Council Communication

Department: Community Development CASE # URV-21-009	Ordinance No. _____	Council Action: 6/28/2021

Subject/Title

Ordinance establishing the River Road Urban Revitalization Area within the City of Council Bluffs.

Location

Undeveloped land lying north of 2849 River Road.

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.

The Community Development Department wishes to create the Urban Revitalization Area consisting of one parcel with development potential owned by the City of Council Bluffs. Staff has prepared an Urban Revitalization Plan in accordance with Section 404.2 of the Iowa Code and has scheduled the matter for City Council consideration. The River Road Urban Revitalization Area will consist of approximately 39.48 acres on undeveloped land lying north of 2849 River Road.

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 404.1.4. Section 404.1.4 discusses an area, which is appropriate as an economic development area as defined in section 403.17. Section 403.17 states an economic development area means an area of a municipality designated by the local governing body as appropriate for commercial and industrial enterprises.

On May 24, 2021, City Council approved Resolution 21-150, which directed staff to initiate the process of creating the River Road Urban Revitalization Plan and Area. This resolution set June 28, 2021 as the date of the public hearing.

This matter was brought before the City Planning Commission at their June 8, 2021 meeting. The Commission found the following: 1) That the proposed River Road 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 River Road Urban Revitalization Area is an area appropriate for urban revitalization as specified in Section 404.1.4 which discusses areas that are appropriate for economic development as defined by Section 403.17.

No property owners were notified as the property is currently owned by the City of Council Bluffs.

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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 River Road Urban Revitalization Plan and Area and 1st consideration of the ordinance.

Planning Commission Public Hearing

Staff speakers for the request:

1. Christopher Gibbons, Planning Manager, City of Council Bluffs

Speakers in favor: None
Speakers in opposition: None

Planning Commission Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommended approval of the River Road Urban Revitalization Plan and Area.

Vote: 10-0 (1 vacant)
AYE – Bass, Danielsen, Halm, Haner, Hutcheson, Rater, Rew, Scott, Stroebele and Van Houten
NAY – None
ABSTAIN – None
Motion: Carried

Attachments

A) Boundary Map
B) River Road Urban Revitalization Plan

Prepared by: Tiffany Schmitt, Community Development Technician, Community Development Department
Approved by: Courtney Harter, Housing & Economic Development Manager, Community Development Department