

**MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL  
ST. CHARLES CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION  
October 4, 2017**

**Members Present:** Chair English, Potts, Kane, Hauser, Nelson and Shimkus

**Members Absent:** Vice Chair Schuetz

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

**Guests:** 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 Ms. Nelson to approve the October 4, 2017 Corridor Improvement Commission Meeting Agenda as submitted.

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

Motion Carried.

**3. Approval September 6, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Ms. Potts and seconded by Ms. Hauser to approve the September 6, 2017 Corridor Improvement Commission Meeting Minutes.

**Voice Vote:** Ayes: Five; Abstained: One; Nays: None; Members Absent: Vice Chair Schuetz

Motion Carried.

**4. Discussion Item**

A. (Discussion Only) Potential CIC Grant – 423 S. Second Street

Mr. O'Rourke provided an aerial photo of the property and stated that this site is the former Fox Title building located at the corner of Route 31 and Prairie Street, on the far south end of the SSA. The potential purchaser is a commercial broker in town who has outgrown their current office space and is planning on attending this meeting. They are planning on doing many improvements and are eligible to participate in the Downtown Grant program as well. One area of possible landscape enhancement is the already existing green area along the south side of the property.

Mr. Corcoran arrived at 7:10pm. He added that Fox Title purchased the building in 1987 and no improvements to the property have been made since that time. He provided Commission members with renderings of enhancements he is considering such as relocating air conditioning units to another area on the property and updating some of the plantings in need of attention. Mr. Shimkus said this building is the first and last building that you see when entering or leaving St. Charles on Route 31- it would be nice to beautify this location, to leave a lasting impression. Mr. O'Rourke added that this is a major signalized intersection with traffic and pedestrians having time to look around for a while.

With regards to the parking lot - if the asphalt in the parking lot is completely redone, down to the base, the setback standards for parking would need to be met, which is 5 feet. The appropriate landscape screening would also need to be implemented. If it is just seal-coated or restriped, this would not apply. If the top of the parking lot is reworked and an overlay is applied, that would need to be looked at more closely at that time, stated Mr. O'Rourke.

Chair English suggested taking out one parking spot as you enter the lot and then add grass and some bushes in that area to really enhance the entire property. Mr. O'Rourke added that in the program – if you are removing hardscape and replacing it with softscape, they could help pay for the asphalt removal and the repopulating of the dirt. Mr. Corcoran agreed that it would look nicer, however his concern is that they are so limited on parking – they could use every parking spot that they have. Mr. O'Rourke added that he is pretty sure that the box for the signal and all of the electric may also run right through there. Mr. Corcoran said that some years ago, the City had purchased a portion of land from this parcel for the purpose of the utilities, and at that time, they were also redoing that intersection.

Ms. Potts asked if the plant materials had been selected yet. Mr. O'Rourke said he asked Mr. Corcoran to stop by to speak with everyone to be sure they were OK with working with this site and to discuss possible species and ideas of what plantings should be used. This would be a situation where we would get all the plans in order over the winter and be ready to go in the spring. Mr. Corcoran said there are boxwoods or evergreens along the planter boxes where the landscaped wall would be – he is not sure if he would change that to ornamental grasses – he would like to see Japanese Maples incorporated somewhere. In addition, he would like to see vines like Clematis – if there is a pergola a flowering vine in that area would be nice. Chair English cautioned that one thing about boxwoods, is that during certain periods in the summer, they can elude an unpleasant odor. If they are placed by an informal meeting area, that may not be a good idea. As an alternative, Ms. Potts suggested ornamental grasses – they are drought tolerant – a lot of asphalt by that small area and there will be a lot of heat generated from that. Clematis's would be a good choice for the pergola as it is not structurally damaging. There will be salting around the parking lot so something salt tolerant would work well.

Mr. O'Rourke explained that the next step in the process is the completion of the application form and submission of a \$50 filing fee followed by attending another Corridor meeting to present formal landscape plans and cost estimates. The plant species list would be reviewed as a group and if there are no major problems, move forward to the Planning & Development Committee for approval. After that, it goes to City Council for final approval. There are no other

potential grants lined up yet so funding should not be an issue. As long as this is approved this fiscal year, which ends April 30, 2018, funding can be rolled forward into the next fiscal year.

#### B. Curbie Award Presentation Update

Mr. O'Rourke said it looks like this will be held at a November City Council Meeting. A definite date has yet to be determined. The Mayor is trying to coordinate other business recognitions at the same time that he presents the Curbie Award to Yurs Funeral Home. For the benefit of the new Commission members, Mr. O'Rourke explained that this award is presented to a St. Charles business that has maintained their landscape by themselves with no grant money applied.

#### C. Program Discussion and Work Planning

Mr. Shimkus was not able to attend last month's meeting so Mr. O'Rourke provided an overview of what was discussed. He said they had a preliminary discussion about looking at the ordinance and possibly applying minor changes that would allow them to work with City owned properties. One property that was discussed at the last meeting was Shakou. After the Director of Community and Economic Development, Rita Tungare, stated that she thought that there was merit to this idea, the next step will be a conversation with the City Administrator. If this moves forward, Mr. O'Rourke said he does not want to get into a situation where they are choosing which property to work on next – it would be best to come up with a list of priorities/criteria to assist with this.

A map of suggested properties was provided and Mr. O'Rourke encouraged them to go out in the next month or so to look at these properties – rank them in order of how they perceive the priority to be. This would enable him to determine if there is some consensus in what they are all seeing. As stated at the previous meeting, the Council would probably like to see more permanent improvements – hardscape improvements such as lighting or wrought iron parking signage. Another property that was discussed is the corner by Jalapeno Grille – the small grass piece on the triangle where the old First Street splits off and Route 31 goes the other way. This is a situation that would have to be looked at more closely – it could be I-dot right-of-way. Chair English suggested asking the Downtown Partnership if they would be interested in working with them on that and they could put up a sign that read “Welcome to Historic Downtown St. Charles” since that is the start of the downtown as you enter from the south. Mr. O'Rourke said that is something that they could be approached on after they know how the City Council feels about this.

As stated at the last meeting, if this moves forward, this could be a multi-year project where there may be years where all the funding went to business/private property owners – which should remain their priority - with City owned properties being a supplement, stated Mr. O'Rourke. In recent years, most of the funds have been spent on business/private property owners.

Ms. Hauser pointed out a few buildings close to one another and asked if they would implement the same look for all instead of having something different for each one. Once they know they

are approved to move forward, Mr. O'Rourke said he would like to come up with some design criteria to create continuity and a certain look or feel.

**5. Additional Business from Corridor Commission Members, Public or Staff**

Ms. Kane asked who is maintaining the landscape on the parkway along the south side of Main Street by Thompson Middle School. Mr. O'Rourke said he believes it is the School District caring for that area now. The mounds of dirt on that property are from the Thompson Middle School expansion project.

Ms. Potts said she noticed that there is no screening for the parking lot at the new Mendel Plumbing location on W. Main Street. Is this something the business owner can buy or is it because there is not enough frontage? Mr. O'Rourke stated that there was nothing there prior, so until they change the parking lot they don't have to do anything - they are grandfathered in.

**6. Announcements**

There were none.

**7. Up Coming Meeting Dates**

**A.** Next Corridor Improvement Commission Meeting is November 1, 2017

A motion was made by Ms. Kane and seconded by Mr. Shimkus to adjourn the meeting.

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