

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION and URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, June 18, 2015, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: *Historic Preservation Commission (HPC):* Tim Francis, Jim Hewitt, Jim Johnson, Berwyn Jones, Liz Kuhlman, and Greg Munn; (Jim McKee absent). *Urban Design Committee (UDC):* Emily Casper, Tammy Eagle Bull, JoAnne Kissel, Gil Peace, Michelle Penn, and Michele Tilley; (Tom Huston absent). Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman, Amy Hana Huffman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Kevin Abourezk from the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Joint Meeting of Historic Preservation Commission & Urban Design Committee

Greg Munn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

DISCUSS AND ADVISE ON THE SPECIAL PERMIT FOR HEIGHT WAIVER, TDP PHASE THREE AT CANOPY & P STREETS (HUDL HQ BUILDING):
PUBLIC HEARING: June 18, 2015

HPC Members present: Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Jones and Munn; Kuhlman declared a conflict of interest; McKee absent.

UDC Members present: Casper, Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley; Eagle Bull declared a conflict of interest; Huston absent.

Zimmer began with explanation of the purpose of the joint meeting. This item is on the border of the Haymarket, so as was done in the past, rather than drawing a 300 foot line west of the Haymarket boundary and having HPC advise on areas within the Historic District, and UDC advise on anything beyond, it makes more sense to come together and review the information simultaneously, though it is best if votes are taken separately to reflect each group as an individual entity.

This is a request for a Special Permit which will go to Planning Commission on July 8, 2015. We are asking your advice, which will be incorporated into the Staff Report.

Eagle Bull and Kuhlman noted they have declared a conflict of interest and would abstain from voting since their firms, Encompass Architects and Sinclair Hille Architects, are associated with this project.

Representatives from HUDL and WRK Introduced themselves.

Dan Grasso, Sinclair Hille, came forward to present the concept, preliminary building plans and materials for this project. The site is Block B, which is surrounded by Canopy Street, Olsson Associates, Lincoln Station, and the Green 2 parking garage. The first half block to be developed will include a seven story, approximately 150,000 square foot building. HUDL will occupy most of that and eventually expand to a future north building. The 1st floor will be mainly retail, including some facing Canopy Street, a common lobby space, service entry through the alley, and there is potential for an inner courtyard. The upper floors are all approximately 25,000. Nelnet will occupy the 2nd floor. There is the option for an exterior patio and green roof, as well as a public art corner. This provides great views down Canopy Street. HUDL will occupy the 3rd floor and up, and there will be a connection to parking at this level.

John Prauner, HUDL, said that HUDL is in a phase of growth. The company started in 2006 with three founders working out of their dorm rooms; there are now 230 employees and there could be hundreds more in the near future. This building provides an opportunity for the company to remain here in Lincoln and draw from the University graduate pool, and to take advantage of the home environment and low cost of living. HUDL is now a top video sports editing company in the world, on the level of Google and other world-class tech companies.

Jake Hull, HUDL, said that from a recruiting standpoint, factors like the workspace, the local area, and the West Haymarket are contributors in finding and keeping the best people. This is a cutting edge company and the building needs to match. Work is done collaboratively, so the open plan is important.

Grasso went on to describe other unique key features, such as a larger, grandstand styled area for meeting with the entire company, an arcade area, and gathering space on the roof. These types of features speak to the culture at HUDL, which is innovative and fun.

HUDL has said from the start that they want to be good neighbors. Though this is a cutting edge building, the idea is to utilize materials already present in the Haymarket and Railyard areas, including darker brick at the base and zinc panels. A sun and glare study was conducted so that appropriate window features, which include vertical fins and perforated panels, are part of the design, particularly on the south and east sides. Other notable exterior features are the vertical panels, major branding features, and the potential for public art.

Different views have been provided to show what the building with the height waiver will look like from different angles. The grade rises on that street. The 7th Floor is set back so visually, it doesn't rise much above the height limit. The block is currently split between the 100 foot and the 75 foot height limits. Eventually, this will be a single building, so the goal is to make it appear that way.

Munn asked the height of the taller area. Grasso replied that it is 90 feet.

Berwyn Jones, HPC, expressed his concern and irritation that height limits are set and that exceptions are always handed out. He does not like the view of the building with that additional height.

Munn asked for explanation about why the height limits are split down the block. Zimmer said this area was formerly I-1 zoning. It was rezoned to accommodate West Haymarket development. B-4 zoning was the broadest option and allows many different height limits going as high as 275 feet. At the west edge, the limit is 100 feet; most of the Haymarket is 75 feet, though most of it is not built to that height. The south half of this particular block is more sensitive than the north. Most commercial development in the B-4 zone has the built-in ability to request a height waiver. The logic behind this is to create a process where the developers must provide a building concept that can be seen, discussed and judged for appropriateness before building can take place, and before it goes before the Planning Commission and the City Council. Jones said that even if the building is nice, it does not change the fact that it is a 75 foot zone, and the building is too tall.

JoAnne Kissel, UDC, noted that if both buildings were being proposed today, the other half would be 100 feet. It seems odd to have that break half way through the block. In relation to the Arena, the building does not seem to stick out. Zimmer said the height difference was a judgment call that provides greater protection to the south half of the block. It is also worth noting that a 75 foot building can have the elevator houses and mechanicals up to an additional 20 feet, by right, in any of these districts, though it must be setback from street frontage. Kissel said the proposed building does not look overly large. Jones disagreed.

Gil Peace, UDC, said that if both halves were built to match, it would look natural. He finds the design appropriate. Jones questioned why the limit exists if it is always waived?

Tim Francis, HPC, said that he likes the design of the building because it adds a real sense of "downtown" to Lincoln. It will help to draw and keep young people here.

Michele Tilley, UDC, noted that there are two different groups with different sets of concerns meeting today. This building fits in, from an Urban Design standpoint. Munn said that from an HPC standpoint, the building would not be visible at all from the P Street view. Jones said it seems a height waiver is requested every time a new building goes up. Munn said that is a good sign that development is happening.

Zimmer added that when these height restrictions were initially discussed, none of the development had occurred yet, so it was a matter of attempting to envision what could take place. Now there is much more experience and information. Deciding to split the block allowed the opportunity for this public process, and to get these various perspectives.

Kissel said she likes the tension between the new urban design next to the old. Grasso mentioned that contrast was discussed internally. The contrast of the glass and metal makes a strong old building, like the station stand out more. That contrast is a design strength. Tilley agreed. The canopy was moved and it was a division line between the old and new. The choice of materials nods to the old buildings and it seems appropriate.

Michelle Penn, UDC, said that as far as breaking rules is concerned, sometimes it is appropriate. There was an equal amount of turmoil with the Olsson Associates building. UDC turned that down, HPC did not. Jones interjected that in the end, the Olsson Associates met the height requirement. Penn went on to say this building uses appropriate materials, and from an urban design standpoint, it faces the street appropriately. That vibrant connection is desirable. People often talk of the intellectual bleed from Nebraska; we want to continue to build on what is part of the urban context to keep our youth here. Even on P Street, it is appropriate to see the buildings peeking over others.

Zimmer said when it comes to height, some things are allowed by right, and there are conditional uses. Special Permits are not amendable. They go through a legislative process. It is an opportunity to say, if there is enough scrutiny, and enough sensitivity in the design, the zoning code will allow for a waiver.

ACTION:

UDC:

Penn moved approval of the special permit for the height waiver for TDP Phase Three at Canopy and P Streets (HUDL HQ Building), seconded by Tilley and carried 5-0: Casper, Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Eagle Bull abstained; Huston absent.

HPC:

Johnson moved approval of the special permit for the height waiver for TDP Phase Three at Canopy and P Streets (HUDL HQ Building), seconded by Francis and carried 4-1: Francis, Hewitt, Johnson and Munn voting 'yes'; Jones voting 'no'; Kuhlman abstained; McKee absent.

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MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tim Francis, Jim Hewitt, Jim Johnson, Berwyn Jones, Liz Kuhlman, and Greg Munn; (Jim McKee absent). Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman and Amy Hana Huffman of the Planning Department; Kevin Abourezk from the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Historic Preservation Commission

Greg Munn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Munn requested a motion approving the minutes for regular meeting held April 16, 2015. Motion for approval made by Hewitt, seconded by Johnson and carried 6-0: Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, and Munn voting 'yes'; McKee absent.

DISCUSS AND ADVISE ON THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE VETERANS AFFAIRS HOSPITAL CAMPUS: PUBLIC HEARING:

June 18, 2015

HPC Members present: Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Jones, Kuhlman, and Munn; McKee absent.

Zimmer said an application was received from the Urban Development Department for review of the plan. The process begins with receiving a request for a blight determination. That goes to the Planning Commission and then to the City Council and does not come before this body because it is merely a technical determination.

The next step is the more substantive redevelopment plan that serves as a broad framework document. When the application falls within a historic district, HPC discusses and advises the Planning Commission and City Council. The plan is followed by the redevelopment agreement which is essentially a contract. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) might be used for specific elements in that plan. Brad Korell from Olsson Associates is on hand to answer questions. Jill Dolberg is consulting from the State Historical Society because there is a parallel Federal process occurring. Phil Boehr is

here representing his neighborhood, and Wynn Hjermsstad is here from Urban Development.

Francis asked if this project will ultimately go back to the tax base. Zimmer said yes; It is not part of the tax base now. With TIF funds, the money is not captured from the zero amount, but from the difference. This is Federal land; not much of it is on City utilities so it is more blended. Adding public infrastructure would be a traditional use of TIF funds. There are mainly single family houses surrounding the property.

Zimmer said that the buildings that are historically crucial to the site will remain open. Hjermsstad said the buildings being removed are mainly services buildings.

Commissioners viewed the plan as presented at this meeting and discussed drainage on the property as well as the location, size and use of the potential new buildings.

Zimmer said the property will be rezoned from P-Public to some type of private use, probably O-2, O-3 or O-4, and will be mapped accordingly to show what uses are allowed. Munn said that in essence, the historic view from 70th will remain and the entire property will be put back into use. Zimmer said it is not unused today. There is an active VA clinic operating in portions of the main hospital. The new development is to the south and east. The VA is firmly committed to building a new 100,000 square foot building to operate from and are in the process of selecting a site. It could be on this campus, and a potential location is shown in the northwest corner. Kuhlman said she appreciates that this proposal is maintaining some of the buildings.

Jones asked for clarification about the location of the new buildings in relation to neighbors. Brad Korell, Olsson Associates, answered that homes to the south face out to a separate street and share a backyard property line with the hospital campus. Kuhlman asked how those property lines will be treated. Korell said part of the area is a utility corridor. There will be landscaping and as many trees as possible will be preserved. Francis noted that this is a well-funded neighbor.

Phil Boehr, 7340 Wedgewood, is a property owner directly to the south. He said that a letter was also submitted to the Commission from another neighbor, Ed Schnabel. The four story building that is proposed in the southeast corner of the VA Campus property is directly in his backyard and does not keep the nature of the neighborhood. He was told that the plans could go back to the drawing table to consider the objections of the neighbors. It is natural that the neighbors prefer the park like setting in the back, but they are not opposed to progress. They were only very recently made aware of the project a week ago via a letter and then at a neighborhood meeting.

Korell said the Seniors Foundation was chosen as the primary lessor and they are negotiating a sublease.

Jones said he is very sensitive to this kind of change occurring right in the backyards of neighbors and has experienced this situation himself. This seems like another case of making exceptions to zoning in areas to build whatever is proposed.

Boehr said he does not see a problem in terms of historic preservation. Further to the north, there is a berm and mature trees so neighbors in that portion will not be able to see new buildings. The southeast corner is also a major drainage area. It seems like there could be other options. Jones added that new paving will exacerbate the drainage issue.

Boehr said that this project, particularly the southeast corner, is moving quickly and could begin in October. The neighbors wish they could be more involved. Maybe a shorter building is more appropriate for the site, or perhaps it could be relocated to another spot on the campus. We do understand the need to take advantage of financial vouchers and the need to help Vets.

Korell said the corner building is being called "Veteran supportive" housing, with 70 units exclusively for Vets. The middle section of development will be more open. To the north and east, those are proposed to be designated for Veterans and seniors.

Jones wondered how the neighbors were not aware of these ideas earlier in the process. Korell said that there are many entities involved, all the way up to the Federal government. This proposal was only recently decided on. This rendering has been in front of the VA for about twelve months.

Kuhlman said that this body will just make recommendations. Zimmer confirmed. He said in one discussion, it was asked how concrete these plans are and Korell had stated that there is still room for change.

Korell said working with the VA is not simple; they have been working with them since August of last year. No plans could be presented earlier because it was unknown what the VA would agree to. That was just returned in March, allowing us to finally firm up the plan to some extent. There are also other concurrent processes taken place that complicate things further. The intent of a meeting held last Tuesday was to get the Vets and neighbors involved. As Mr. Boehr said, the main concern was the height of the southeast building and the lack of transition to the hospital. It is fairly abrupt. We have taken those concerns to heart. That that has led to an attempt to create a better transition and a better setback and will be discussed in the near future.

Korell went on to say that HUD grant vouchers will help to pay for this Vet's housing and they granted 70 for this property. Lincoln Housing Authority is also involved with that allocation. The condition is that these vouchers could be pulled if the building is not under construction by a certain time. We received approval in March, so this has been on a fast-track to get an agreement with the City and all other entities. These tight

timelines are imposed on us by others. Having Vet housing on this site is important to us and is key to the project and its financing to make it work from a developer's standpoint. We have to find a way to use those voucher and take the concerns of neighbors into account. There are also many City requirements to meet. The good news is that the campus is sixty acres so it is easier to deal with some of these issues, including the drainage.

Zimmer said this site is currently zone P-Public. The grounds will stay public. It will be zoned and regulated like any other area. The VA is exempt, but they will not pass that exemption to this project. This project is still developing, so this is not a recommendation on the exact plan as presented today. This body would be saying that it generally agrees or disagrees with the direction.

Munn said that in general this seems like a wonderful project. The details just need to be worked out.

Jones said he would like to see closer collaboration with neighbors from this point forward.

Hewitt asked if there are physical problems with swapping the location of the four and two story buildings. Korell said that option was considered. When the VA first came forward, they had reserved a spot in the center for a clinic. We suggested moving that out to 70th Street to keep it further away from residential. Aging Partners would move from its downtown location to occupy a wing of the hospital. They provide a number of services so it is convenient to be located so close to Vet housing and to provide opportunities for better access to exercise, food programs, and other similar services. The bus route also goes to this campus. There are a lot of things that made sense for the tall building as shown in the southeast location, but we also understand the concerns of the neighbors.

He went on to say that the large existing building was built in the 1930s and was used as acute care services. The VA abandoned some of the buildings and they have not been used since the 1990s, so there is a lot of damage. The VA cannot get the money to make repairs. If you visit the site now, it would be a real eye opener; there are areas that are falling apart and even areas where copper was stolen and damaged. If the VA does not get this leased, they have said that they are just going to completely close the facility and move the clinic. They have done a good job in keeping up the areas that are in use, but as you know, if anything else is allowed to be abandoned, the more difficult it will be to save. The old hospital could be repurposed into living units when VA moves out. Then there is still considerable area to be used for office, non-profit, and other organizations that provide services to seniors.

Hjermstad added that there could be a delay until the clinic decision is made, but that is a separate process. The developers and the City would like to see it stay on this site,

but it is the VA's decision. We do not know how many proposals they have received. That still leaves this campus in the state it is in now, whether the clinic stays or not. Therefore, delaying this plan to wait for the clinic decision does not change anything. Boehr said if the potential northwest corner site is not selected, it frees up space for the taller proposed buildings and then the neighbors would have no objection.

Zimmer said he toured the site a couple of times and there is a sharp contrast inside between the active clinic spaces, which are pristine, and the inactive which are virtually abandoned; they have focused funds in the areas that are still used and not in maintaining unused areas.

Commissioners discussed various options for recommendation, such as whether or not to include language about collaboration with neighbors. Zimmer noted that someone from Sampson would visit each back yard to look at the impact on individual property owners. The public process is an additional outlet for communication. Hewitt said the plan presented is intelligent and this body now has awareness that neighbors are troubled by some aspects of it. He is confident they will work together, and it is not the job of the Commission to manage that process. He would not feel comfortable adding those types of conditions.

Kuhlman said the only reason this is on such a fast track is the vouchers. Korell agreed. No exceptions would be allowed. Kuhlman wondered what the exact definition of being "under construction" would be. Korell said there is a small amount of flexibility, but there needs to be a good plan in place.

Jill Dolberg, Nebraska State Historical Society, explained that in order to make this program work, it was made clear some of the buildings needed to go. They are primarily the single story garages and some mechanical buildings. A few are a bigger loss than others, but it was negotiated to maintain continuity of the historic vista. Korell added the buildings, while designated, do not add much to the site. Munn asked Dolberg whether or not the Historical Society was content in terms of which buildings were being maintained. She said yes. The goal is to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse affects to historic properties. The buildings being removed are not highly visible. Ultimately, it was preferred that the four that are highly visible from 70th Street remain intact. She added that the Historical Society does review for compliance when it comes to Federal licensing and the public is involved in that process. She assured Commission that the neighborhood would be involved.

ACTION:

Munn moved approval of the redevelopment plan for the Veteran's Affairs Hospital campus, seconded by Johnson and carried 6-0: Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Jones Kuhlman and Munn voting 'yes'; McKee absent.

Staff Report

Zimmer stated the Wesleyan Hospital landmark designation has been approved. The owner has asked Planning to use the extensive research that was done to prepare part one for a historic tax credit to see if a national tax credit can be established. That has now gone to Parks Service for review.

The City has received proposals for the 21st and N Street area. The first is a modest proposal. The second comes from Speedway and is much broader in scope, including 21st and N and much of the Antelope Parkway area. Included in the area is the art deco AT&T warehouse from the 1930s. There are not many AT&T buildings that predate World War II and the building does have some character; the exterior is almost unaltered. If it were included in the plan, Speedway would probably seek registry designation and the historic credits. So the potential for loft style apartments with significant protections is back on. The selection by the City has not been finalized, nor has the complicated redevelopment agreement, but there is good potential there. A couple years ago we designated the Muni Building. They would like to acquire that as a daycare/childcare center for the apartments, but our designation also give that building a nice level of protection.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.