

CITY OF VERONA
MINUTES
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (“CDA”)
August 22, 2019

1. **Call to order:** Erin Welty called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
2. **Roll call:** Katie Kohl, Adam Frey, Errin Welty, Luke Diaz, Christopher Zak and Steve Rudolph, were present. Also in attendance: Adam Sayre, Interim City Administrator and Director of Planning and Development; Katherine Holt, Community Development Specialist; Dayna Sarver, Economic Development Manager; and Kim Albrecht, Amanda Golemba, Elise Osweiler, and Rachel Schulz, representing Community Development Solutions (CDS). Dia Caulkins
3. **Public Comment:**
 - Sayre stated City Staff received an email on August 21, 2019 from Nicole Austin regarding the design concepts for the Sugar Creek Elementary School property. Staff will keep the remarks on file.
 - Kohl stated she has received some emails regarding the design concepts from her constituents, as well. She will forward them to Sayre for review.
4. **Minutes:** Motion by Kohl, seconded by Rudolph, to approve the minutes from the July 18, 2019 CDA meeting. Motion carried 6-0.
5. **Discussion and Possible Action: Concept presentation by Community Development Solutions for the Sugar Creek Elementary School property located at 420 Church Avenue.** Welty stated a public open house was held before this meeting to receive comments from the public regarding the concepts proposed by Community Development Solutions (CDS).

Amanda Golemba explained that CDS is made up of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee graduate students. They have been working with the CDA for several months on design concepts for the Sugar Creek Elementary School property. Three final concepts have been proposed. Some form of public green space, mixed-use, and residential areas have been included in each of the concepts. Walking tracks around each of the parks have also been proposed. The items requested by the CDA to be included in the concepts include: mixed uses, farmer’s market space, programmed parks, a pavilion/concert venue, activities for all ages, and streetscaping.

Mixed-Use Town Center Concept (formerly Mixed-Use) – presented by Kim Albrecht. Retail spaces and mixed-use buildings are positioned along W. Verona Avenue. The residential buildings behind the retail space in the original plan were removed to make room for a larger green space. A community center and band shell adjoin the green space on the south side, with a plaza space on the north side near W. Verona Avenue. Multi-family apartment buildings and townhomes are situated at the south end of the property. Church Avenue continues through the property, jogging off to the south and then west to Legion Street.

This concept provides the highest number of roads and highest density of the three concepts.

Public feedback from the open house included the need for more sidewalks leading to the park area, and less density. Residents also expressed the desire for an outdoor swimming pool.

Zak requested the approximate total residential square footage and number of housing units included in this plan.

Albrecht replied the total residential area is approximately 230,000 square feet, with a total of 224 units. The total commercial area is approximately 36,000 square feet.

Town Center Community Pool Concept (formerly Community Center and Park Area) – presented by Rachel Schulz. This concept places commercial and mixed-use properties on W. Verona Avenue. A city center site, which incorporates the New Century School building, is also accessible from W. Verona Avenue. Walking paths lead from the city center site to the park/music venue area in the center of the design plan, which is surrounded by apartment buildings. The community center and pool are located on the south side of the property. Church Avenue continues straight through the property, and a road from W. Verona Avenue to Church Avenue is added.

Public feedback was in favor of the pool. More play equipment within the pool and the addition of concession stands around the pool were also suggested. There was some concern regarding pedestrian safety in the proposed crosswalk at the corner of Church Avenue and the new road from W. Verona Avenue to Church Avenue. A few people expressed concern over the height of the buildings (3 stories); while others believed that the height was acceptable. It was also suggested that the park/music venue area and the city center site be directly connected as one larger site. More parking around the community center/pool area was requested, as well.

Zak requested the approximate total residential square footage and number of housing units included in this plan.

Schulz replied the total residential area is 92,567 square feet, with a total of 216 units. The total commercial area is 31,178 square feet.

Community Park Makers Space Concept (formerly Makers Space) – presented by Elise Osweiler. This concept has the largest green space of the three concepts, and focuses on a makers space concept rather than a large community center and pool. The makers space is placed in the northeast corner of the property at W. Verona Avenue and Marietta Street. An area suitable for a farmers market is situated to the west of the makers space building. The park space is large enough for soccer fields and other recreational opportunities. To the west of the green space are commercial and mixed-use buildings.

Public feedback included requests for more green space and fewer residential and commercial units. Inclusion of a pool was also requested. There were mixed reviews on the makers space, with some residents expressing concern over whether or not the makers space units could be filled. A suggestion was made to combine the community center and

makers space. One resident was concerned about the close proximity of the band shell to the senior living apartments.

The total residential area is 263,000 square feet, with a total of 248 units. The total commercial area is 65,730 square feet.

Golemba explained that the next steps are to compile a report containing public feedback regarding the design concepts, as well as a breakdown of the number of units and square footage of the buildings contained in each plan.

Welty explained that the historic building was maintained in each plan, but no specific use was designated for the building.

6. Reports and comments from CDA members.

Rudolph stated the public input he heard indicated an outdoor pool was the number one request. There was also favor for the makers space. Some suggested more, or larger, play areas. There was also some concern that the plans are too dense.

Kohl stated she heard good feedback regarding the town homes. They may be a more affordable housing option for some people. Moving the band shell away from the senior living facility was also suggested. She likes the idea of combining the makers space with the community center. She has also been getting pro-pool emails from her constituents.

Zak stated he believes there is not enough density in the Town Center Community Pool Concept to support the plans from a tax levy standpoint. He likes the Community Park Makers Space Concept. He believes the City is in need of a large field, such as the one proposed in the makers space concept, but he is not convinced that the City needs another pool. He also believes that most developers would want to combine the smaller commercial building on W. Verona Avenue with the mixed-use building to the west.

Albrecht asked how many stories would be acceptable if the density were increased by increasing the height of the residential buildings.

Sayre replied four stories would probably be the maximum acceptable height.

Frey explained that once a building goes over four stories, the cost per square foot is substantially higher. Developers will want four stories, but not more. He believes a community pool is very important. He likes the continuous green space in the Community Park Makers Space Concept. He recommends beginning with the Town Center Community Pool Concept, moving the band shell to the west, and putting the makers space in the New Century School building.

Welty stated her favorite is the Mixed Use Town Center Concept. She like the jog in Church Avenue to prevent drivers from speeding through the property, and is in favor of the town homes. She also likes the plaza area on W. Verona Avenue. She does not feel that a permanent band shell is necessary. She likes the combination of the paved plaza area, playground, and grassy area. She is not, however, a big proponent of outdoor pools, but she does like the community center.

Diaz sees potential in all three plans. He believes any density increase should be on the north side near W. Verona Avenue. He clarified that no matter which plan is chosen, there will be plenty of public space included. He thanked members of the public for their feedback on the plans, and encouraged them to continue offering feedback in future.

Diaz asked Sayre if the City will have some flexibility within the request for proposals (RFP) process.

Sayre replied the process itself has not been defined. The CDA will help define that as the time gets closer. The plan is to have a concept that the CDA, Plan Commission and Common Council will all buy into. He does not see this as a formal Comprehensive Plan amendment. There needs to be some flexibility, so if a developer comes in with a great idea that we have not thought of yet, we have the ability to accept that idea as part of the plan. The concepts we have now can be used as a guide and a tool to use when creating the RFP. The RFP will probably go out with approximations for residential or commercial space, or listings of required or desired features. What the developer brings in will ultimately determine how it all comes together.

Welty suggested revisiting the development vision statements that were put together by the group some time ago.

Kohl suggested that the group put together a vision statement for this space in particular. She is looking for a central space where the community can come together and visit with neighbors. She would like to embrace Verona's "Hometown U.S.A." title.

7. Reports and comments from City Staff.

None.

8. Adjourn: Motion by Kohl, seconded by Rudolph, to adjourn at 7:41 pm. Motion carried 6-0.