

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, July 28, 2011 8:00 a.m., Room 210, County/City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Bob Ripley and Matt Hansen (Capitol Commission); J.J. 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 8:00 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Approval of meeting notes of May 26, 2011

Steward moved approval of the May 26, 2011 meeting notes seconded by Nalow. Motion carried 4-0, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Todd voting 'yes'; Kay, Laging and Stoll absent.

Design update on plan for Centennial Mall (Design Team and Parks & Recreation Dept.)

Yost stated they have been working on design development along with updated images. They have been working on a water feature on the K to L block. A donor has been interested in funding the K to L block and wanted a water feature. The water feature is in the lower plaza just below the steps. This would create a special place that would be honored with their gift.

Scheer stated that the Master Plan which was approved by the Commission has been changed, so that may possibly need to be amended. There are many places to collect water and reuse on the Mall. Yost stated that these enhancements were not in the original budget, but the funding for the analysis is through a DEQ grant. The State Museum site is an important site, and as they develop that block, they want to make that zone as accessible and friendly as possible.

Nalow stated that they wanted to make sure that this water feature didn't compete with the main fountain and Capitol, but that it enhances it. They are looking at creating a channel feature with the water falling over the steps which will emphasize the change in elevation. There will also be benches on the inside. The theme for this block is "We the People". They also want to look at the introduction of light in the water feature. At night, they want to add light to the water feature with the light reflecting through the water onto the murals.

Steward wondered if the width of the running water feature is significant enough to distinguish it from a drainage vent. Scheer stated one of the points of the smooth, cascading water is that it reflects

Nebraska water. Width is part of that, so that is a good point. Nalow stated they currently are looking at a width of 18". Commissioners generally agreed that double that width would be better.

Todd stated that she likes the design as it makes it more human.

Ripley stated that the issue of memorials will resurface as there are many groups interested in placing memorials on the Mall. Scheer stated that they will work on a framework for memorials.

Laging asked the design team if they considered running the water down the center from the fountain so as to tie the two features together. Scheer stated that they did not consider that.

Next, Nalow presented the P to Q Street block. They revised the layout and made a more direct connection to the Children's Museum. The water feature is more playful. The seating has been moved to the east and the west. In the center plaza, they are looking at bringing one more row of trees in the center which will frame the view to the capitol and gain that reverse perspective to the capitol. They are starting to look at how to recognize donors as a group, and they found that this block is an opportunity to do that. They are considering donor plaques with a leaf theme.

Laging questioned the reverse perspective. Todd suggested moving the seat walls toward the center. Laging suggested placing a grove of trees in the planter to get that reverse perspective.

Searcy stated that he really likes what the design team is doing with the Mall and believes that it will be a jewel for the community.

Draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan, especially Chapter 4: "Placemaking"

Zimmer stated that staff has been working with an Advisory Committee on the Comprehensive Plan for the past year. Urban design and historic preservation have been reunited under the title "Placemaking". The Capitol takes the lead in that chapter as our key urban design feature countywide. The Capitol view corridors map has been placed in the chapter. We are now shifting from the Advisory Committee to the public review process with the Planning Commission, City Council and County Board as well as bringing presentations to community groups. He noted that Steward and Scheer served on the Advisory Committee, and Laging provided graphic renditions for the Plan.

Steward stated that this document sets up an opportunity for urban design, design standards and subarea planning as a vehicle to implementation for the overall Comprehensive Plan. It is much more of a living, breathing document than we've had before.

Todd asked if the Plan addresses the issue of maintaining landscaping for the screening requirements. She is concerned about landscaping being mowed down in parking lots. Krout stated that the Plan does not address enforcing the requirements, but that is a good point.

Searcy stated that he sat in on the review of the Planning Commission at yesterday's meeting. He was impressed with the level of work on the Plan as well as Planning Commissioner Larson's comment on the importance of the Capitol. He asked if we've given enough emphasis to the Capitol and Centennial Mall.

Zimmer stated that he is confident with the level of emphasis on the Capitol. Krout stated they will look at Centennial Mall.

Searcy also commented about straightening the jog in J Street and if that could be mentioned in the Plan. Ripley stated that the opportunity to do that has never been better. Zimmer stated that we could look at language that underscores the value of the Malls as the formal setting of the Capitol.

Searcy asked if there are other corridors that could be identified to the east on the capitol view corridors map. Zimmer noted that staff could look at enhancing the corridors map by looking at including viewpoints and not just corridors.

Staff report/misc.

Zimmer stated that there will be a lot of public work in downtown. The biggest project will be a resurfacing project for almost every street in downtown. They will not be resurfacing the Centennial Mall blocks since they will be torn out soon. There will also be some water main work as well.

Ripley noted that in the spring, he publicly thanked LES staff at an LES Board meeting for burying the cables on Goodhue Boulevard on the McPhee block.

Steward informed the Commission of a proposal in the block in which he lives for a non-restaurant alcohol-based business. He has proposal that will be heard before the Planning Commission in August that will restrict bars to be within 100 feet of a home and many other facilities. Downtown is becoming a residential neighborhood.

Steward stated that he has been invited to participate on a plants conservatory board. He is looking at moving that to a larger arena , perhaps Pershing Center.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 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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