

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP:	NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:	Thursday, July 23, 2009, 8:00 a.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 555 South 10 th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	John Kay, Tom Laging, Jeff Searcy, Cecil Steward and Larry Stoll. Jim Hewitt and Kim Todd absent.
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	JoAnne Kissel (The Clark Enersen Partners); Lynn Johnson (Parks & Recreation); Tom Kaspar (Capitol Commission); Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)
STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:	Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Approval of meeting notes of May 28, 2009

Steward moved approval of the May 28, 2009 minutes, seconded by Stoll. Motion carried 4-0. Laging, Searcy, Steward and Stoll voting 'yes'; Hewitt, Kay and Todd absent.

Review of Capitol Environs Design Standards pertaining to Centennial Mall master planning (Parks & Recreation Dept.)

Zimmer informed the Commissioners that Parks & Recreation has sent out a Request for Proposals for the Centennial Mall master planning and they received proposals from two firms. He noted that Tom Laging has declared a conflict of interest as he is part of both teams.

Johnson stated that interviews are scheduled for Friday, July 24. They anticipate having a contract negotiated in early August and then they will come forward for the Certificate of Appropriateness in November. The initial phase will include a Master Plan for all seven blocks of Centennial Mall and then they will proceed with work incrementally as they get an idea of cost estimates. They plan to begin construction in spring 2010. A fundraising effort will also be undertaken during this process.

Johnson then reviewed the Capitol Environs Design Standards with the Commission.

Design Standard 3: Memorials and Monuments

Johnson noted that from a concept standpoint, they would like to tell the natural and cultural history of Nebraska along the face of the Mall. They also talked about recognizing all 93 counties on the Mall.

Searcy stated that he supports that concept, but questioned memorials. Steward stated that he feels comfortable with memorials and monuments being a design decision.

Design Standard 4: Public Art

Johnson stated that there are currently two pieces of art on the Mall. Guidance must be given regarding the placement of Tem & Ptah and Wind Spirit. Steward suggested that any artwork should be moveable unless the art is created with a specific placement in mind.

Design Standard 18: General Landscape of all Malls

Johnson stated that he can see opportunities for backless benches with multi-directional views if they are appropriate for design. The other issue is if there should be seating in the middle of the Mall. Steward cautioned that if they use backless benches, there should be skateboard prohibitors on them.

Design Standard 19: Overstory Trees

Johnson stated that overstory trees define the edges of the Malls and will be used to provide a solid canopy.

Design Standard 20: Understory Trees

Johnson stated that ornamental trees should be used along the interior edges.

Design Standard 22: Centennial Mall Landscape

Johnson stated that they may want to consider an alternate dominant tree species other than the red oaks as the major species. After walking the Mall many times, he believes the red oaks should come out. Laging agreed that many of the red oaks are in poor shape. Steward believes this is the time to reestablish sustainable landscape.

Guideline 22.7

Johnson stated that the southern fountain should be more formal and will likely have an emphasis on vertical sprays of water. The possible fountain in the P to Q block may be more informal in design and have more emphasis on interactive water features. Steward believes there could also be an argument made for similarity and formality, and he believes this could be a design choice. He hopes the design more carefully relates to the occupants on the edges.

Searcy stated that he believes the water features are a very important feature to the public. He hopes the design team is looking into how to make the water features a part of the Mall.

Steward stated that on the parking lot guideline, he would like 20% of any hard surface parking lot dedicated to trees or landscape. He believes the standard in the capitol district should be at least or greater than the city standard.

Steward also had another question as to whether we have the means to recognize depressed land location sites to increase the building height. Zimmer stated that the overall height requirements in downtown are very complex. He stated that he will bring this back for further discussion.

Steward stated that on the guideline for rooftops, he believes language should be added to allow for energy generating technology.

Laging asked for clarification on the build-to line. Zimmer stated that he will research that question and provide clarification.

Zimmer stated that the other issue needing guidance is traffic on the Mall. The Commission's position has been to not encouraging traffic on the P to R blocks. Steward believes it should be one way or the other. Right now, it is both. He believes either there should be cross traffic on all blocks or work on closing the last three and treat it as a grand pedestrian Mall. The Downtown Master Plan recommendation was to put an emphasis on vehicular traffic on the last two blocks of the Mall. Crandall Arambula believes this would enhance the retail.

Laging stated that he believes it should be re-framed so that eventual completion is to provide continuity along the Mall. Zimmer stated that he will bring back language for the Commission's consideration at the next meeting.

Steward is concerned about the relationship of this project to the Downtown Master Plan (DMP). The designers need to recognize that we have a DMP which has been approved by the City Council. He

believes the proposals need to support the DMP or show why they cannot. Laging stated that the Commission opposed some of the recommendations in the DMP on several occasions and received no response from that group. Zimmer believes that the Commission should acknowledge the DMP and seek to amend it if necessary to accomplish a desirable re-design.

Staff report: J Street Bridge, etc.

Zimmer stated that the main elements of the bridge have been completed in terms of lighting. They are now installing lights on the Lincoln High School property to point to the capitol. He believes it is working well, and the connection to the capitol is subtle but apparent..

Laging asked about the open storage at Lincoln High and Windstream and stated that it industrializes that corridor.

Miscellaneous

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

***Please note that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Capitol Environs Commission. ***

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