Council Communication

Department: Community Development Case/Project No.: URN-25-005	Ordinance No.: Resolution No.: 25-	City Council: 6-23-2025 Planning Commission: 7-8-2025 P.H. and First Reading: 7-28-2025

Subject/Title

Proposed creation of the Grapplers Gate Urban Renewal Plan

Location

Generally located south of Gleason Avenue and north of Franklin Avenue and east of E. Pierce Street and west of Bennett Avenue

Background/Discussion

Background

A developer has approached the City about developing a vacant parcel of land included in the proposed Grapplers Gate Urban Renewal Area for housing. The developer is proposing to construct 15 single family housing units. It has been determined the proposed area meets the definition of "economic development area." This determination is based on Chapter 403.17 of the Iowa Code.

In order to invoke its urban renewal powers, the City Council must agree to designate the subject property an Urban Renewal Area, adopt an Urban Renewal Plan and negotiate a development agreement with the Developer. Assistance in the form of an urban renewal project area, conforming to the Section 403 of Iowa Code, is necessary to acquire land; improve regulatory control; improve public infrastructure and facilities; and to allow for private development of vacant land.

Discussion

On June 23, 2025, the City Council passed a resolution of necessity, which directed staff to initiate the process of creating the Grapplers Gate Urban Renewal Plan and Area. That resolution established the following timeframe:

06-30-2025	Consultation meeting to be held with other taxing jurisdictions
07-08-2025	City Planning Commission hearing and review
07-28-2025	City Council public hearing on the proposed urban renewal plan

The consultation hearing was held on June 30, 2024 and no public attended. Additionally, no written correspondence has been received by the Community Development Department either in support or against the proposed plan.

Iowa statutes require the City Planning Commission to review the plan for conformity to the comprehensive plan and to forward a recommendation to City Council prior to the public hearing. This was held 07-08-2025 and Planning Commission recommended approval of the Grapplers Gare URN with a 7-0-4 vote. An urban renewal plan conforming to the requirements of Chapter 403 of the Iowa Code has been prepared and is attached for your review.

The Grapplers Gate Urban Renewal Area is being designated as an economic development area that is appropriate for the promotion of economic development of new low and moderate income (LMI) housing and the provision of public improvements related to housing and residential development conforming to Chapter 403.17 of the Iowa Code. Designation is necessary to assist and promote local commercial enterprises to strengthen and revitalize the economy. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) will be utilized to provide assistance to the developer for the infrastructure costs that will be incurred.

Council Communication

Staff Recommendation

The Community Development Department recommends concurrence that the Grapplers Gate Urban Renewal Plan and Area is in conformity with the *Bluffs Tomorrow: 2030 Comprehensive Plan*.

Planning Commission Recommendation

The City Planning Commission recommended approval of the Grapplers Gate URN with a 7-0-3 vote. VOTE: AYE – Hutcheson, Knauss, Rater, Rew, Stroebele, Van Houten and Watson. NAY – None. ABSTAIN – None. ABSENT – None. VACANT – Four. Motion carried.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Grapplers Gate Urban Renewal Area Plan
Attachment 2 - Legal Description
Attachment 3 – Authorizing Resolution

Prepared by: Marianne Collins, Housing & Economic Development Planner
Submitted by: Courtney Harter, Director of Community Development