

VILLAGE OF NORTH UTICA
248 W. Canal St., North Utica, IL 61373
Planning Commission Meeting
January 27, 2022
www.utica-il.gov

AGENDA

- I. **6:00 p.m.** Call to Order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Roll Call
- IV. Update - Village of North Utica DCEO Rebuild Downtown & MainStreet Grant Application
- V. Village President: General Discussion regarding the next Chapter(s) of the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance to be reviewed by the Planning Commission
- VI. Consideration and Possible Action on Planning Commission Meeting Minutes: 09-30-2021
- VII. Old / New Business
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Adjournment

POSTED 01-25-2022

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MINUTES

At 6:07 pm the Planning Commission Meeting was called to Order by Chairman Tom Guttilla, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Village Clerk Laurie Gbur recorded meeting attendance. Present at the meeting were Planning Commission Members Doug Gift, Mike Brown, Bill Zens, Warren Munson, Roy Chapman and Andy Skoog. Member Dennis Hamilton was absent from the meeting. Also present were Village Attorney Herb Klein, Village Engineer Kevin Heitz and Public Works Director / Zoning Enforcement Officer Curt Spayer.

Village of North Utica DCEO Rebuild Downtown & MainStreet Grant Application-

Mayor David Stewart provided a brief summary about the Village of North Utica DCEO Rebuild Downtown & MainStreet Grant Application. The Village is working with North Central Illinois Council of Governments (NCICG) to complete a Grant Application for the purpose of economic development on property left vacant after the 2004 tornado. The Village owns property that can be developed and utilized for small businesses and artisans to open seasonally in a small shop. The Village will lease the shops to interested parties which will provide those small business owners with a place where they can open a business at a more affordable cost to them, providing them with an opportunity to grow their business. The project will provide the Village with an opportunity for economic development of the property, including raising the property out of the floodplain. Mayor Stewart also stated that since the tornado in 2004, the property has remained vacant with very little interest in development. We believe that this project is a great way to raise the property out of the floodplain for development rather than to just have it remain vacant.

Village Engineer Heitz provided an overview of the project and distributed copies of project notes. He stated that the Villages' Application is strong and meets the criteria necessary for the Grant. The key objectives of the project are as follows:

1. The vacant property will be raised out of the floodplain.
2. Leasing small 'mini-shops' will help start-up businesses save on making a large initial capital expenditure to secure a building or property to house their business.
3. Leasing a small 'mini-shop' will offer an artisan or small business owner an affordable opportunity to begin growing their business.
4. Development of the area will offer more to do for our visitors, similar to the Canal Market.
5. It will bring additional people in to the Village, helping our local businesses to realize an increase in customers and sales.

Engineer Heitz provided a short presentation showing the small shops currently located in Muskegon, MI and Batavia, IL., which looks very similar to the Villages' current plans for the development. The shops are approx. 12 X 12, 144 sq. ft. with a small porch area. Typically, the small shops are open from May through December and the rental fee is \$2,500 per unit. Each shop has slat walls for additional display opportunities as well as heat and AC. There are portable restrooms in place for the season.

The property would be raised up and out of the floodplain. There would be a rock-basket wall constructed, similar to the one recently constructed by the new Farmer's Market in the Village. The area will be ADA accessible, and additional parking would be completed behind the development, along Clark St. and there would be a plaza for live music. The streetscape on Mill St. would continue will lighting, trees and stamped concrete. The Villages' investment for the project would be approx. \$1.5 Million.

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The Application for the Grant had to come together to be submitted rather quickly. We worked with NCICG and provided them with data and plans outlining the scope of the project. We requested letters of support from local residents, business, organizations and agencies and we received approx. 75 letters. We believe that the Application we have submitted is strong and that we have a very good chance of being awarded the Grant. The Grants will be awarded in the Spring and then it would be approx. two to three months to complete the final design.

Member Gift asked if the Burgoo event or parking would be affected. Engineer Heitz stated that there will be additional parking created, approx. 54 spaces, to address the need for parking. Regarding Burgoo, the LaSalle County Historical Society supports the project and they see this development as a positive development for the community.

Member Brown asked if there is a plan for the construction of permanent restrooms. Engineer Heitz stated that we would begin with portable restrooms however, the construction of permanent restrooms is a long-term goal for the Village.

Member Zens asked if the units will have water or sewer. Engineer Heitz stated that the current project does not have plans for water and sewer. Mayor Stewart stated that the shops are for small businesses and artisans; The Village does not want to create competition for other local business.

Member Gift stated that he had visited the shops in Batavia and he was very impressed. The units were a nice size and when he spoke to people in that area, they stated that the small units can lead to another larger location in the community or surrounding area.

Parking was discussed among the Members. Mayor Stewart stated that the plans have addressed parking; There will be approx. 54 parking spaces available to visitors.

Chairman Guttilla asked if there will be heat and AC available in the units. Engineer Heitz stated that while the mini-shops will be for seasonal operation, each unit will have heat and AC.

Chairman Guttilla then asked if Clark St. will be paved. Mayor Stewart stated that the parking areas and Clark St. will be paved.

Member Chapman asked if the units will have electricity. Engineer Heitz stated that each of the units will have electricity.

Chairman Guttilla asked about the height of the basket wall. Engineer Heitz stated that the rock basket wall would be approx. 3-4-ft. tall.

Member Skoog asked if the mini-shops will remain portable so that they could be moved to another location, if the Village receives an opportunity for future economic development of the property. Engineer Heitz stated that the units will be portable so that if an opportunity for economic development comes along, the Village can relocate the mini-shops to a new location.

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Member Brown asked about the project timeline.

Engineer Heitz stated that if the Village is awarded the Grant, there will be approx. two to three additional months in creating the final plans.

Mr. Tom Collins, News-Tribune asked about the timeline for the shops to open if the Village receives the Grant.

Mayor Stewart stated that the Village would like to have the mini-shops open tentatively in the Fall.

Village President: General Discussion regarding the next Chapter(s) of the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance to be reviewed by the Planning Commission –

Mayor Stewart stated that the next area he would like to review within the Village of North Utica Zoning Ordinance is the Sign Ordinance. It has been quite some time since the Village has completed an extensive review of the Chapter regarding sign regulations. He will also assign a few of the Village Board Trustees to join in the review at a joint-meeting. Zoning Enforcement Officer Spayer will be providing the group with a brief list of areas that he has identified within the Sign Ordinance that the group can review and then consider making some changes to.

Minutes: It was motioned by Member Brown, seconded by Member Zens to approve the Minutes from the 9-30-2021 Planning Commission Meeting as presented.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

Old / New Business: NONE

Public Comment: NONE

With no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm. Motion made by Member Skoog, seconded by Member Munson.

All in Favor

Motion Carried

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie A. Gbur
Village Clerk