be very specific to the areas. The idea is going up but only in areas where it is wise.

Mr. Keeler thanked the Task Force and Ms. Noble for working on this. A number of these items are already in process. He referenced wayfinding and noted that he has not seen QR codes implemented yet but would like to. At the cemetery and other landmarks in the historic district, folks could scan a QR code and get information about a specific property. Mr. Keeler noted that more consistent signage with gateways was presented to Council. He stated that he is envisioning more than just signage. He recommended tacking on to what Mr. Ranc is already working on. Mr. Keeler asked about technology for parking; there was discussion about a specific app that identified open spots. Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that it was going to be an app solution that would inventory parking spots and revenue would be generated that would go to property owners. That was one of the scenarios discussed but the businesses did not want that. They would have to control the time and availability of their spots and they didn't seem interested in participating in that. There was another attempt where there

were shared use agreements where the City would come in and pave, put in lighting and landscaping. The City would maintain the lots. This included the opportunity to preserve a certain number of spots but the rest would be public parking. There seemed to be no interest in that sort of relationship. There is such a diversity of ownership in these buildings, they could not get everyone on the same page.

Mr. Reiner stated that he likes all the recommendations. They are all important. The gateway features need to be significantly cool and memorable. The concept of widening sidewalks is interesting. The City never built a parking garage because they found there were 1,000 parking spaces in Historic Dublin. A lot of people could park in those spaces if people would cooperate. Maybe now that there's pressure from Bridge Street they may possibly be more interested. He referenced Arts & Culture and stated that he thinks the frog is fantastic. He stated that nodes to put in small pieces of art can make that an interesting corridor.

Mayor Amorose Groomes stated that she disagrees with banners. She would much prefer hanging planters. Dublin already has banners up and down 161. She would prefer to see planters than banners. Some of these do far more to make a place feel high quality and engaging. Mr. Reiner agreed that baskets are better.

Mayor Amorose Groomes suggested waiting until the streetscape is done to focus on the sidewalks.

Ms. Noble stated that they are ready begin early next year.

Architectural Support Services

Ms. Rauch stated that this topic has been raised a couple of times. It was referred to this committee in June. Staff has been looking at providing architectural expertise to board and commission members as they are going through plan review. This will also help to supplement staff review. Currently, there are design consultants that help with project specific reviews. Staff did some benchmarking looking at 20+ communities around central Ohio and nationwide. The majority do not hire outside architectural support. This is unique.

Ms. Rauch stated that Staff presented two options to Council. The first was looking at subject matter experts to fill in gaps through consultation with professionals in specialties. This option would be seamless with how they currently review plans and is Staff's recommended option. The second option was to establish a Design Review Committee to review development proposals across the City of Dublin. That committee would be comprised of three members; two architects and one landscape architect. Staff's recommendation was Option #1 and that was referred.

Mr. Reiner stated that Option #2 gives a stronger edge but he suggested to go with Option #1 and integrate at least one architect into the discussion.

Mayor Amorose Groomes also suggested going with #1 but would like the City to be more intentional when advertising for Boards and Commissions. She stated that the dialogue needs to continue that we are looking for expertise to donate to the community and not just time. We really want a specialist or at least someone who has familiarity with reading drawings. She is supportive of Option #1.

Mr. Keeler agreed with Option #1.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Deputy Clerk of Council