

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, December 16, 2010 8:00 a.m., Council Chambers, County/City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Jim Hewitt, John Kay, Tom Laging, Jeff Searcy and Kim Todd. Cecil Steward and Larry Stoll absent.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Bob Ripley (Capitol Commission); Dennis Scheer, Karen Nalow and Elizabeth Thomas (The Clark Enersen Partners); Dan Worth (BVH Architects); Nancy Hicks (Journal Star); Susan Larson Rodenberg and Patty Pansing Brooks (Citizens); Lynn Johnson and JJ Yost (Parks & Rec); 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 8:05 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

### **Approval of meeting notes of November 4, 2010**

Kay moved approval of the meeting notes of November 4, 2010, seconded by Hewitt. Motion carried 4-0. Hewitt, Kay, Laging and Searcy voting 'yes'; Todd abstaining; Steward and Stoll absent.

### **Master Plan for Centennial Mall (Parks & Recreation Dept.)**

Yost stated that the design team is here to present the Centennial Mall Master Plan and hopefully get the Commission's endorsement. The total cost for the project is \$9 million. Design development is the next step following the plan's approval. There will be a fundraising kickoff in March 2011 with construction beginning in the spring/summer of 2012. The goal is to have the Mall ready for the State's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in March 2017.

Scheer stated that the design requirements for the project were to be functional, safe and beautiful. Downtown public spaces in addition to Centennial Mall include the Haymarket, Civic Plaza, Union Plaza, Foundations Gardens and Government Square. There is a circulation system connecting all the spaces, and Centennial Mall is a key part of that system. He reviewed each block of the Mall from south to north.

From K to L Street, Scheer stated that they tried to merge the previous master plan efforts. You continue to see the steps cascading down from the Capitol. There is also more green space. Laging added that the trees establish the overall linear quality and set the framework. The fountain is the most spectacular of all of the fountains.

From L to M Street, the most significant change is that they are proposing to remove the steps to the State Office Building, replacing them with a ramp system at a 5% grade, integrated into the Mall. This block has a lot of green space as well. There are two water features. He noted that all of the water features will be basin-less. Laging added that the amenities are very important in this block because of all the State employees and other people congregating. It has been perhaps the busiest of the blocks of the Mall.

The next three blocks are the blocks that remain open to traffic. The alignment remains the same as the other blocks so the curbs will be moved. There will be double rows of trees.

From P to Q Street, this block is significant because it contains Andersen Hall (UNL College of Journalism) and the Children's Museum. They do not want to compromise the intent of the Mall which is to focus on the Capitol, but this block is very active. The idea is to create a plaza that is child- and student-friendly. There is a significant water feature which will be interactive. They will improve the streetscape connection to the Children's Museum entrance.

From Q to R Street, there is an existing sculpture in the center. All of the other elements in the previous blocks continue in this block. Ripley noted that LES has agreed to remove the overhead wiring in this block.

All of the seven intersections will be repaved with a colored, textured surface.

Scheer then moved into the thematic aspect of the plan. The K to L block has a memorial to Nebraska's government, leaders and citizens. The State Office Building block has an opportunity for a stewardship and environmental theme. The next three blocks are about community. The next block is imagination and the last block has an education theme.

Kay asked about the public and stakeholder input. Scheer stated that they met with all the stakeholders on the Mall. The recurring comment is that the Mall currently is not usable, and they would like to make it usable and accessible. The major constructive criticism received is to make sure this is integrated in all the other plans that Lincoln is doing.

Todd commented that silva cells are a spectacular learning opportunity, both in sustaining urban trees and in utilizing run-off. Part of the dilemma is planning long-term so there is not that gap-toothed smile in the tree planting when one is lost.

Kay asked about the letter from the Downtown Lincoln Association. Johnson stated that DLA wants to be involved in the design process. The Centennial Mall process was slowed down to let the Civic Plaza process catch up. The design development process for both of these will occur in tandem. A plan needs to be developed on how to manage all the downtown events in terms of planning and infrastructure. There are fundraising efforts for Centennial Mall and Civic Plaza, and they need to be coordinated.

Ripley offered compliments to the fundraising team for this project. The fundraising effort is integral to getting to the completion point. Searcy echoed those sentiments and acknowledged the support of the City of Lincoln in this effort.

Kay moved to support the schematic and design concepts for the Centennial Mall Master Plan and to continue the direction and development of the themes and concepts presented; seconded by Todd. Motion carried 4-0. Hewitt, Kay, Searcy and Todd voting 'yes'; Laging abstaining; Steward and Stoll absent.

**Staff report/Misc.**

Zimmer offered an updated Annual Report for 2010. Searcy thanked Hewitt for his six years of service on the Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 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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