

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
DES MOINES, IOWA

ITEM 47

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 97-112
MARCH 3, 1997 AGENDA

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
FORT DES MOINES COVENANTS	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	JAMES GRANT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

SYNOPSIS —

Voluntary development covenants have been developed for the undeveloped northwest area of the Fort Des Moines #3. The covenants ensure that the development will reflect the historic character of the Fort, protect the historic street patterns, and preserve an area of the parade ground as open space for a possible future memorial site.

FISCAL IMPACT —

N/A.

RECOMMENDATION —

Receive, file, and direct the Legal Department to prepare declaration of covenants.

BACKGROUND —

On December 2, 1996, by Roll Call No. 96-4010, the City Council directed the City Manager and the owners of property at the Fort Des Moines site, Mid-America Group, and Knapp Properties to develop voluntary land use covenants to assure that any future development of the property respects the historic character of the Fort. In that same action, the Council declined to designate any portion of Fort Des Moines as a local landmark.

The Community Development Director; Gerald Neugent, representing Knapp Properties; and Jim McCulloch, representing the Mid-America Group, have had several meetings to develop the proposed covenants. The covenants assure the future development of the land protects the historic street pattern of the Fort and the federalist architecture of its buildings. Compromises have been made on behalf of the developers from their original plans. The covenants detail the building material of red brick, the construction of a decorative landscape and fence along the perimeter of the Fort, and the protection of Allen Circle and a portion of the undeveloped parade ground as open space. The next step is to have the Legal Department prepare a declaration of covenants which incorporates the agreed-upon terms. (Covenants are attached to the roll call.)

The covenants allow Mid-America Group to proceed with a preliminary and final plat for their portion of the ground. Knapp Properties has no definite plans for development at this time. The covenants have been informally reviewed by the Plan and Zoning Commission, and the Commission will also need to approve the preliminary and final plats for any development. Mid-America Group continues to leave some of the area unplatted in case the County or State of Iowa is able to purchase the property for construction of a small memorial to those who served at the Fort Des Moines.

All of the issues concerning the street system and other utilities for the Fort Des Moines have not yet been resolved. A road is needed to run east/west through the entire Fort Des Moines and connect Chaffee Road to SW 9th. Currently, private roads, not up to City specifications, connect the area in an inefficient manner. Mid-America Group has indicated that they would be willing to contribute some funds to construction of the road to SW 9th if they eliminate a road from their development in order to protect Allen Circle.

The Blank Park Zoo has been involved in discussions of the development and the road system. David Allen of the Zoo and John Crose of Crose-Gardner are looking at the road system, as a master plan for Zoo expansion is being developed. The Blank Park Zoo master plan will be presented to the City Council later this spring.

In order to come to resolution, staff and the developers will continue to work on the issues concerning the roads and utilities the next 90 days. Once the federal portion of the Fort is transferred to private owners, the City Development Board at the State of Iowa may require the City to annex and service the area. This planning effort should help the City be ready for that action.