

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP:

PLANNING COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND
PLACE OF MEETING:**

Wednesday, August 21, 2013, 1:00 p.m., Hearing Room 112 on the first floor of the County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Cathy Beecham, Michael Cornelius, Tracy Corr, Chris Hove, Jeanelle Lust, Dennis Scheer and Ken Weber (Lynn Sunderman absent); Marvin Krout, Steve Henrichsen, David Cary, Brian Will, Christy Eichorn, Paul Barnes, Brandon Garrett, Sara Hartzell, Jean Preister and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; media and other interested citizens.

**STATED PURPOSE
OF MEETING:**

Regular Planning Commission Meeting

Chair Michael Cornelius called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the back of the room.

Cornelius requested a motion approving the minutes for the regular meeting held August 7, 2013. Scheer moved approval, seconded by Beecham and carried 6-0: Beecham, Cornelius, Corr, Lust, Scheer and Weber voting 'yes'; Hove abstained; Sunderman absent.

The next item of business was election of Chair and Vice-Chair for a two-year term. Hove nominated Jeanelle Lust as Chair, seconded by Beecham. There being no other nominations, Jeanelle Lust was elected Chair on a vote of 6-0: Beecham, Cornelius, Corr, Hove, Scheer and Weber voting 'yes'; Lust abstained; Sunderman absent.

Cornelius then nominated Chris Hove as Vice-Chair, seconded by Beecham. There being no other nominations, Chris Hove was elected Vice-Chair on a vote of 6-0: Beecham, Cornelius, Corr, Lust, Scheer and Weber voting 'yes'; Hove abstained; Sunderman absent.

CONSENT AGENDA

PUBLIC HEARING & ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

August 21, 2013

Members present: Corr, Weber, Beecham, Scheer, Lust, Hove and Cornelius; Sunderman absent.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items: **CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 13015, COUNTY CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 13014 and COUNTY SPECIAL PERMIT NO. 04058A, amendment to Lakewood Hills Community Unit Plan.**

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Item No. 1.1, Change of Zone No. 13015, was removed from the Consent Agenda and scheduled under Requests for Deferral.

Cornelius moved approval of the remaining Consent Agenda, seconded by Hove and carried 7-0: Corr, Weber, Beecham, Scheer, Lust, Hove and Cornelius voting 'yes' Sunderman absent.

Note: This is final action on County Special Permit No. 04058A, unless appealed to the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners by filing a letter of appeal with the County Clerk within 14 days.

CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 13015,
FROM AGR AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
TO R-1 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT,
ON PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED
AT FRONTIER ROAD AND HIGHWAY 2.
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

August 21, 2013

Members present: Corr, Weber, Beecham, Scheer, Lust, Hove and Cornelius; Sunderman absent.

The Clerk announced that the applicant has requested an 8-week deferral to work with the neighbors.

Cornelius moved to defer, with continued public hearing and action scheduled for October 16, 2013, seconded by Hove and carried 7-0: Corr, Weber, Beecham, Scheer, Lust, Hove and Cornelius voting 'yes'; Sunderman absent.

There was no public testimony.

SPECIAL PERMIT NO. 1219L
FOR THE EXPANSION OF
BRYAN MEDICAL CENTER EAST BY
REDUCING THE FRONT YARD SETBACKS
ALONG SOUTH 48TH STREET AND ALONG SUMNER STREET.
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

August 21, 2013

Members present: Corr, Weber, Beecham, Scheer, Lust, Hove and Cornelius; Sunderman absent.

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Staff recommendation: Conditional approval.

Staff presentation: **Paul Barnes of Planning staff** presented the proposal for an amendment to the special permit to expand Bryan Medical Center East to renovate and expand the existing Emergency Department, with most of the changes taking place along Sumner Street and South 48th Street. The expansion of the existing ambulance bay will reduce the setback along Sumner Street down to zero just for the portion containing the ambulance bay and not the entire site.

Barnes explained that the other reduced setback is for the proposed expansion of the parking lot along South 48th Street which currently accommodates 14 vehicles. The proposal is to expand that parking lot to 30 parking spaces. That part of the site is subject to a 40' building line district along South 48th Street, so in measuring from the building line district to that setback, it would reduce the setback to 6 feet. There would still be 10 feet of green space area between the setback and the property line to South 48th Street.

Barnes also explained that this is a two-phase project so that the Emergency Department can remain in operation during the expansion. The first phase will be the expansion of the parking lot, followed by the ambulance bay as well as a temporary parking lot located on the Bryan Home lawn. In conjunction with the first phase, there is a staff recommendation to have a landscape plan for the temporary parking lot to be submitted prior to obtaining a building permit. That landscaping plan would be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission and then reviewed and approved by the Planning Director. The Historic Preservation Commission is aware of this project and, with the historic significance that relates to the Bryan Home, the Historic Preservation Commission is in concurrence with the staff recommendation.

Barnes suggested that the Comprehensive Plan does acknowledge that hospitals and health care facilities are located within residential areas and encourages that they remain in the future and remain viable for the demand and the need of the community. Staff believes that, with the conditions of approval, this application is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and in keeping Bryan Medical Center East viable at this location.

Proponents

1. **David Reese**, Vice-President of Clinical Support Services for 16 years for **Bryan Medical Center**, presented on behalf of the applicant, stating that the reason for this project includes issues with the Emergency Department from a facility perspective. One of the biggest issues has to do with access into the emergency room. They currently have 34,000 emergency room visits on east campus per year, and this continues by multiple percents over the years. The existing 14 parking stalls for the Emergency Department do not even cover the patients seen in the emergency room now. The biggest difficulty for

patients is that they have to walk up a ramp from the parking lot if they are not dropped off at the door. In addition, it is very difficult to maintain the ramp in the winter months and inclement weather.

Beyond the shortage of parking and the ramp from the parking lot, Reese explained that another issue is confusion. The front of the Emergency Department is also the ambulance bay. This is not good from a confidentiality standpoint, and visitors are confused as to whether they can go into that area because they see the ambulances. Then they go to the parking lot and have to walk up the ramp.

Reese also observed that security is another issue that needs to be improved, especially in the ambulance bay. The proposal includes a garage door that goes up and down for the ambulance bay.

Reese then displayed the footprint of the existing Emergency Department. This project will expand the number of rooms and the capacity for storage. The reason the Emergency Department is kept on second floor is because that is where the radiology, cardiac and surgery departments are located. The services on second floor will also be expanded.

2. Wade Stange also testified on behalf of the applicant. He explained that there are also some internal issues driving this proposal. He showed the current layout of the Emergency Department. With patient volumes increasing, the project will increase the number of rooms from 16 to 23, a 50% increase. The demographics at East Campus show a need for better access and privacy to protect the dignity of the patients.

Stange then explained the external improvements to help address some of the issues. The reduced setback along South 48th Street will allow them to double-load the parking lot. By expanding the parking lot to the north and to the west, they can expand it to 30 cars for off-street parking.

In addition, they will remove the ramp and enclose the walkway and create a stair and elevator tower that can be accessed from the parking lot. There will be a covered patient drop-off for visitors that are not arriving by ambulance, which is particularly important to the elderly patients. There will be an ambulance garage to protect patient privacy and provide a better working environment for the EMT workers bringing patients to the hospital.

Stange reiterated that the synergy on second floor is very important. Because of the proximity to the cardiac, radiology and surgery departments, second floor is the optimum location for the Emergency Department. The expansion will increase the Emergency Department in size by double, increasing the number of beds from 16 to 23. The rooms will be more similarly sized than they are now, with a few identified for quick-in and quick-out access. This will provide better collaboration of services in a central core.

With regard to phasing, Stange explained that the existing Emergency Department will remain as-is in Phase 1. The access drive off of Sumner Street and the existing parking will also remain in Phase 1. The first phase will include construction of the new ambulance garage with new curbcut off Sumner Street. At the end of Phase 1, they will need to borrow the south lawn of the William Jennings Bryan Home for a period of time, with access to the Emergency Department off of Sumner Street. A temporary drive will be created with some limited parking. During Phase 2, the Emergency Department will be moved to an abandoned cardiac ICU area with 16 rooms. Phase 2 includes renovation of the existing Emergency Department area; construction of the parking lot, expanding to 30 stalls; and enclosing the new walkway and entrance canopy.

Following occupancy, Stange stated that the site will be fully restored. The applicant is in the process of developing a landscape plan for review by the Historic Preservation Commission and approval by the Planning Director prior to building permit. The screening along South 48th Street will be improved so that the neighbors will not see vehicle headlights. Vehicles will access along the west side, and egress off the east side of the ambulance garage.

Reese and Stange expressed appreciation to the Planning Department staff. This has been a three-year project and they have met with staff multiple times. It was a great collaborative effort. Reese also advised that they held neighborhood meetings in June, and will meet with them again as the project is phased out.

Corr inquired how the applicant decided who to invite to the neighborhood meeting. Reese stated that they included a broad spectrum of the neighborhood from South Street to A Street, from Cotner Boulevard to South 52nd Street, knowing that to be the biggest component that would be affected. They also invited the contact for the South 48th Street Neighborhood Association. There were a total of 8 people who attended the neighborhood meetings, and they were very supportive. The physician of the Emergency Department also attended the neighborhood meeting. There were a lot of comments about the inconveniences now. Corr confirmed that the people across on 48th Street were notified and the applicant indicated that they were.

Lust inquired as to what percentage is ambulance drop-off versus private drop-off. Reese estimated it to be about 40% ambulance.

Beecham commented that she has been to this emergency room and it is really confusing on where to enter, so this is a great idea. She referred to the picture of what the south side of the ambulance garage will look like. Will there be windows on the garages? Reese stated that there will be windows but they will be higher up for privacy purposes.

Beecham inquired about the height of the landscaping. She does not want someone to be looking out at an 8' brick wall across the street. Stange showed a photograph of what exists today and what is being proposed. They will have to reconstruct a concrete retaining

wall but will put in some stone for a base and provide more pedestrian scale plantings. They will need to be cautious of the sight line by Sumner Street where people exit the garage as well as egress from the ambulance bay. Reese added that the goal is to make it as pleasant and pleasing as possible. Bryan wants to be a good neighbor. The windows are placed higher for safety purposes as well as confidentiality.

Beecham expressed appreciation to the applicant for being so careful with the historical building and restoring it afterwards.

There was no testimony in opposition.

ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

August 21, 2013

Hove moved to approve the staff recommendation of conditional approval, seconded by Beecham.

Lust believes this looks like a great project for the community that is much needed. Improving the Emergency Department and the public space for patient drop-off is a great idea and it appears to have been carefully thought through.

Motion for conditional approval carried 7-0: Corr, Weber, Beecham, Scheer, Lust, Hove and Cornelius voting 'yes'; Sunderman absent. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Please note: These minutes will not be formally approved until the next regular meeting of the Planning Commission on September 4, 2013.