

**CITY OF WEST DES MOINES  
DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING  
CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
Training Room**

Monday, September 2, 2025

**Attending:**

Council Member Matt McKinney  
Deputy City Manager Jamie Letzring  
Deputy City Attorney Jessica Grove  
Development Director Lynne Twedt  
Planning Administrator Linda Schemmel  
Building Official Dennis Patrick

Development Coordinator Karen Marren  
Principal Engineer Ben McAlister  
Planner Brian Portz  
Associate Planner Kate DeVine  
City Engineer Brian Hemesath

Guests in room:

Item #1 - Villas at Kierland HOA representatives Ted Slocum, Loren Simons, Rick Grant  
Item #2 – Attorney Matt Blake

The meeting of the Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee was called to order at 7:30 AM.

**1. Villas at Kierland Development Improvements**

Development Coordinator Karen Marren presented a summary of the compliance issues needed to final out the development. The last home in this development is under construction, triggering a review for compliance with site plan requirements. The HOA was notified that there are deficiencies, including buffer landscaping, sidewalk connections, and interior landscaping. Typically, occupancy for the final home would be held until compliance is achieved. The HOA Board has requested a phased timeline due to costs they were unaware of. There haven't been any complaints about the buffer not being present, so Staff are willing to consider a PUD amendment to remove the requirement to help reduce the landscaping cost. The sidewalks may be done this fall, however the interior landscaping costs are substantial, so they are requesting to do that over a 24-month time period. Staff is ok with their approach and would prefer not to hold up the last investor from occupying their detached townhome. Staff are asking the subcommittee if they are willing to accept a phased approach, and whether they would require surety for the landscaping before the City issues occupancy on the last home.

Ted Slocum introduced himself as the property manager, with Loren Simons and Rick Grant representing the Villas at Kierland HOA. They requested time for a phased approach due to unexpected costs, in order to bring the site into compliance without negatively delaying occupancy for the final home being built. The HOA members pointed out that the developer left many things unfinished, and they are working to bring the site into compliance. They would like to delay completion of one part of the sidewalk until work has been completed on an adjacent detention basin. They intend to submit for the PUD amendment this fall. The timeline to complete the landscaping depends on if that gets approved. The buffer landscaping doubles the cost of the overall landscaping to about \$30,000. If the work can be broken into three phases, they can cover the cost by raising the fees, otherwise they will need to do a special assessment or get a loan.

Council Member McKinney asked if there is agreement from the City perspective and the HOA. Ms. Marren stated there wasn't currently. Director Twedt clarified that there isn't a written agreement in place, however Staff are in agreement with the HOA proposal.

Council Member McKinney clarified that there appears to be an intent to complete the sidewalks, but there is a question about removing the buffer requirement. Director Twedt stated that there have been no complaints during the time that the buffer has not been installed, and Staff would be willing to consider removing the buffer requirement. Development Coordinator Marren explained that the interior landscaping was proposed to be completed over 24 months so they could raise fees to cover the cost.

Council Member McKinney asked when the HOA had taken over the development and who the developer had been. Mr. Simons replied they took over 24 months ago, and the developer was Chad Ireland, working with Brothers Construction.

Council Member McKinney questioned how the HOA wasn't aware of the requirements around the pond, adding that the City has been looking at improvements to noticing to provide better information to residents. He expressed concern about the precedent that could be set if requirements are eliminated, adding that the City needs to be consistent with how folks are treated. He added that he had no concern about allowing the extra time, and that it is important that the City take steps to ensure compliance to protect the City interests.

Council Member McKinney asked Deputy City Attorney Jessica Grove what the City's legal position is. Ms. Grove replied that there should be discussion regarding setting an earlier trigger for site compliance prior to the responsibility being handed off from the developer to the HOA. She added that it's not uncommon to re-evaluate whether a buffer is needed and support a PUD amendment where appropriate.

Council Member McKinney asked if there is a bond for this development. Ms. Marren responded there is not.

Ms. Marren commented that Staff are trying to not hold up the last investor in the final detached townhome and are asking the subcommittee if they're okay with Staff doing a written agreement with the HOA regarding a phased approach.

Council Member McKinney asked what a reasonable time frame for a executing a written agreement would entail. Director Twedt responded that if a PUD Amendment, it would require noticing of a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council, therefore Mid- to end of October would be likely.

Mr. Grant pointed out that the last owner that is building now needs an answer soon, as she can't finish, live in it or sell it while the site remains out of compliance. He reiterated their position of trying to help her. Council Member McKinney responded that the City would be reasonable and work with them, with the intent to no treat them any differently than anyone else throughout the City.

*Direction: Council Member McKinney supported a phased approach but asked that for precedent purposes the requirements be similar to those required of other developments throughout the City and that the legal interests of the City be protected.*

## **2. Potential City Code Amendment – Performance Standards for Mini-Storage Facilities in Office & Commercial Districts**

Director Lynne Twedt noted that this discussion was just to ensure education on the background of the ordinance in light of a possible request to amend code. She noted that if an official amendment request is submitted, that they would come back to Subcommittee with the applicant present.

Director Twedt provided a history of the change to code in 2016 to allow indoor storage facilities in commercial and office zoned areas, with specific language so that the buildings would look and operate like an office building. U-Haul has a location on Valley View Drive which was recently cited for violating this code with images of doors visible through the upper windows which advertised the building as a storage facility, and a neighbor had complained about U-Haul parking trucks onsite. U-Haul appealed to the Board of Adjustment regarding the door images and was denied their appeal. U-Haul via email indicated their intent to request a PUD amendment to allow the truck parking but have not officially submitted a request.

Director Twedt provided images of U-Haul with the door images in the upper windows and contrasted it with indoor storage facilities on S. 50<sup>th</sup> Street and behind Walmart, which are in compliance, She stated that U-Haul bought CubeSmart and removed the opaque existing windows, installing clear windows

with images of doors on them.

Council Member McKinney asked when the code was amended. Director Twedt stated it was amended in 2016. He asked when U-Haul bought the CubeSmart site. Director Twedt responded it was about 2022.

Deputy Attorney Grove inserted that there has been a lot of communication with U-Haul, and that Staff have comments in writing from U-Haul verifying that this is one of their most popular locations.

Council Member McKinney asked whether U-Haul is asking to display the orange doors. Director Twedt stated the Board addressed the doors and now they have proposed asking for code to be changed to allow parking of trucks onsite, however she would not be surprised if they also asked about the orange doors while they are before Council. Ms. Grove added that they did not appeal the violation notice about the trucks. They moved the trucks, and stated they would like to see if there is support to allowing parking of outdoor trucks.

Director Twedt stated staff would consider whether the trucks could be parked inside the facility. Deputy City Manager inserted that customers could go to 8<sup>th</sup> Street where trucks are allowed.

Director Twedt pointed out that parking the trucks outside is considered outdoor storage. She added that garden centers such as Lowe's and Home Depot fall under outdoor display and take out a temporary use permit and must show as part of the site plan. Ms. Twedt noted that these are commercial locations, rather than an office development.

Council Member McKinney asked whether allowing a PUD amendment for U-Haul would restrict allowances only to this site. Director Twedt replied that the amendment would apply across the City as we cannot allow through a PUD a use that is not otherwise allowed in code. She added that Greyhawk, 50<sup>th</sup> and Fieldstone, had trucks outside but when they were notified about the violation, and they stopped.

Council Member McKinney asked if there was anyone online representing this item. Matt Blake introduced himself as a member of the Dickinson Bradshaw law firm, representing U-Haul. He stated he couldn't speak to what U-Haul knew when they purchased the building in 2022, as he had just been brought on recently. Mr. Blake stated they had requested what the next steps would be regarding the PUD amendment and did not receive a response from Staff and were surprised to find this discussion item on the agenda for today. They are very interested in figuring out what solutions might be available to them. Regarding the drive to another facility, Mr. Blake pointed out this could add a 40-minute round trip at an estimated cost of \$30-40 per customer.

Director Twedt stated that there had been mention of doing a code amendment as one of the options presented to U-Haul. If there is a PUD amendment, it would need to be something that applies to all of the indoor storage sites.

Council Member McKinney pointed out the difference in traffic volume between U-Haul's facility and the one on S 50<sup>th</sup> and Fieldstone, so we would need to avoid sending large truck traffic into residential areas that can be disruptive. He stated he would be happy to have this come back to subcommittee when Council Member Hardman is present, or as conversations develop.

*Direction: Council Member McKinney did not indicate agreement or disagreement with a possible PUD amendment as the matter will be discussed in more detail at a future meeting if an amendment request is submitted.*

**3. Upcoming Projects – Council Member McKinney indicated no need to run through each of the projects.**

- a. *Fitness by Design*, 245 Railroad Avenue: Permitted Conditional Use Permit to operate a private fitness studio (Board of Adjustment consideration) – PC-006958-2025
- b. *AmeriCARna*, 519 S 18<sup>th</sup> Street: Permitted Conditional Use Permit to operate a used motor vehicle dealer with indoor showroom only (Board of Adjustment consideration) – PC-007001-2025
- c. *630 20<sup>th</sup> Street Variance*: Requesting to build a deck that would encroach approximately 14’ into the 35’ front setback – VAR-006996-2025
- d. *Glen Oaks Rowhomes*, Southwest quadrant of Interstate-35 and Mills Civic Parkway interchange: Final plat for 33 townhomes on postage stamp lots and 3 outlots – FP-007004-2025

**4. Minor Modifications & Grading Plans**

- a. *WDM Soccer Club*, 1875 SE Walnut Drive: relocation of gas barrels – MML1-006993-2025
- b. *WDM Fire Administration Building*, 318 5<sup>th</sup> Street: Modifications to existing fascia and soffit, upgrade to lighting, and installation of a new rear awning – MML2-007002-2025
- c. *515 Railroad Ave*: Addition of HVAC condenser – MML1-006967-2025
- d. *Polo Club Apartments*, 6201 EP True Pkwy: Replace existing lighting with LED lighting – MML1-006983-2025
- e. *Hope Landing*, NE corner of Stagecoach and S. 88<sup>th</sup> St: Preliminary site grading – GP-007000-2025

**5. Other Matters**

None

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 AM. The next regularly scheduled Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee is September 25, 2025.

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Lynne Twedt, Development Services Director

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Jennifer Canaday, Recording Secretary