

MEETING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, June 23, 2016, 8:00 a.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Campbell, Gene Crump, Christie Dionisopoulos, Thomas Laging, Karen Nalow, Jeff Searcy and Jon Weinberg.

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 and Matt Hansen from the Office of the Capitol Commission; and Jeff Jensen from the Nebraska State Building Division.

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 24, 2016. Motion for approval made by Weinberg, seconded by Laging and carried 5-0: Crump, Dionisopoulos, Laging, Searcy and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Campbell and Nalow abstaining.

Everyone welcomed Mary Campbell as the new member.

Searcy thanked everyone for the wonderful job that they do.

A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR GROUND (MONUMENT) SIGNS AT THE NEBRASKA STATE OFFICE BUILDING, 301 CENTENNIAL MALL SOUTH IN THE CAPITOL ENVIRONS DISTRICT
PUBLIC HEARING: June 23, 2016

Members present: Campbell, Crump, Dionisopoulos, Laging, Nalow, Searcy and Weinberg.

Ed Zimmer believes this item is straightforward. He recommends these signs are appropriate.

Campbell wondered why with so many state buildings, why there is no attempt at uniformity. Bob Ripley believes there is an intent.

Jeff Jensen stated that the present signs are from the 1980's. This is an attempt to modernize the state on their signage. This will be carried out through all facilities. The old Woodman building is the signage they would like to move forward with.

Laging asked if the state has ever retained a graphic company to review these. Jensen doesn't know if the picture presented does the sign justice. He believes the actual sign is more attractive. The state wants to be fairly moderate in their signage. They want it to be traditional enough so that it will last without being outmoded or out of style.

Ripley offered that with the acquisition of what was formerly the Woodman Building and the labor buildings across the street, Nebraska State Administrative Services, through the Nebraska State Building Administration, he gives credit to the new director who refers to this as a capitol campus and address all the buildings as a whole. He believes this is a step in the right direction to address this as more of a campus. Byron Diamond is the new Director. He is in the process of developing a campus plan. He believes this is an attempt to do greater planning. He thinks this is a step in the right direction.

Campbell sees this as a nice clean design.

Crump inquired if the font is specific to just this building or all buildings in the Capitol Environs. Jensen apologized, he doesn't have the specifics of the font. They would seek to duplicate this at their other facilities.

ACTION:

Weinberg moved approval of the two ground signs, seconded by Dionisopoulos.

Nalow questioned the font color. It looks like there is red and white text on the existing sign. Is the new sign proposed to be the same? Jensen believes so, yes.

Laging inquired if the background is blue or black. Ripley thinks it is a dark blue. Jensen thinks it is more of a bronze.

Nalow is concerned. In looking at the existing sign, the red text isn't as legible as one would hope. She is a little concerned with color selection. It looks like the existing example has a limestone base. The proposed would have a concrete base. Is there a plan for the other signs? Jensen doesn't have an answer regarding the base.

Crump inquired if there will be a prototype with the seal and type for all designs in the future. Jensen replied that this has a little different format.

Laging question why two different sizes of signs. Jensen doesn't have an answer.

Nalow believes it is not so much comparing stone to concrete, just understanding the thought behind it. Is this based off of the building or will all the signs have a concrete base from here on out? Jensen believes the intention would be for most of the bases to have concrete. This would be the standard going forward.

Zimmer believes the 1526 Building sign may be using the base that Assurity installed for their monument sign.

Searcy is trying to recall the approval of the existing sign. Zimmer knows the Assurity sign was discussed.

Searcy appreciates the update of signage on Centennial Mall.

Laging thinks an overall systematic graphic system would help the state in terms of wayfinding and where offices are located. Other states do it and it may be a good time to examine the graphics that the state has used, particularly when there are offices scattered all over.

Jensen stated that DAS has gone out for a master plan for state facilities. Part of their intent is to look at wayfinding, traffic, the whole package plus how do they brand their facilities so we have uniformity going forward. That would be their hope to achieve this from the planning study. They would look to duplicate this sign no matter where you go. They are looking at updating sign across the state.

Crump questioned if the proposed sign would be built this way or if it would wait to finish the comprehensive study. Jensen doesn't know at this point. The current sign is in disrepair. They are having issues with the base. He can come back to the next meeting and give an update with

more information. Perhaps this should be tabled until the next meeting and he can give further direction on the design.

Nalow is concerned with the combination of the red on the dark background. The other sign has white and reads well. She would like to see exploration of other colors for the sign, as well as making sure that the fonts and everything is consistent.

Ripley reminded everyone that the Capitol Environs District is 60 plus square blocks. The area immediately around the Capitol is dense with state offices. Administrative Services is a key player to what happens in the district.

Crump stated that he would like to see the applicant come back with something that addresses the details such as font size and colors. He would like to see uniformity considered. Think if this appeals to traffic. It would help to list the name of the font and seal size.

Matt Hansen agrees the more detail, the better. In the future, the approved sign can be a template for anyone to look at.

Weinberg and Dionisopoulos withdrew their motion for approval.

Jensen apologized for not being fully prepared. He will be back with more information.

STAFF REPORT AND MISCELLANEOUS:

- Centennial Mall

J.J. Yost stated that Centennial Mall is substantially complete. Parks Dept. is working with some issues to get the fountains to operate as intended. In the next couple of weeks, this should be figured out and the fountains will be on full time. That just leaves landscaping. They started this spring but suspended planting due to the heat. They are doing some aerating of the turf to let water percolate a little better. This is weather dependent as well. If we get cool weather, they will install some material. He believes a lot will have to wait until the fall. The first batch of bronze tiles have arrived. They will get those installed shortly. They don't have as many of the granite borders in the sidewalks to hold those plaques. They are waiting for more. The contractor stands ready to install those as soon as they arrive. The second batch is in production, the third batch is in the proofing stage. They are looking at recognition in September and feel they are on schedule.

Ripley wondered if there is a ball park percentage of the amount of total landscape material in place. Yost replied that all trees are in. He believes plant material is around 20 percent. It has just been too hot for planting.

Searcy extended his thanks on behalf of the Nebraska 150 Sesquicentennial Foundation. Renowned Nebraska artist Todd Williams is involved in the Nebraska Legacy Project. The artist is taking scenes from each of Nebraska's 93 counties and he believes this will be a grand exhibition on Statehood Day with the newly renovated Nebraska State Museum. Williams painted a picture of the fountains on Centennial Mall. He thanks Lynn Johnson for turning on the fountains and coordinating with the artist. The Governor's office reached out and wanted to bring to our attention that someone from Nebraska stopped in and observed that in the work being done on Centennial Mall, there are two Gage County plaques and no Hitchcock County. He assured them this would be corrected.

Yost added that immediately upon completion of adding the circular star markers on the map in the plaza in front of the State Office Building, he received a call that noted there was not 93. He has counted multiple times and believes they are all there.

Searcy is excited about the upcoming donor recognition. Dionisopoulos stated that a date hasn't been set yet. She believes it will be in the last week in September.

Johnson noted that there is a cooperative effort going on with the State of Nebraska and the Nebraska Indian Affairs. The theme will be Chief Standing Bear. That will come forward in the future. Dionisopoulos believes a design will be presented at the next meeting in July.

- Larry Enersen Urban Design Award

Searcy attended the ceremony and accepted the award. Zimmer stated that this is a little different than most of the Mayor's Arts Awards. This is by Urban Design Committee recognizing projects around the community. The long term renovation of Lincoln Mall was the winner. A couple of years ago, a jury was established to make recommendations. This is a long term project and the award recognizes the remarkable degree of change we have seen in Lincoln Mall over three decades. The awards were last week.

Ed mentioned that Tom Laging is the only member of this commission who has served since inception. This will be his last meeting. Laging stated there was study published in 1975.

Some ideas were codified a few years later. Later, there was a charrette for the areas east and south of the Capitol, then another one for Centennial Mall. This has been 28 some years in the making. This is an achievement that he feels good about. Moving on, he believes the new member John Sinclair will do a great job.

Searcy recognized Laging for his outstanding efforts and long term commitment and dedication. He has been wonderful to work with. He appreciates everything Laging has done over the years.

Johnson inquired if Laging would be willing to speak at the dedication. Dionisopoulos agreed there would be no one better.

Ripley stated that Laging has greatly understated his role. He never said no to anything that would improve the Environs. The charrette was the start of the momentum that evolved into the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission today. There was great support, but someone has to do the work and Laging was the one who did it. He created the document that ultimately went on to create this commission. It has been a long haul and Laging has done a huge amount of the heavy lifting. From a personal standpoint and the Capitol office standpoint, he just can't say enough thanks for all the work done.

Zimmer also wants to thank Laging. When he reads the 1975 book, there is also a chapter that talks about a great historic area around the Capitol. That was the foundation for the 1980 preservation ordinance. The area mentioned was the Mount Emerald district. There was no ordinance or Historic Preservation Commission yet.

Hansen added that as a former student of Laging and on a personal level, he believes his dedication is worthy of applause. There was a standing ovation for Laging.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.