

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, July 24, 2014, 8:00 a.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Christie Dionisopoulos, John Kay, Tom Laging, Karen Nalow, Cecil Steward, Jeff Searcy and Jon Weinberg. Marvin Krout, David Cary, Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong-Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Lynn Johnson, Jerry Shorney and J.J. Yost of Parks and Recreation; Bob Ripley and Matt Hansen from the Office of the Capitol Commission; Roger Ludemann; and Kevin Abourezk from the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

Chair Jeff Searcy called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Searcy then requested a motion approving the minutes for the regular meeting held June 26, 2014. (Secretary note: copies of minutes provided for June 26, 2014 were missing pages. These minutes will be voted on at the next regular meeting).

SOUTH HAYMARKET SUBAREA PLAN **PUBLIC HEARING:**

July 24, 2014

Members present: Dionisopoulos, Kay, Laging, Nalow, Steward, Steward, Searcy and Weinberg.

Stacey Groshong-Hageman stated that Planning staff has been doing research on the South Haymarket area for around one year. Staff met with stakeholders early in the process.

There have been changes to the area. Alter Scrap has moved and there is a new parking garage. The South Haymarket area is located within the greater downtown. Pinnacle Bank Arena is near the study area and Cooper Park is to the south. The boundaries of the subarea plan are "O" Street, 10th Street, "G" Street, 4th Street and the railroad mainline. There are 38 blocks in the study area. Existing land uses today include publicly owned land. There are mainly industrial uses on the western half of the subarea. Residential is limited to the blocks near 9th Street and "G" Street.

Staff looked at the 2005 Downtown Master Plan. Since 2005, many things have been implemented such as the arena and associated redevelopment, and the Lumberworks garage. The protected bikeway along “N” Street has been designed and other trail improvements, such as extension of Jamaica North Trail, have been planned.

Searcy questioned if that trail has already been funded. David Cary replied yes.

Groshong-Hageman continued that there are a number of historic resources in South Haymarket. Three properties are individually listed and seven properties are determined to be eligible for the National Register. The Capitol Environs District extends into the South Haymarket District. Currently, the Downtown Design Standards apply to everything zoned B-4 or O-1. Any new residential structures in R-zoned districts would have to comply with the neighborhood design standards.

Searcy thanked the Planning Dept. and Bob Ripley who helped bring language to the Legislature which would allow the extension of the Capitol Environs District. This was around eight years ago. He believes it was good foresight to enhance the district.

Groshong-Hageman continued that the floodplain in the area is important. A portion on the north end is included in the Arena flood mitigation and can be redeveloped. What staff found from the preliminary study is that the South Haymarket can be a good mixed-use district. It is a good location for residential. Rights-of-way can be upgraded to help the pedestrian routes throughout the neighborhood. The government footprint could be consolidated. Similar districts are the Pearl District in Portland Oregon or LoDo in Denver, Colorado.

The Downtown Master Plan suggests that South Haymarket could be developed as a residential area. The area could provide 1,000 to 2,000 new residential units. Staff looked at the potential of the “K” Street building for the possibility of residential units. One concept for 7th Street and “N” Street is that “N” Street could be softened a little with landscaping and other amenities. Midwest Steel is a full block. The business has no interest to move now, but there could be opportunities in the future with surrounding development going on. 8th Street and “N” Street is a prime entrance to the Haymarket from the south. A variety of uses exist in this area. Looking further south, there could be redevelopment of industrial into residential. “J” Street has the potential to accommodate medium-density residential. Row house units are suggested.

At 9th Street and “J” Street, there is an opportunity to enhance the entrance to the “J” Street boulevard. Two, one-story buildings in public ownership could be developed into more substantial structures. In looking at public properties, 24 percent of the land in South Haymarket is held in public ownership. There are JPA lands to the north, the County-City complex, StarTran and the LPD maintenance facility. The public footprint could be consolidated. There is potential on the north and south lots for further development. The north parking lot of the County-City Building could have a building on

the north end of the block. Perhaps there could be something similar on the south lot as well.

Twenty percent of South Haymarket is occupied with industrial uses. The concept is for those areas to transition to lighter industrial, office or residential. Staff has had a lot of discussion with J.A. Woollam. They would like to expand their business.

There is a lot of public right-of-way. There is an opportunity to enhance the aesthetic with items such as streetscape and sidewalk enhancements. Some streets in the area could be extended. There could be some softening on "N" Street. The concept is having a one way couplet with "M" Street. To the south, Arena Drive could be extended further south.

Open space would provide some opportunity for the floodplain. An open space network is important for the residents. There is an opportunity to provide some enhancement along 8th Street. This would provide connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists. There is the potential for a plaza on 7th Street and "N" Street. 9th Street could have some enhanced landscaping. This would enhance the pedestrian experience.

Parking becomes an important part of this study. Staff has located some key spots. A public garage could go on the Midwest Steel block. There is potential for parking under Rosa Parks Way.

Staff is continuing to get public input. We are talking with other departments before the plan is finalized. Staff will develop South Haymarket design standards and the goal is to adopt it as part of the Downtown Master Plan. Staff briefed City Council on Monday, Planning Commission yesterday and today is this Commission and the County Board. Urban Design Commission and Historic Preservation Commission will also be briefed.

Kay noted that there is an Open House on South Haymarket on Tuesday, July 29, 2014 in Room 113 of the County-City Building.

Ripley commented that he likes what he sees. The study has been very nicely done. It converts some areas that have always been problem sites. This area is in transition. It is nice to see some forethought.

Kay thinks the concept of open space is really good. In planning the West Haymarket, some focus groups had the similar opinion of needing open space in the area. He thinks it is nice to see. Harris Overpass has always been a barrier. Pigeon proofing has helped. It is still a very compact area. Transition points for the two districts are contiguous, which he believes is really important. Streetscape elements are being carried to the south. With the renovation of the historic canopy, if a portion of it was placed south of Harris Overpass, it would help to visually connect the two areas. He appreciates that staff recognizes there are different uses and different densities to the two districts.

Dionisopoulos stated that San Antonio had a similar situation. They had a barrier with an overpass. The City got an artist to create really large fish, possibly made from fiberglass. They light up at night. People would come watch them light up. Behind that, was a hotel. They created a really great space. It changed the whole area. There are creative ways to overcome that challenge. She was on the Pershing Re-Use Committee. The Library Board has narrowed their sites to a few options. The second site was north of South Haymarket. This would replace the downtown site. She questioned if anyone has heard if a site has been picked yet to replace the current location of Bennett Martin Library. Marvin Krout replied that he has had conversations with the Library Board. This area is good for residential because it doesn't have the traffic that downtown does. His concern is a library could get buried. They talked about there might be a site on 9th street that could be a gateway to South Haymarket and have good visibility. If it was located to the south, it could be adjacent to a future neighborhood to the west, along with some existing neighborhoods. He thinks there are some ideas that they are exploring. K Street building for example, could have potential. Some might object. The whole issue is what happens in the future with books. Libraries are a gathering place and have other functions.

Searcy wondered about the "J" Street open space from a Capitol Environs standpoint. He is curious what kinds of vistas we would project from the area north of 4th Street and "J" Street. Zimmer believes there is a sequence of views. From the ground, too much height would change the entryways. The rowhouse concepts fits and doesn't create obstructing height. The Capitol aligns with the antenna on the County-City Building.

Ripley made the observation that we might talk with LES to see what could be done with Rosa Parks Way. Instead of pairs of poles, they could have a common pole in the center. As you come into the center, you eliminate the row of fence posts. It orients due east until you get to the curb. If the street light were in the median, you could eliminate two rows and open up a vista to the due east. You could probably make it a little more efficient.

Laging thinks it might be a series of precedents of building heights that enhance and make the connection of private open space more efficient. If there were a precedent, this could be a bank of information.

Dionisopoulos questioned if structured parking will be encouraged. A lot of street parking is not a good idea. Krout replied that many of these sites assume there would be garages provided or off-site parking. Larger apartment sites could have decked parking. Staff has identified a few spots for public parking. There is an opportunity to use on-site parking, to allow a reduction from what otherwise might be required. We want to talk about this some more. He thinks it is possible that a city can be creative with on-street parking. In some cities, next to a University there is something you call a residential permit program. We need to be very careful when vacating streets. This has given us problems when we are trying to create connectivity.

Ripley offered an alternate method. If there was an element he saw missing, it was mass transit. In creating greater density, it seems like every project that has housing, people who might live in these would likely rather not drive six or eight blocks if there is a mass transit system that travels pretty readily. He would encourage mass transit that minimizes the need for autos and parking.

Krout believes that the 2005 Downtown Master Plan included a proposal for a trolley. When the plan was updated, staff didn't envision anything happening right away. It may take a while before someone looks at that concept again.

Ripley would propose that now is the time to think about that. Mass transit has great potential.

Steward supports that notion. Routes need to be defined and respected in future development. That has to be an incremental set of decisions. You don't affect transit that quickly in a citywide fashion.

Searcy sees great progress that has been made. He thanked staff for their efforts.

STAFF REPORT

- Spirit of Nebraska Pathway Committee

Dionisopoulos stated that Roger Ludeman, Karen Nalow, Ed Zimmer, JJ Yost, Lynn Johnson and herself are on the committee. There are currently 119 tiles. They have gone through those and determined which block best fits the tile. They have been divided into five areas. They have a meeting on Monday to review every single inscription. They also need to determine an icon for each tile. The Commission had narrowed it down to five icons. If we are okay with the text on the tile, and the Commission has approved it, we will get those made. The Committee will bring back the tiles that haven't been seen or approved. This will be done in phases.

Ripley asked if there was a policy made on selecting icons or do you ask the individuals what they want? JJ Yost believes that the Committee would make that decision, so there is an equal balance of icons. Lynn Johnson added that there are themes for each icon.

Roger Ludeman appreciates the opportunity to support and help coordinate this task. There will be some discussion on the icon pieces on Monday. He believes it is worth taking a look at, to make sure we are on the right track. The further review is a nicely packaged insurance policy so when these are being fabricated, everyone is happy with them. We want them to be historical, timeless messages. From his perspective, 97 percent will be fine. The interactive implementation has been going fabulously. We are getting letters of applause. This is still in the final processes. It is going extremely well. We plan to have most of it wrapped up in the next few weeks.

Johnson pulled up the website: <http://www.nebraskaeducationonlocation.org/> and showed some of the tiles.

Searcy stated there is a lot of room on the mall and the opportunity for people to share the rich history of Nebraska.

- Cecil Steward – Pershing Auditorium

Steward stated that this is an informal FYI for the Commission. There is potential impact on the mall in the study. The Jocelyn Institute has been asked by NIFA to conduct a study on saving Pershing Auditorium. That study is motivated by the fact that NIFA is the State administrative element of the Federal and State new markets tax credits program. There is potentially a healthy sum of money that could come to this project. There was also a request to look into a southeast Nebraska food hub. We think there are other compatible uses to be considered in the function and use in the structure. It is possible to think library and public market functions as compatible operations. This will be a four month study. Last Wednesday, in cooperation with Clark Enersen, a beginning charette was conducted. Nebraska Farmers Bureau also participated. This will be a very large set of stakeholders which will bring food marketing and processing to the table and determine if this is a fit. The Jocelyn Institute is very excited about being involved in the study. The moderators of the existing food markets are part of the study as well. More information will be coming. The early objective is to get some initial graphics that we can communicate better with. That part will stimulate more involvement for the commercial operation potential.

Searcy asked Steward to define 'food hub'. Steward replied that the USDA definition is a collaborative that produces and promote agricultural production within reasonable geographic locations. The ones we have researched so far are multi-county. Omaha is planning a similar operation. This will involve cooperative agreements of production. You could obtain cooperative agreements with market share buyers such as schools, hospitals and nursing homes. You would have cooperative administration of market circumstances. The idea is to create a constant market for producers to stimulate a higher production of food. A new policy allows for food growth on public land. You aggregate as big a market as possible.

Searcy thanked NIFA and Jocelyn Institute for being involved in this.

Ripley thinks this is a great idea. Pershing is a very important asset in the Capitol Environs. If Pershing is taken down, it can't be replaced with a comparable material.

Steward stated that without graphics, it is very difficult for people in the community to see anything other than what has already happened. Bleachers could be turned into greenhouses with tiered plant beds. There are alternative energy options and many other things that could be studied.

Nalow added that the structure is already set up for a use like this. The building has docks, large freight elevators and a large basement.

Kay asked if the group will be reaching out to Innovation Campus. Steward replied that they plan to.

Searcy noted that the joint meeting of the Capitol Commission and Capitol Environs Commission will be on Tuesday, November 18, 2014 at 9:00 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

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