

## MEETING NOTES

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

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, October 22, 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, Thomas Laging, Karen Nalow and Jeff Searcy; (Gene Crump absent, but phoned in to listen to presentations, Jon Weinberg absent).

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong-Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Lynn Johnson and J.J. Yost of Parks and Recreation; Robert Ripley, Matt Hansen and Clark deVries from the Office of the Capitol Commission; Mike Smith and Lynne Ireland of the Nebraska State Historical Society; John Heacock of the Nebraska State Building Division; and David Landis, Steve Werthmann, Sean McClatchey and Loren Roberts of Urban Development; and 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 meetings held July 23, 2015 and August 27, 2015. Motion for approval made by Laging, seconded by Dionisopoulos and carried 4-0: Dionisopoulos, Kay, Laging and Searcy voting 'yes'; Nalow absent at time of vote; and Crump and Weinberg absent.

### **A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT THE NEBRASKA HISTORY MUSEUM, 131 CENTENNIAL MALL NORTH**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** **October 22, 2015**

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

Mike Smith stated that they are making progress on this project. They hope to have the internal work done by the first of 2016. The public opening is scheduled for April 1, 2016. The 1% art is for the east façade.

Lynne Ireland stated that this is a more refined version for the 1% art titled Inside/Outside. Inspiration came from the museum collection. Many different types of artifacts are represented. The artists also took inspiration from the Great Plains landscape. This building was first built in 1967 as the Lincoln Elks Club. She presented a revised version of the elevation. The panels are powder coated. Part of what makes this work is not only the artist willing to work with staff to select objects, but also that the medium looks different from various angles. The perforations create different views of the panels. She presented pictures of the different panels being proposed. There is a Kewpie doll, Indian artifacts, keys, musical instruments and tools. There would be 12 panels, each 5 foot by 10 foot by .25" thick. The holes are waterjet cut which helps relieve wind stress. One of the reasons they are so excited about this proposal is that it enlivens the outside of the building. They hope to be able to do the installation yet this fall, depending on the weather and temperature.

Ripley questioned if these panels are only being proposed for the east front entrance side. Ireland replied yes. The total budget limits us. Were more funding to become available, it would be possible on the north façade. Due to the trees on P St., the north façade is not very clearly visible. The artists are interested in the possibility.

Dionisopoulos wondered about the actual colors. Ireland stated that these are all renderings. The images are digital. The colors will be determined by the colors available. There is a variety of coatings available. They have been attempting to replicate sky, plant material, the color of soil and reddish hues at sunrise and sunset. Dionisopoulos wondered if something would be coming back with actual colors. Ireland replied that what is being presented today is the proposal.

Laging questioned if any consideration has been given to dropping one or two panels to the lower level. Ireland replied that part of the reason they did not suggest that is there is a window application on the first floor that was designed to provide space for vinyl clings, or a variety of changing imagery to inform pedestrians of exhibits and programming inside the museum. Another issue is on the corner there is brick work that contains a previous 1% for artwork from the 1980's. They don't want to compromise or impinge on that piece.

Kay believes that the museum store is moving to the front. Ireland confirmed. That is another reason to activate the street level space and provide good visual access into the store.

Laging inquired if the pieces will be framed. Ireland replied no. The designers and renovation team felt there was no structural need for the framing.

Nalow wondered about signage. Has any consideration been given as to how the signage would work with the existing museum sign? Ireland stated that part of the reason the images were placed on the panels where they were, was due to the signage. The artists are cognizant of the issue.

Ripley clarified that the edge of the precast has a line of LEDs that will run the length of the sign. The letters are back 6 inches or so from the edge of the precast. The panels are back from that. Ireland agreed.

Laging questioned if the panels are lit at night. Ireland replied yes.

Ripley observed the panels to be lit from the back. Heacock stated that no lighting is being proposed as part of the 1%. Ireland stated that the artists are willing to work with the Society to see what concepts are available for lighting. Another challenge is the small and tight budget. Once they get approval here, they are going to go out to bid for actual costs of the panels. That will make a difference in terms of lighting options.

Ripley would prefer downward lighting. He doesn't like to cast ambient light into the atmosphere.

**ACTION:**

Laging moved approval, seconded by Nalow.

Dionisopoulos thinks this is fabulous. It helps the museum a lot and brings the inside out. She is a little concerned about the lime green. It seems a little much. She doesn't want it to be obvious. Ireland thinks the intention was to recreate the budding willows. She believes it is more of a chartreuse color. She will pass along that concern.

Nalow believes it is finding the right hue for prairie.

Searcy would echo the compliments of the project. This is a well thought out presentation. He can recall the elements from the last meeting and the changing nature of the project. From sunrise to sunset, the panels will be ever changing. This will be an interesting new element.

Motion for approval carried 5-0: Dionisopoulos, Kay, Laging, Nalow and Searcy voting 'yes'; Crump and Weinberg absent.

**A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR CONTINUED DESIGN DEVELOPMENT OF NEBRASKA'S CENTENNIAL MALL**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**October 22, 2015**

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

Lynn Johnson stated there have been ongoing discussions with UNL about the north end. We are not ready to discuss this yet. It will be back at a future date. There will be inscribed letters in limestone. There is still discussion happening about the placement of the columns. This block is under construction. Columns could be set at any time.

Laging questioned what the columns are for. Johnson replied there is an interest to recognize the connection to UNL. The State seal in the fountain serves a similar purpose on the south end. Laging wondered about the bollards. Johnson stated they are a common element to protect the face from vehicles.

Ripley appreciates the value of the bollards. He remembers a new driver who drove onto the mall and into the fountain. Bollards are not a bad idea.

Ripley wondered if those are loose pavers in front of the wall. Nalow replied yes. The reflection plaza pavers are similar to what is on south side. Johnson added that tjeu will put skate stops on top of the wall. JJ Yost stated that the bollards will have a cut metal sleeve over them. They will not be illuminated.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Staff Report

Ed Zimmer stated that the first item is a proposal for two houses to be built, tucked around on 19<sup>th</sup> Street. This is the edge of a district. This is currently a vacant parcel. It used to be a multi-

story tenant building. The house was demolished. He believes the properties meet the Commission's standards and Neighborhood Design Standards. If the commission finds it suitable, he believes it may be eligible for a certificate of 'no material effect'. The standard is to improve the district and meet the neighborhood design standards. He believes this meets that criteria. They hope to start construction this fall.

Steve Werthmann presented designs of what is being proposed. The garages will be off the alley. A survey was done of the area. In this neighborhood, 85% of units are rentals with a lot of multi-story. They picked a couple of designs which they thought would fit in with the single family houses of the neighborhood. They thought it was important to have covered front porches which would fit into the neighborhood.

David Landis pointed out the two buildings that were removed. One house hadn't been occupied in quite a while. The multi-story structure was substandard. He believes getting rid of those structures was an advance from what was there. The this area has one of the highest crime rates in the city. A lot of that can be due to bad management. This will be affordable housing. He believes this is an investment in the stability of the neighborhood.

Ripley requested clarification that two single family houses are being proposed. Werthmann replied that was correct. The width of the lot is 94 feet. They are hoping to divide it into two equal lots, roughly 120 feet deep. The back alley will have access to the garages. Laging questioned the condition of the alley. Sean McClatchey stated it is not in great shape. Ripley asked if these will have attached garages. Werthmann replied yes. He believes that is better for safety purposes. Zimmer added that this alley serves a number of the apartments. Ripley questioned if it is paved. Werthmann doesn't believe it was ever paved.

Laging likes the front porches. Ripley agreed. He thinks that architecturally it adds a lot more character. Most houses in this neighborhood have porches all across the front. The porch helps scale the house. It gives more character.

Landis didn't want to have both buildings identical. Laging thinks the porches can vary.

Zimmer stated this is a question if the commission is comfortable that this is within the guidelines. He is hearing perhaps the applicant should give up the bay window for a bigger porch. Ripley remembers many homes in the area have large windows looking onto the front porch.

Nalow stated that this is a definite improvement.

Ripley believes the designs are consistent with the intent of the character of the neighborhood. Lagging does not want to see vinyl siding. This should be HardiPlank siding. The other commissioners all agreed. The commissioners all agreed that what has been proposed justifies a certificate of no material effect.

Kay noted that we would like to see investigation into full front porches on both houses.

- Zimmer stated that the Farmers Mutual Building has a courtyard on the south end of the building. They would like to further enhance it with a semi-wall and roof structure within the courtyard.

Ripley believes it is a distinct improvement.

Searcy wondered if they are asking for advice on placement of the element. Zimmer stated that this property is on the mall. He is not sure this element itself rises to needing much scrutiny.

Kay questioned if any information was submitted on lighting. Zimmer is unsure of lighting. This is a kind of furniture.

Searcy stated that Farmers Mutual has always been an outstanding neighbor in this area.

Ripley is okay with it.

Laging stated that it seems to him the thing is backwards. He would turn it around for sun protection. Searcy wouldn't mind seeing it again in more detail. Zimmer will inform them it can appear in November.

- Presentation of South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan

Stacey Groshong-Hageman stated that this plan will appear before Planning Commission on November 18, 2015, for approval as part of the Downtown Master Plan. The plan area is within the greater downtown area. It consists of 38 blocks. The boundaries are O St., 10<sup>th</sup> St., G St. and 4<sup>th</sup> St. and the railroad on the west. The plan divides this area into six subareas, each with unique characteristics. The overall goal is to create an urban neighborhood. There are eight

overarching goals. They are to consolidate the government footprint, transition from heavy industrial uses, organize the streets, sidewalks & trails, develop adequate open space, preserve historic resources, implement site & building design and develop a parking program. The existing boundary of the Capitol Environs district goes to 5<sup>th</sup> St. We are proposing extending it to 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

Searcy questioned if extending the district to 4<sup>th</sup> St. can be accomplished without legislation. Zimmer believes it needs state legislation. Boundaries can't be adjusted at the local level.

Laging suggested that future boundaries not go down the center of street, but at the lot line.

Searcy would like a feel for the goal of how much of the area would be considered owner occupied housing. Groshong-Hageman stated that we don't have anything specific addressing that in the plan. She believes it could be a mix, particularly in the southern area and the J St. area, could be housing.

Groshong-Hageman stated that the first area is the N Street Corridor. It would be for high density residential. There is a concept for a one way N Street which would pair with a one way M Street. There could be a public plaza and a public parking garage. Throughout the plan are a number of concepts which show the existing conditions and a concept of what it could be. 7<sup>th</sup> and N St. could have a better pedestrian area and more green space. Canopy Street could become a plaza. The Lumberworks Parking Garage and Liner Building is out for an RFP. We have seen some proposals for how to screen the LES Substation. There is a building under construction at the old Baker Hardware site. We see 8<sup>th</sup> St. as a primary connection throughout South Haymarket. There could be reuse of the Midwest Steel building. Also in the plan is an alternate for the 7<sup>th</sup> and N Street site. If not residential, it could be mixed use.

Searcy inquired if there would be a capitol vista on the green space. Zimmer doesn't believe so.

Nalow questioned if that has been looked into throughout the plan. Searcy stated that we need to preserve all opportunities to preserve or create, a capitol vista.

Ripley stated that around the County-City Building, there is street lighting on both sides that are almost impossible to look through. If it was moved to a single pole lighting where it starts to curve in, it would eliminate the visual barrier. That is just his thought for LES, Public Works and the Building Commission.

The next area is the Arena Drive Corridor. This area could have an extension of Arena Drive and L St. The area is mostly greenspace that could also be used for floodplain storage, an extension of the Jamaica North Trail and high density residential. A concept for 6<sup>th</sup> and L St. shows redevelopment of the industrial for residential uses.

Laging wondered if the alignment of the road should follow the rail. It would make it more accessible. Ripley thinks it should be parallel to the Jamaica North Trail.

Groshong-Hageman continued that Tech & Office Hub is the next area. It would support existing and new office, tech and light industrial businesses. We would encourage residential units throughout to make it more of a mixed use area and organize the parking. A lot of reuse is suggested in the area. Under the viaduct, the parking could be organized and reused for public parking.

Next is the 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> St. Corridor. This is a transition from downtown into South Haymarket. It would be more mixed use and government campus.

Ripley had to leave. He thanked everyone for the presentation. He thinks it is really great.

Groshong-Hageman continued that a concept is to consolidate the government campus and build out the north and south blocks. Decks could be added to the north parking garage and development could happen in the south parking lot. We recommend a reuse of the K St. Power Plant building to residential. 9<sup>th</sup> and J St. could have multi-story buildings.

J St. Boulevard is the next area. Staff is recommending row houses along J St., an enhanced streetscape and westward business expansion. TMCO could expand to the west. J St. has the potential to accommodate medium density residential and row houses.

The last area is the South Salt Creek Village. This area would focus on preserving historic structures and historically sensitive development. These would be small residential lots. The South Bottoms Historic Area extends into this neighborhood.

The expectation for this plan is a 20 to 25 year change. There is already a lot of change on the north side.

Searcy finds that this could be accelerated. These things can happen very quickly. He complimented staff for a beautiful job on this plan.



Searcy had to leave.

Groshong-Hageman stated that the main goal of this plan is to create an urban neighborhood. It will have public hearing before Planning Commission on Nov. 18, 2015 and then it will go on to City Council.

Kay would like to hear a summarization of other comments that staff has heard. Groshong-Hageman stated that overall there has been a lot of support. We met with a lot of property owners. A lot of business owners realize that their location won't make sense in this area in the future. The Public Building Commission has already had plans in place. They would prefer we leave out the mostly government area between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> St.

Kay knows that the Public Building Commission expressed strong opposition. They have made investment in the area. They do bonding for these projects. They want a longer investment. Perhaps there is a phasing opportunity for a period longer than 25 years, but less than 40 years. That would be one way to alleviate their concerns. Groshong-Hageman stated that perhaps we could revise some text. In general, we don't address phasing in this plan. Zimmer believes that a 20-25 year horizon is a way of saying long range. Staff is trying to give long term guidance. This would suggest a robust public conversation about what the right step would be for expansion.

Laging thinks Groshong-Hageman did a great job. He is concerned there is no energy sustainability issue in the goal statement. That, and infrastructure is not addressed. There is a lot of old infrastructure in this area. Tie that in with trees and aesthetic. Sustainability should be a goal. Groshong-Hageman stated that related to that, Planning staff just met with Public Works Stormwater staff and the District Energy folks. Those are things we will add to the plan.

Zimmer stated that the proposal is to adopt this as an amendment to the Downtown Master Plan. That is a subset of the Comprehensive Plan. This plan is catching a lot of things that are already happening. Sustainability was a high item in the discussion.

The Commission complimented Groshong-Hageman on a job well done.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.