

## MEETING RECORD

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

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, April 23, 2015, 8:00 a.m., Conference Room 214, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Christie Dionisopoulos, John Kay, Tom Laging, Karen Nalow, Jeff Searcy and Jon Weinberg; (Cecil Steward absent). Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong-Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Lynn Johnson and J.J. Yost of Parks and Recreation; Robert Ripley and Matt Hansen from the Office of the Capitol Commission; Kevin Abourezk of 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 March 26, 2015. Motion for approval made by Weinberg, seconded by Nalow and carried 4-0: Dionisopoulos, Nalow, Searcy and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Kay and Laging absent at time of vote; Steward absent.

### **A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR INSCRIBED PLAQUES IN THE SPIRIT OF NEBRASKA PATHWAY OF NEBRASKA'S CENTENNIAL MALL**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** **March 26, 2015**

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

Searcy recognizes all the hard work that has gone into this and appreciates it.

Dionisopoulos noted that there is a minor change to the text submitted. The plaque for Sheila Dickinson Dinsmore Graff should be honored by the Lincoln Community Foundation.

Lynn Johnson stated there has been a half million dollar gift to Centennial Mall. The plaque should recognize the foundation as well.

Ed Zimmer stated it has been challenging to write the shorter captions for the smaller plaques. Dionisopoulos stated that the remaining \$1,000 donations will be challenging to get meaningful information in such a small number of characters.

**ACTION:**

Dionisopoulos moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the plaques as presented, and seconded by Weinberg.

Johnson noted that two of these are new. He wanted to make sure all of the Nebraska Hall of Fame members are mentioned. They were not included on the list previously. The next Hall of Fame member will be designated in 2019. They will continue to add plaques for those every five years.

Zimmer stated that it is at the Mayor's suggestion that those plaques will contain "footnote" line mentioning the Nebraska Hall of Fame.

Motion for approval carried 6-0: Dionisopoulos, Kay, Laging, Nalow, Searcy and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Steward absent.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

- **SODO Study**

Searcy noted that last month, this commission submitted a request that they would like to have some involvement in the SODO group taking a look at some sweeping and wonderful improvements. The commission asked Searcy as Chair to reach out and see if some Capitol Environs members could assist in the efforts of the study. Laging has been with this study since the beginning.

Laging has already attended a meeting or two. Kay has worked with the consultant. The consultant used to be a Planning Director in St Louis. He is a very bright guy.

Kay is very impressed. He attended the kick-off meeting for the stakeholder committee. It is a large group with members from education, social service and other areas. Zimmer attended also.

Zimmer noted that the city didn't hire this consultant, the community foundation did. This is a private endeavor with the assistance of Jon Carlson of the Mayor's Office. There will be further meetings with city departments. They are already working with our GIS. This is a big area from A Street on the west to 17<sup>th</sup> Street. There is a narrow portion of downtown from 10<sup>th</sup> St. to 14<sup>th</sup> St. Laging noted that Lincoln Mall and Goodhue Blvd. are included. This is a very diverse

neighborhood. Zimmer stated the area is 93 percent rental. There are many diverse neighborhoods within this area. There is an upcoming week-long charrette. It is a key step along the way. There will be an opportunity for anyone to come by during the week. He believes it will be held the first week in June.

Laging believes there will be an open public meeting before this event.

Ripley wondered why Centennial Mall was excluded. Zimmer replied that the core downtown wasn't included as it has had close attention in recent planning studies. TIF might become a strategy, but he doesn't believe it shaped the study area.

Laging questioned the role of Sinclair Hille. Kay replied they are supporting with catalytic projects. Along with the steering committee meeting, there were one-on-one meetings gauging interest in what it would take to create a project in which investors would be interested. They discussed potential construction costs, etc. They will be folding this into the larger report document when this is completed in approximately September. This is about a six month effort.

Weinberg wondered if the study will be analyzing what is currently built and what might be proposed for an area. Kay stated they are just testing what they see as the strengths and growing them out. They don't want to make recommendations on projects that aren't viable.

Laging is not clear as to what the end result of the plan is. Would a plan be adopted by the city if they propose an overlay zone? Zimmer believes that in order to have durability and a long lasting effect, a potential subarea plan to the Comprehensive Plan could be proposed. He doesn't know if they have even crystalized this enough to know the final steps. They are just beginning to involve the city departments that could make suggestions. We know how a subarea plan works internally. This would look a little different if we included private studies. They are very capable. This is an area that could use a good look. We are in communication with them.

Searcy is pleased we have such fine representatives on this group and will look forward to updates as things progress.

- **President and Ambassador properties**

Ripley asked what has been done on the President and Ambassador properties. There has always been an issue with a dumpster and a concrete retaining wall that projects into the right-of-way, at least visually. He questioned if this has been dealt with as part of the renovation. Zimmer replied that the plan as presented and approved does correct that.

- **Goodhue Blvd.**

Zimmer stated that the footing and ramps for the monument at Goodhue Mall have been placed. They are still aiming at having it all in place for the Near South Tour of Homes on mother's day.

Searcy stated that McLaughlin has been doing a great job with organizing everything.

- **Centennial Mall**

Yost stated that construction is going well on Centennial Mall. The construction crews are now attacking on multiple fronts. They are wrapping up on the K St. to L St. block. It is starting to get more of a finished look. Irrigation should be going in next week. That block will wrap up in the month of May.

Johnson stated that Clark Enersen did a wonderful job on the steps. Yost added that the granite seal is great as well.

Yost continued that the L St. to M St. block will be getting more attention. They are getting the area prepped. They are also started the intersection improvements. They will be tackling half an intersection at a time. It takes about a month per intersection. He believes construction on the N Street cycle track intersection will be next. Then they will work on intersections as need be. The schedule calls for it to be completed by end of July. Landscaping will be done in the fall of 2015. K St. to L St. landscaping will be done yet this spring. You will see a little bit of green on the south end. The project is on track to be completed next spring.

Ripley questioned if Parks and Rec is doing the landscaping. Yost replied yes, Parks is doing the installation.

Matt Hansen asked for any updates on the traffic arm. Yost replied there are no updates. They are waiting to get through this phase. He is hoping there will be TIF dollars available. Hansen inquired when that could possibly happen. Yost would have to talk with Public Works about availability and materials. One year from now would be the soonest. Hansen wondered about the grand opening event. Johnson will coordinate that with the Sesquicentennial Committee. Searcy sees several events. This could be, in essence, the largest celebration in Nebraska history with magnificent opportunities up and down the mall. With everyone's involvement, the timing is perfect. The contractors seem to have a great sense of pride in what they are creating on the mall. It is wonderful to see. They have done a great job.

Ripley gives them a lot of credit. They don't miss many work days. He has been very impressed with them.

Johnson has a briefing with Chancellor Perlman and Tim Claire of the University of Nebraska. There has been suggestion that there might be recognition of the University. He would bring anything before this commission.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

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