

MEETING RECORD

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

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, February 27, 2014, 8:00 a.m., Room 214, County/City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Robin Wilcox (Alta Planning & Design, by phone); Bo Jones and Steve Powell (Tru-Built); Kevin Abourezk (Lincoln Journal Star); Lynn Johnson and JJ Yost (Parks & Rec); Dallas McGee, Ernie Castillo and Hallie Salem (Urban Development); Bob Ripley and Matt Hansen (Capitol Commission); 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 8:01 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Approval of meeting record of January 23, 2014

Dionisopoulos moved approval of the meeting record of January 23, 2014, seconded by Weinberg. Motion carried 6-0. Dionisopoulos, Kay, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg voting 'yes'. Laging absent.

Certificate of Appropriateness for work on the N Street Bikeway at Centennial Mall and N Street, in the Capitol Environs District.

McGee began by stating that they are focusing on the intersection of N Street and Centennial Mall. They have the 90% drawings for the project ready. They anticipate going out for bids in March and beginning construction in May. Wilcox stated that they are meshing the cycle track project with the Centennial Mall project. On either side of the intersection, there is a protected section for pedestrians. Adjacent to each of those are two widened landscaped nodes. The plant materials in each node are very similar to what is shown in the Centennial Mall plan. There are step out zones for people exiting their cars. It will be made of permeable pavers. They are proposing stormwater cells and open tree wells with plantings.

McGee stated that they addressed the question of silva cells. It was not in the budget initially. They made some changes along the bikeway that would allow larger areas for the roots of trees without using silva cells. It will be helpful for costs as well as provide space for the trees to grow.

Steward asked about the stormwater cell and if it has a raised curb. McGee stated that it has. Steward asked if it is at seat height. Wilcox stated that is a 6" curb so there is a 12" angle transition to make up for that height. Steward asked if there are no seating arrangements in the design. McGee stated that there are none adjacent to the bikeway. The seating would occur on the traditional sidewalk that remains in place. Steward asked if there is any street furniture. McGee stated that there is not.

Nalow asked about the rest of the streetscape. McGee stated that they intend to leave the existing curb in place. Mayor Beutler wanted to ensure that if there is room for additional trees in the sidewalk, they would do that. The bioswale goes from 11th Street to 16th Street.

Steward stated that the basis for his question is envisioning the pedestrian strip separation from the bikeway would indicate that it is going to be a very pleasant landscape. He is challenging whether it is a wise decision to make no room for pedestrian seating. Wilcox stated that is not something we want to encourage. The idea is not that people will linger in those separation zones. We want to discourage people walking in the cycle track and pedestrians and walkers coming into contact.

Ripley asked about the storm cells and the elevation change. Wilcox stated that the level of the base of the stormwater cell is 12" below the level of the curb but is 6" below the cycle track. That area is intended to be used for snow storage. It should not be an issue as it would be fairly compacted snow. Ripley stated that his comment is a concern for stepping into a much lower well, and perhaps an 18" seating wall would be a little more of a warning if they were attempting to cross there. McGee stated that is the intention of the curb.

Steward asked if the pavers are pervious. McGee stated that they are.

Nalow stated that with the change in the curb line, she asked what kind of precautions are going to be used to protect what is already there. Wilcox stated that it will have to be addressed in construction phasing. McGee stated that we need to coordinate on that and determine how far the new construction can fit back into what is already there. This allows for a narrower crossing. Nalow stated that changing the curb line is great, but it is a matter of protecting what is already there. McGee stated that it will be the same contractor as Centennial Mall so it will be coordinated with them.

Nalow asked about the north-south crosswalks and if the "tactile" warning strips will be yellow. Wilcox stated that it has to be delineated to a visually impaired person. Nalow stated that we have typically seen black in Lincoln and recommended maintaining that color. Wilcox stated that they have heard they are not approving black anymore; yellow is the guidance they have received in the last couple years for accessibility requirements. But the intent is to match material types as much as possible.

Steward asked what the anticipation completion date is. McGee stated that they hope to be complete the entire project this construction season.

Steward moved to approve the design on the N Street Bikeway with the recommendation to use black tactile strips, seconded by Weinberg. Motion carried 6-0. Dionisopoulos, Kay, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg voting 'yes'. Laging absent.

Certificate of Appropriateness for inscribed plaques in the Spirit of Nebraska Pathway of Nebraska's Centennial Mall, in the Capitol Environs District.

Zimmer stated that he has not received any material on this item, so it will be delayed to a later meeting.

Recommendation on redevelopment project at 1421 P Street in the Capitol Environs District, and Certificate of Appropriateness for work at and adjacent to 1421 P Street.

Jones stated that they intend to fully renovate the building at 1421 P Street to apartments. They are working with the City on the redevelopment agreement which also includes vacation of the alleyways. It

will be used as a courtyard with some greenery, picnic tables, and a barbecue. It can be put to much better use than what it is today. The previous owners had neglected the building and there is water damage on the front of the building. They will remove whatever brick is necessary and repair it. There will be new windows, a new front entry door, and they will repaint the concrete on the lower portion. They are working with LES to bury the power lines. They will remove the graffiti, remove the trash chute, and repair the fire escape. Their biggest concern is safety and security for their tenants. They also want to remove the exterior stairs on the east side of the building. They are proposing two new mailbox units. They are proposing three gates to secure the alley areas. They want an ornate wrought iron fence.

Ripley stated that his concern is that it will be a series of trash cans along the fence. He would hate to see another wall along the street. Jones stated that they intend it to be see-through as they do not want a big black wall.

Kay stated that the fence should be consistent with other elements on the Mall. Kay also noted that the History Museum will be renovated starting in October. He asked how they will tie the gate in to the museum. Jones stated it will have to be pushed back to the same plane.

Ripley stated that he is delighted to see the renovation on this building. He feels it will be a nice improvement. His concern was that it was going to be a dark back alley, but he can see that is not their intent.

Salem stated that this will be introduced to City Council on Monday, March 3 with public hearing on March 10. If there are any substantial changes, Zimmer will determine if it needs to go back to this body.

Steward stated that what is shown on the drawing is aluminum sash windows and the color needs careful consideration. Powell stated that they will not have the aluminum screens. Jones stated they are proposing vinyl windows because they can make them to the exact size. The color is the same color as the tan columns.

Searcy commended the design team on the project.

Dionisopoulos asked where they intend people to park. Jones stated that there is a parking garage to the west, and there may be University tenants as well.

Weinberg moved to approve the project, seconded by Dionisopoulos. Motion carried 6-0.

Dionisopoulos, Kay, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg voting 'yes'. Laging absent.

Recommendation on redevelopment project and Certificate of Appropriateness for work at the President and the Ambassador Apartments, 1330 and 1340 Lincoln Mall.

Zimmer stated that these buildings were rehabbed about 20 years ago and kept the original floor plans. These are very small units or efficiency apartments. They found these are not working well and would like to do an extensive rehab. There is little exterior change on the project. They want to reconfigure these to be 1 bedroom apartments. The item of most interest to the environs is the courtyard treatment as it has been kind of awkward. They want to move the mailboxes back up to the front door. A cast stone and metal fence is proposed between the buildings with a sidewalk and iron archway. They

are also proposing plantings in the courtyard and to the south along the sidewalk. Trash dumpsters will be moved north and will be screened.

Ripley asked if they could discourage vendor parking on entrance walks on Lincoln Mall. He then asked if the east canopy of the President that was once there will be put back in again. Zimmer stated that when it came off, it was supposed to be restored. He is pursuing where that is. Ripley stated that they are adding more concrete between the sidewalk and the porches, and he encouraged that to be more of a green space as opposed to more concrete. He also asked about the metal arch over the entrance and suggested making that the full width of the supporting piers. He feels it would add better scale and more prestige to the building.

Ripley asked if the Commission will see the project again. Zimmer stated that the Commission is reviewing this project for the TIF elements. Ripley asked if the Commission will see the project again for review prior to any construction.

Steward stated that this will never be what it could be as long as a majority of the tenants are one paycheck away from being homeless. At the same time, its location presents such high value in terms of good housing opportunities. He is not sure what multi-million dollar improvements are going to do unless there is a major change in the management of the occupancy status. Zimmer stated that they are working to stabilize the occupancy by producing better units. It also meets a significant downtown housing need.

Dionisopoulos stated that she is concerned about parking. Zimmer stated that this produces a slight reduction in the overall units.

Weinberg moved to approve the TIF aspects of the project, and noted that the Commission appreciates the direction they are heading and would like more details in the future, seconded by Nalow. Motion carried 5-0. Dionisopoulos, Kay, Nalow, Searcy and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Steward abstaining; Laging absent.

Miscellaneous: staff report, etc.

Zimmer stated that he has added the section on the East Capitol District Planning recommendation to the Commission's Annual Report.

Zimmer noted that he has been asked to make contact with Public Works on the traffic light style on Centennial Mall, and has done so. The matter will be brought to the Commission at a future meeting. Hansen stated that he would like to eliminate the overhead arms on the Mall. Zimmer stated that Roger Figard has concerns about the timing as the design of the project is at a very advanced stage. Figard also stated that there might be a particular challenge on O Street. The other piece that could be challenging is that these allow the support column to be further back, and to get corner units installed might require changes to the streetscape design. Nalow stated that it is not cheap to redo the traffic signals, and at the time, Public Works was set on the type of traffic signalization. Steward stated that there are some positive characteristics to the traffic arm, such as the light and traffic signal being on one pole. Another consideration is color treatment of the poles. The lighter color is less intrusive. Hansen stated that we have done so much work on the Mall to improve it, and it is a shame to see these signals intruding into this vista.

Steward asked that Public Works be invited to the next meeting to have this discussion.

Searcy stated that there will be a news event tomorrow at the capitol on Centennial Mall and the upcoming sesquicentennial.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:31 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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