

MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
ANNIE GLIDDEN NORTH TASK FORCE
HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
March 14, 2018

The Annie Glidden North Task Force Housing and Commercial Development Subcommittee held a meeting on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at City Hall in Council Chambers.

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 pm

A. Roll Call

Members present: Glenn Roby, Denise Weinmann, Shelly Perkins, and Ellingsworth Webb.

Staff present: Ray Munch, Jo Ellen Charleton, Jason Michnick

B. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve by Ellingsworth Webb, seconded by Shelly Perkins. Motion carried.

C. Approval of Minutes - February 15, 2018

Motion to approve by Ellingsworth Webb, seconded by Denise Weinmann. Motion carried.

D. Public Participation

None

E. Old Business

Denise Weinmann distributed an ESRI report for the study area and information on coop grocery stores. The ESRI report provides demographic data used by the business industry to evaluate suitability of a business to the area, among other things (see Attachment A).

F. New Business

1. Identification of strategies and actionable projects:

There was discussion that existing businesses are thinking of moving because of declining sales and/or crime. It was suggested that adding cameras and getting businesses more confident might help retain and attract businesses. Cameras on private property can help solve crimes. Police should have access to private property cameras. Combining cameras, lighting, code enforcement and parking regulations makes a good package to sell to businesses.

There was then a discussion of the most important locations for new development or improvements. There was strong support for adding a substantial commercial development at the intersection of Hillcrest and Blackhawk. This would have a big impact and help all businesses. It was stated that there would have to be apartments above retail for it to work. Asking prices or unwillingness to sell have been a problem in acquiring properties for redevelopment in that area. There was a comment that filling existing vacant spaces is easier than new development.

City staff commented that TIF could work well here. If TIF was used, it might be helpful to include some other areas. There is also the Opportunity Zone the City is trying to get designated and the possibility of a HUD 108 loan.

There is a big need for accessible housing. People don't want to be near campus. The Lincoln Highway former carwash site or a location further east between Dekalb and Cortland were suggested.

There was discussion of how to achieve a vibrant mix of student and non-student residents. Mixed use development would help. These should be small units-studios and one bedrooms. Entertainment would attract people. If new housing was built, then the older housing could be purchased by the City and torn down to reduce density. There should not be an increase in the total number of rental units. The reality is you must tear down existing units to build new. Maybe small units could be combined into larger ones. That would reduce density and create less units so more could be built.

The City considered a TIF here in 2012, it didn't qualify, and there has continued to be reinvestment. The boundaries would have to be drawn strategically. Strategically drawing the boundaries could minimize the negative impact on other taxing bodies.

The Council is still interested in demolition of 912 Edgebrook, but perhaps it could be converted to another use. Parking might not be a good idea because there will be negative gatherings there. The area would need to be well lit and policed. Members agreed that it makes sense to knock it down with a good purpose. It was explained that there will be a need for more off-street parking because of safe streets initiative. It would be permitted parking. It was agreed that this would be acceptable. There was then a discussion of several other potential parking locations including a portion of the parking lot next to Fanatico's.

The conversation then returned to Suburban Apartments and the poor conditions there. The same owners have the two large vacant parcels adjacent to the apartments. Members agreed that even though the area is unincorporated, it still has an impact on the AGN neighborhood.

The discussion then focused on affordable housing. The Housing Authority could be involved in developing affordable housing but recognizes the need to balance it with more expensive housing to strengthen the tax base. A mix of incomes rather than isolating low income people was suggested. The Housing Authority does not have a lot of people waiting for senior housing, but the area could use assisted living. The city is overbuilt with rentals, but what is needed are accessible units. The Housing Authority could explore working with the City using TIF to do scattered site single family housing. This suggestion got a favorable response but also the

comment that it is costly to maintain, utilities are higher than in apartments. It was reaffirmed that the group felt the study area should still have a mix of students, families and Greeks. There would be some relocations as new development displaces people.

Other areas that could be targeted for commercial development/redevelopment include Normal and Dresser, Annie Glidden near University Plaza, Annie Glidden and Lucinda.

Streetscapes were discussed as part of commercial redevelopment in these areas. Along Annie Glidden across from University Village and in that area is very uninviting. Just a few improvements in streetscape would make a difference. Elevated walkways to cross Annie Glidden were offered as one idea. Members agreed that you need to add something that creates an entrance to the neighborhood. An archway would be good, maybe by New Hall. Lucinda is the highest traffic crossing so maybe do something there. The dorm at the NW corner is empty and might be demolished. Then it would be green space. Maybe the university would give it up for development.

G. Adjournment

Glenn Roby moved to adjourn at 3:50 pm. Seconded by Shelly Perkins. Motion carried.

Minutes taken by Mim Evans, NIU Center for Governmental Studies

Minutes approved by the Housing and Commercial Development Subcommittee on:
April 5, 2018