

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, November 14, 2013, 10:00 a.m., Room 1525, State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Christie Dionisopoulos, Tom Laging, Karen Nalow, Jeff Searcy, Cecil Steward and Jon Weinberg. John Kay absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Matt Hansen (Capitol Commission); Lynn Johnson (Parks & Recreation); Danielle Conrad (State Senator); Ed Zimmer, Stacey Hageman, and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Approval of meeting record of October 24, 2013

Steward moved approval of the meeting record of October 24, 2013, seconded by Dionisopoulos. Motion carried 5-0. Dionisopoulos, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Laging abstaining; Kay absent.

Certificate of Appropriateness for Spirit of Nebraska plaques on Centennial Mall in the Capitol Environs District (Parks & Rec Dept)

Johnson stated that the pathway tiles are intended to be placed in the granite walkway. There are thousands of opportunities for plaques. They want to get the first hundred tiles written, and Senator Danielle Conrad will help with that process. The group of tiles is the group that the Commission approved a couple weeks ago, which are the Nebraska Notables. They want to defer the Native American tiles, as they want to refine those with input from the Indian Commission and bring them back for further discussion.

Conrad stated that she wants to stress that this is a case of first impression, and they are eager for input on the content. There is a draft of how some of these tiles may look. It is challenging to write the tiles to meet the space and size requirements.

Johnson stated that there is a parallel piece going on. On each of the bronze tiles, there will be a QR code that will provide the access point to the online portal of information. In terms of process, he wants to get feedback on if the Commission would like to approve all of the tiles.

Steward stated that it seems the web-based piece should always begin with the exact same description that is on the tile for consistency reasons.

Dionisopoulos stated she is concerned that there are no dates on many of the tiles. She thinks maybe there should be a date represented somewhere on each tile. Conrad stated that they tried to

incorporate a date in every tile so there is some sense of context, but there would possibly be room for a placement or installation date. They initially talked about having a birth and death date, but they didn't want to have the feel of a tombstone.

Dionisopoulos also commented that she feels the Commission should approve each of the tiles. Steward recommended that we use a consent agenda with the tiles provided to the Committee prior to the meeting. Searcy added that he believes the online piece should be part of the Commission's approval process as well.

Laging asked if there is a staff person assigned to update the website. Johnson stated that they are determining where the website will be housed. They are going to establish a process if a family wants to update information there will be a fee associated with that. They also want to make the initial pages as timeless as possible. Conrad stated that there are private donations and grants in place for technology related pieces.

Laging asked about maintenance on the Mall. Johnson stated that during the upcoming budget preparation, they will put together the budget for maintenance of the Mall. The endowment will help fund the ongoing operation of the website.

Johnson stated that they want to get as much of the content as possible finalized by the end of the year. They hope by June or July they can supply the tiles to the contractor and begin to get them in place.

Johnson noted that the QR codes will be in the lower right-hand corner above "Nebraska's Centennial Mall". Zimmer suggested that it go on the same level as the text to give some balance to the icon in the upper left corner.

Steward asked if we want to honor some living individuals such as Warren Buffet and Ted Koozer. Johnson stated that if the Commission wants to add some tiles, he believes they would have it in their budget to do that.

Steward moved approval of the process beginning with this proposed list of the plaque and web-based information and that it be handled by consent agenda with the understanding that members will receive the information prior to the meeting, seconded by Weinberg. Motion carried 6-0. Dionisopoulos, Laging, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Kay absent.

Zimmer stated that he would like to work with Conrad to integrate a date for the plaques.

Steward stated that at a previous meeting, he had suggested that every past and present Commissioner should have a plaque on the Mall. He thinks it is a significant part of the capitol that has been created by specific people. Conrad stated that the tiles are just one piece, and there will be additional components for donor recognition or other historical information.

Searcy commented that there may be other opportunities in the seating areas to recognize the Platte River and Ogallala Aquifer and other geographic areas of the State. He also acknowledged Mayor

Beutler for his efforts to encourage the Nebraska sesquicentennial effort to identify 150 notables throughout the State for recognitions.

Laging stated that there are some major missing areas. We have many nationalities represented in the State. We have to be careful that we are not identifying one sector, or we need to be inclusive. Zimmer stated that there are so many tile opportunities that it would be better to be more inclusive. Steward stated that the designers of the capitol wanted it to be a living gallery of art.

Steward moved to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the submitted list of Nebraska Notable tiles with the removal by the applicant of the three Native American tiles, seconded by Nalow. Searcy offered an amendment to encourage further consideration of the geographic areas, and it was accepted by Steward. Motion carried 6-0. Dionisopoulos, Laging, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Kay absent.

Resolution for "Planning for the East Capitol District of Downtown Lincoln (Cecil Steward)

Steward moved to approve the resolution as submitted, seconded by Dionisopoulos.

Weinberg asked how much of this is covered in the Antelope Valley subarea plan. Steward stated that he does not believe it was comprehensive in terms of housing, site development, or the connections of the capitol environs corridors. One of his principal concerns of the Antelope Valley study is that millions of dollars have been spent on specific infrastructure without regard to it being a livable portion of our community. It did not take into account the J Street corridor or Goodhue Boulevard. Weinberg stated that he can see studying the south portion that hasn't already been studied and gone through a public process, but he can't see studying an area that has a subarea plan in the past three years.

Zimmer stated that Krout was concerned that there is not funding or staffing available to undertake a project of this magnitude. We also need to address design standards. The main area of downtown feels well studied by rather recent plans. It is in the Commission's purview to advise the Planning Department on this.

Steward asked how we influence the best use and most attractive outcome if we don't have some opportunity to advance connected and comprehensive planning.

Searcy noted that at the last meeting, we asked about doing two or three portions of the study.

Dionisopoulos stated that the Mayor mentioned that those people not directly benefitting from the West Haymarket asked, "what about the rest of Lincoln?", so she feels it's timely to advocate for the Capitol Environs.

Weinberg asked what the Antelope Valley subarea plan doesn't address. He doesn't have any problem with updating that subarea plan if someone can tell him what is wrong with it. Steward stated that it is not his intent to replace the Antelope Valley subarea plan.

Laging stated that one of the problems is there are a lot of major roads that cut through this area, so there is a big transportation piece. It may require a focus on Complete Streets.

Searcy asked if this resolution passes how it becomes record. Zimmer stated that we would anticipate a response from the Planning Department.

Laging stated that if the Planning Department could provide context for our area, it would be of service to the Environs Commission. Our Commission does not have a big picture. Zimmer noted that the Planning Department is working on a subarea plan for South Haymarket, and that will come to the Commission. We could also report on other planning efforts that apply to portions of the environs.

On the motion to approve the resolution as submitted, the motion carried 5-1. Dionisopoulos, Laging, Nalow, Searcy and Steward voting 'yes'; Weinberg voting 'no'; Kay absent.

November Draft 2013 Annual Report of NCEC

Zimmer stated that he will update the report after the December meeting and will bring it to the Commission for approval in January.

Miscellaneous: staff report, future items

Zimmer stated that there will be more work on Centennial Mall at the December meeting.

Zimmer noted that there was an application for a garage rebuild at Goodhue & E Street, and it was determined to have no material effect and approved administratively by the Planning Director and Commission chair. He will provide copies to the Commission at the next meeting.

Searcy commented that the four interior courtyards of the capitol have been an objective but have never been accomplished, and the Commission would like to see that effort be completed over the next few years. If this becomes a formal request to the Legislature, he would like to know that that he has the support of the Commission for his involvement in that process. There was general agreement from the Commission.

Laging stated that we really do not have a sense of where the State is going with their comprehensive plans. He believes it is integral to the Commission's work to know what the State has planned.

Searcy noted that the December meeting will be December 12.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:21 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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