

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL
ST. CHARLES CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION
MARCH 7, 2018**

Members Present: Chair English, Potts, Hauser, Nelson, Shimkus

Members Absent: Vice Chair Schuetz, Spurling

City Staff Present: Matthew O'Rourke – Economic Development Division Manager

Guest Present: Ryan Corcoran – Corcoran Commercial Real Estate

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was convened by Chair English at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Ms. Potts and seconded by Mr. Shimkus to approve the March 7, 2018 Corridor Improvement Commission Agenda.

Voice Vote: Unanimous; Nays: None; Members Absent: Vice Chair Schuetz and Spurling

Motion Carried.

3. Approval of January 10, 2018 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Potts and seconded by Ms. Nelson to approve the January 10, 2018 Corridor Improvement Commission Meeting Minutes.

Voice Vote: Unanimous; Nays: None; Members Absent: Vice Chair Schuetz and Spurling

Motion Carried.

4. Corridor Improvement Grant Review:

- A. Recommendation to approve a Corridor Improvement Grant for 423 S. Second Street (Ryan Corcoran – Corcoran Commercial Real Estate)

Mr. O'Rourke provided a recap of the last meeting attended by Mr. Corcoran when he talked about the recent purchase of the property at 423 S. Second Street in order to relocate his offices. At this time, they are in the process of reworking the interior of this building. With regards to the exterior, they are proposing landscape improvements to soften the appearance that currently has asphalt around most of the building. This gateway site into the downtown area of St. Charles is located in the SSA 1-B area so it is eligible for the grant, stated Mr. O'Rourke.

After receipt of feedback from Commission members at the October 2017 meeting, Mr. Corcoran decided to submit a formal application. Mr. Corcoran said that 2 of the 3 proposed landscape areas are located to the south of the building, along Prairie Street. One grassy area that currently has nothing in terms of landscape he would like to add some rock, shrubs, trees and color. On the north side, there is a section where the asphalt is not right up against the building and in this space he would like to add something that would not wash away such as granite. The 3rd area is located in the corner of the building that faces Rt. 31 and would work well as an outdoor seating space. Mr. Corcoran stated that a small paver area with a pergola would work well here. The HVAC units were once located in this spot and have been relocated to the back of the building where they are less visible. This space would also include a grill, planters and some boxwoods. Being this particular piece of the property is highly visible from the street, he would like to have some grasses planted to provide a screen from the traffic at this intersection.

Ms. Potts advised that the boxwoods survival in containers during the winter months would be questionable. She suggested starting out with something less expensive to see how they survive in the colder months. The use of grasses throughout this property and in planters would be great. Also, arborvitae or a small juniper would also be good for something green. Mr. O'Rourke added that his concern would be the 5 year maintenance period from staff's perspective. If something expensive is put in and it does not make it, the applicant is required to replace it. There is the flexibility to change species based on site conditions but something similar would need to be in place.

Based on his review, all of the plant materials are eligible, stated Mr. O'Rourke, however they have not had a discussion about the paver/patio area and its eligibility. This piece of the property is in an eligible area however the area behind the planters cannot be seen from the right-of-way. The code amended in 2013 allows hardscape improvements, however at that time they never considered anything like this. The purpose of the code amendment to include hardscape was more for decorative fencing and/or walls. They were not necessarily that specific in the way the language was written. Mr. Corcoran said that they are considering having a paver block base for the pergola and posts. Ms. Potts asked if this would be visible from the street and Mr. Corcoran stated that it would be visible. Chair English said he feels that portions of the patio area may be outside of their scope. Ms. Potts added that if it were more in the front of the boxes, where you turn on to Prairie from Route 31, there would be no question that this would be enhancing the City and the property at the same time. Mr. O'Rourke said that boxes and some features in the area are visible from Route 31 and it is between the right-of-way and the building. Mr. O'Rourke's concern was that the flat paver part would not be seen due to the L-shaped row of planter boxes that are visible from the road. Chair English asked if the brick base on the corner would be eligible and Mr. O'Rourke stated that it is similar to a decorative sign base, which the Commission has provided assistance for in the past. Chair English concluded that the cost of the pavers and other non-visible items should not be covered with consideration given to covering the cost of the pergola base and the planters. Chair English noted that asphalt removal is shown and in the past the Commission has provided assistance when this is to assist with site preparation for adding eligible items. Mr. O'Rourke highlights that in the past, the Commission has chosen to not include plant materials that go in planters as they are usually annuals. However, in this case they are proposing perennials as a screening application and that will

which will come back each year, and as mentioned earlier will need to replace if they do not survive.

Ms. Potts questioned the salt tolerance of the leaping beech plant during winter months. Mr. Corcoran said the plant will be located about 8 feet from the sidewalk and about 6 feet from the street. From a maintenance standpoint, Ms. Potts suggested spraying and soaking the plants well with water in the spring to wash away any possible salt that may have come their way.

Mr. Corcoran asked about the wooden portion of the pergola. Chair English and Mr. O'Rourke were both hesitant to include the cost of the pergola. This item was viewed as an outcropping/structural element. Chair English was willing to include the decorative brick base as this completes the screen wall and is similar to the decorative sign bases that have been approved in the past. Chair English stated that they want to keep this grant request moving and would like see if the Commission would recommend approval based upon removing the costs associated with the patio, the brick pavers, and sand joints. They will not require him to change the plants that Ms. Potts cautioned him about – they will ask that he keep the care suggestions in mind and try some grasses first to see how they do. Chair English added that boxwoods can elude an unpleasant odor during certain times in the summer. Ms. Potts said there are some grasses that grow upright and are more structural that would provide more screening with a softness to the landscape that will be appreciated during the winter months, added Chair English. Mr. Corcoran said he will have his landscaper list only the eligible items and present a revised cost estimate to Mr. O'Rourke by the following day. Based on the current figures, the total grant amount will be approximately \$10,000.

A motion was made by Mr. Shimkus and seconded by Ms. Hauser to recommend approval of a Corridor Improvement Grant to Corcoran Commercial Real Estate, 423 S. Second Street, in the amount not to exceed \$10,000.

Voice Vote: Unanimous; Nays: None; Members Absent: Vice Chair Schuetz and Spurling

Motion Carried.

5. Discussion Items

Ms. Nelson wanted to know if the property located at the corner of Campton Hills Road and Route 64 would qualify for a grant. This property is A&A Tire and St. Charles Motor Sports. The business owner would like to block the cars that are in view from traffic heading west on Route 64. Ms. Potts said some shrubs can grow 8 to 10 feet so that is worth considering instead of having to put in trees. Mr. O'Rourke said that he would be eligible along any of his frontage that is located on Route 64. Until the next budget round gets approved, it is not known how much will be in the budget for next year. If a plan and landscape bid could be submitted by the April 4, 2018 meeting, this could get approved by the end of this Fiscal Year and funds from this year's budget would be applied. Ms. Potts stated that most landscape businesses will put together a plan at no cost if they know they will be getting the business. If there is a large design involved,

designers will probably charge a small designer fee and will reimburse that amount if they end up doing the install.

Mr. O'Rourke said Eric Larson called earlier in the week with interest in applying for a grant regarding the new property he purchased located across from Thompson Middle School. If both grant requests come through for this Fiscal Year, in past years they have split the remaining amount in the current budget between applicants. Another option would be to do a phased approach – part of the landscape is done in the current budget year and then they come back next year for the second half. Mr. O'Rourke will email Ms. Nelson the 2 page application form that he will also need filled out. Mr. O'Rourke said that he would be happy to speak with the applicant and walk him through the process. Ms. Potts added that she would not recommend Blue Spruces as they are experiencing problems with them dying at the base and it is not known exactly why. This could be due to the temperature/climate change with it not getting as cold as it used to.

6. Additional Business from Corridor Commission Members, Public or Staff

Mr. O'Rourke said with the recent interest in these grants, he would rather focus on them And did not put together a list of businesses that would be eligible for a Four Season Grant. Mr. Shimkus asked what happens to the funds that are not used. Mr. O'Rourke explained that those funds are re-appropriated to the General Fund. If those funds are committed before the end of the Fiscal Year, they can be rolled forward into the next Fiscal Year.

The new program and amendments that were discussed at last month's meeting have been approved by City Council.

7. Announcements

There were none.

8. Up Coming Meeting Dates

A. April 4, 2018

A motion was made by Ms. Nelson and seconded by Ms. Potts to adjourn the March 7, 2018 Corridor Improvement Commission Meeting.

Voice Vote: Unanimous; Nays: None; Members Absent: Vice Chair Schuetz and Spurling

Motion Carried.