Council Communication

Department: Community Development Case No.: URV-22-010 Submitted by: Housing & Economic Development	Resolution No.: 23-	Resolution of Intent: 11/28/2023 Planning Commission: 1/10/2023 Public Hearing & First Reading: 1/23/2023 Second Reading: 2/13/2023 Third Reading: Request to Waive

Subject/Title

Establishment of the 2022 Amendment to the Veterans Memorial Highway Urban Revitalization Area.

Location

Properties addressed as 706 and 800 Veterans Memorial Highway.

Background/Discussion

Background

Chapter 404 of the Iowa Code authorizes a City to designate an area as an urban revitalization area. Improvements to qualified real estate within designated areas may then be eligible to receive a total or partial exemption from property taxes for a specified number of years. The exemptions are intended to stimulate private investment by reducing the tax increase that would normally result from making improvements to real estate property.

Urban revitalization tax abatement incentives can apply to residential, commercial and industrial development. Both new construction on vacant or unimproved land and rehabilitation of existing structures are eligible for tax abatement.

On May 4, 2020, City Council adopted Resolution No. 20-118 approving the Veterans Memorial Highway Urban Revitalization Plan. Subsequent to this action, Ordinance No. 6049 was adopted on May 18, 2020, which established the Urban Revitalization Area.

The Community Development Department wishes to amend the Urban Revitalization Area by adding one additional parcel with development potential. McGregor Interests, Inc. has a purchase agreement with the current owner of the subject property and intends to expand their commercial storage facility known as 'Lockbox Storage' at 800 Veterans Memorial Highway. This is one of the multiple locations of 'Lockbox Storage' across Iowa and Nebraska. McGregor Interests, Inc. proposes to construct an additional storage building and thirty-three (33) total parking spaces to provide exterior storage for boats, recreational vehicles (RVs), trailers and campers on the subject property. Staff has prepared an amendment to the Plan in accordance with Section 404.2 of the Iowa Code. The amendment consists of adding approximately 1.86 acres to the existing area.

Discussion

Iowa Code permits the City to establish urban revitalization areas which satisfy one of the five conditions outlined in Section 404.1. Staff believes this project meets the criteria under 404.1.2. Section 404.1.2 discusses an area which by reason of the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures, predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, incompatible land use relationships, faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility or usefulness, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, deterioration of site or other improvements, diversity of ownership, tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the actual value of the land, defective or unusual conditions of title, or the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes, or a combination of such factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth

of a municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations or constitutes an economic or social liability and is a menace to the public health, safety, or welfare in its present condition and use.

On November 28, 2022, City Council approved Resolution 22-298, which directed staff to initiate the process of creating the 2022 Amendment to the Veterans Memorial Highway Urban Revitalization Plan and Area. This resolution set January 9, 2023 as the date of the public hearing. January 9, 2023 resolution 23-08 continued the public hearing to January 23, 2023.

This matter was brought before the City Planning Commission at their January 10, 2023 meeting. The Commission found the following: 1) That the proposed 2022 Amendment to the Veterans Memorial Highway Urban Revitalization Plan furthers the goals of the City's *Bluffs Tomorrow: 2030 Plan*, which is the general plan for the development of the City of Council Bluffs; and 2) That the Veterans Memorial Highway Urban Revitalization Area is appropriate for urban revitalization as specified in Section 404.1.2 which discusses areas that are appropriate for economic development as defined by Section 403.17.

Property owners were notified, and no comments were received. Concurrent with the adoption of an urban revitalization plan, an ordinance establishing the urban revitalization area can be considered. Upon adoption of the area and approval of an ordinance, the City is permitted to grant tax abatement to qualified projects.

Staff Recommendation

The Community Development Department recommends approval of the 2022 Amendment to the Veterans Memorial Highway Urban Revitalization Plan and Area and 1st consideration of the ordinance.

Planning Commission Public Hearing

Staff speakers for the request:

1. Courtney Harter, Director Planning & Community Development, City of Council Bluffs

Speakers in favor: None

Speakers in opposition: None

Planning Commission Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the 2022 Amendment to the Veterans Memorial Highway Urban Revitalization Plan and Area.

Vote: 7-0 (4 absent)
AYE – Halm, Knauss, Opperman, Rater, Rew, Stroebele and Van Houten.
NAY – None
ABSTAIN – None
ABSENT – Bass, Danielsen, Hutcheson and Scott
Motion: Carried

Attachments

A) Boundary Map

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B) Amended Veterans Memorial Highway Urban Revitalization Plan 2022

Prepared by: Marianne Collins, Housing & Economic Development Planner, Community Development Department
Approved by: Courtney Harter, Director Planning & Community Development, Community Development Department