

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, February 23, 2012, 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 and Jon Weinberg. Cecil Steward absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Dennis Scheer and Elizabeth Thomas (Clark Enersen Partners); Bob Ripley and Matt Hansen (Capitol Commission); Lynn Johnson and JJ Yost (Parks & Rec); Ed Zimmer, Marvin Krout and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Approval of meeting record of January 12, 2012

Weinberg moved approval of the meeting record of January 12, 2012, seconded by Kay. The motion carried 5-0. Kay, Laging, Nalow, Searcy, and Weinberg voted 'yes'; Steward absent.

Certificate of Appropriateness for Centennial Mall (M-N, N-O, O-P Streets)

Johnson stated that they are moving toward getting the construction documents out in March for the M-N, N-O and O-P Streets of Centennial Mall. They would like to finish the construction during this construction season. They have the Public Works street improvements for review. They will have additional detail in the future.

Scheer displayed the area that will be going to bid. It is a city-let project through the Purchasing Department. The first phase of work will be between M and P Streets. There is a lot of work being coordinated with Public Works and the re-milling of downtown streets. Traffic signals and pedestrian crosswalk signals are being relocated or renovated because the lines of the Mall are important. This is all about having sidewalks and curbs line up. Nalow added that they have removed the intersection pavements from the first phase because of the re-milling. They anticipate doing those intersections next summer.

Scheer stated that they are requesting approval for the work with curbs and pavement.

Ripley asked if there is some cost savings because of the work being coordinated with Public Works. Scheer stated that he does not believe there is any cost savings, but there is a great deal of coordination. Johnson added that it is important to do this work in concert.

Weinberg asked if Parks has agreed to do maintenance and if this has been worked out with the Downtown Lincoln Association. Johnson stated that Parks will do 100% of the maintenance.

Scheer stated that they have been working on the stormwater planting areas. They have planting areas at the end of the blocks and mid-block. The water will be collected at each end at the bio-detention area and it will be linked with a pipe. This allows the elevation of the curb to be level.

Scheer stated that because the crossing has been moved out, there is a very minimal ramp from the street crosswalk to the sidewalk.

Kay stated that this is by far more pedestrian friendly and will allow for better closure of streets for festivals.

Weinberg asked what happens to the project if all the money is not raised. Johnson stated that originally they intended to wait until they had raised all the money, but they are confident they will get there. The Mayor approved proceeding at this time with the first 3 blocks to coordinate with the street improvements being done this summer. They hope to have all the funds in hand by the end of this year. The fundraising committee is reaching out across the state and is getting a positive reaction.

Weinberg moved to approve the proposed improvements to the M-P blocks of Centennial Mall, seconded by Kay. The motion carried 4-0. Kay, Laging, Searcy, and Weinberg voted 'yes'; Nalow abstaining; Steward absent.

LR 381 – resolution to rename “a portion of ‘J’ Street adjacent to the Capitol’s east entry in honor of Colonel [Harry Francis] Cunningham.”

Zimmer stated that this is a legislative resolution in response to a constituent. When we change the name of a street, we are concerned with residents and businesses who have to change their address. The resolution would urge the city to change the name of the street. It is unclear which portion of the street they want to rename. If they went to Lincoln High, there would be literally hundreds of addresses changed. In the past when they have changed a street name, it has been in conjunction with some major improvements, and the affected individuals and businesses were notified well in advance.

Ripley stated that Cunningham’s role is clearly present, but he was involved with only one of four phases of construction. He was not involved in the design of the Capitol. Although Cunningham played a role in the construction of the Capitol, he can think of four or five people who were far more involved in the development of the Capitol. He noted that Cunningham was a well-respected designer in his time. Ripley noted that he has communicated this to Senator Fulton’s staff.

Zimmer suggested a possible direction the Commission could take is to offer a resolution in recognition of the 80th Anniversary of the Capitol completion and to honor those individuals who were influential in the design and construction of the Capitol.

Johnson suggested having one of the Centennial Mall Pathway plaques named in recognition of Colonel Cunningham.

Laging moved to request that the City to draft a substitute resolution to offer to the Legislature to recognize Colonel Cunningham during the 80th Anniversary of the completion of the Capitol and to honor him with a Centennial Mall Pathway plaque; the motion was seconded by Nalow. The motion carried 5-0. Kay, Laging, Nalow, Searcy, and Weinberg voted 'yes'; Steward absent.

Update on fundraising for Nebraska's Centennial Mall

Johnson noted that invitations were sent out for the March 1st Centennial Mall public event. He noted that \$5.7million out of \$9.6 million has been raised to date.

Searcy stated that the fundraising committee has met with the Chairs of the Appropriations Committee, and they felt good about the response from the Senators. The testimony on LB 859 went very well, and he appreciated those who testified and the support received. He encouraged the Commission's attendance at the March 1st event. He thanked the fundraising committee and the design team for their efforts. He believes the statewide support is building.

Johnson mentioned that the Visitors' Promotion Committee has recommended an additional \$400,000 of lodging tax be directed to Centennial Mall. This brings the County's support for the project to a half million dollars.

Miscellaneous

Zimmer noted that Steward is up for reappointment to the Commission. Todd has indicated that because of her academic schedule, she has not asked to be reappointed. Christie Dionisopoulos has been nominated to serve on the Commission and her appointment is pending action by the City Council.

Ripley stated that this year marks the centennial of the dedication of the Daniel Chester French memorial at the west entrance of the capitol in 1912. The sculpture was done by French and the granite backdrop was done by architect Henry Bacon. In 1922, we started construction of the State Capitol, and the national memorial to Lincoln in Washington DC was dedicated. This memorial was also done by French and Bacon. Ripley noted that they would like to honor these two individuals with a dedication on September 2nd.

Weinberg stated that he spoke with an administrator in the Windstream corporate office regarding the tower. The administrator conveyed that they did not know what their maintenance plans are with the tower. They appreciated the call, and noted that the decision will be made in the national office.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 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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