

MEETING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP:	URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:	Wednesday, March 4, 2009 3:00 p.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 2 nd Floor, 555 South 10 th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Margaret Berry, Mike Eckert, JoAnne Kissel, Michelle Penn, Gordon Scholz and Scott Sullivan. Mary Anne Wells absent.
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Bill Schmeeckle (Assurity Life); Lowell Berg, Dennis Scheer and Jeffre Chadwick (The Clark Enersen Partners); Dallas McGee (Urban Development Department); JJ Yost (Parks & Rec Department); Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department.)
STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:	Regular Meeting of the Urban Design Committee

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Accept meeting notes of February 4, 2009

Kissel moved to approve the February 4, 2009 meeting notes, seconded by Mike Eckert. Motion carried 5-0. Eckert, Kissel, Penn, Scholz and Sullivan voting 'yes'; Berry and Wells absent.

Plaza at 27th Street pedestrian bridge

JJ Yost stated that two years ago, the Parks & Rec Department presented the bridge over MoPac Trail to the Committee. He stated that construction is on schedule with a completion date of the end of May. Phase 2 is concerning what to do with the plans under the bridge. They are working to complete the pedestrian plaza space. They are proposing concrete pavers that would create an image of the MoPac train. Before the approach spans, there is a connection to 27th Street. The ramp would tie in to the plaza. There will be plantings of shrubs and low maintenance plants. At the request of the business owners, they are proposing a fence along the convenience shop. There is an opportunity for historic and interpretive signage on the bridge piers. They are also considering inseting some panels. There is lighting on the piers. There will be a bike rack, and other pedestrian furniture is being proposed. The area is not intended to be a gathering place or an attractive nuisance.

Sullivan asked why they are developing the plaza. Yost stated that it is very difficult to maintain soft landscape so they felt there was a need to do some type of hardscape. The North 27th Street Business District has driven that there be some type of plaza space. This is Business Improvement District funding that is supporting this plaza.

Committee members expressed concerns with making the area look like a mini-park yet the intention is to not have it be a gathering space.

Sullivan moved to have the Parks & Rec Department reconsider the plan to make it more friendly, open to the sidewalk, not so isolated, and to become more of the 27th Street experience; it was seconded by Scholz. Motion carried 6-0. Berry, Eckert, Kissel, Penn, Scholz and Sullivan voting 'yes'; Wells absent.

Recommendation on urban design aspects of Assurity redevelopment project, R to Q Streets, 19th to 21st Streets (Urban Development Department)

Dallas McGee stated that the Assurity redevelopment project is a unique site, a site that is in transition. They view this as the lead development in Antelope Valley, and they hope many more exciting things will come because of this.

Lowell Berg noted that the Assurity project is a 2 phase project. There was extensive site analysis on how to site the building and garage. The building orients to the east to Union Plaza.

Scheer stated that many of the site issues are generated from the fact that Antelope Valley is directly east. They tried to bring the greenspace from the park into the Assurity site. The 21st Street right-of-way is developed as contiguous park. There are sustainable elements they are developing as part of the site. They are trying to achieve LEED Gold status. There is a parking garage with possible public use. The building will be raised 4 feet from the existing elevation so they don't have to contend with the FEMA re-mapping. It also helps with functional and aesthetic aspects.

Chadwick stated that there will be green roof systems. The goal is to take advantage of the views into Antelope Valley. The material selection will be rough and smooth stone, glass, and green material. Currently they are looking at opportunities to bring green up on to the walls of the garage as well, but this has not been approved by the Assurity Board.

Zimmer explained that this is coming to the Committee for recommendation on a public/private development project. The project will come back to the Committee for design standards review at a later meeting.

Scholz expressed a concern with the visual prominence of the parking garage on the Antelope Valley Parkway. Eckert and Penn agreed with Scholz. Scheer stated that they are committed to making the garage walls a green zone. He stated that they looked at many site options and felt this was the best layout. Berg added that there are many factors which lead them to the proposed layout.

Committee members felt that providing as much softening as possible on the west side of the garage is important.

McGee stated that they are currently working on the redevelopment plan, which is scheduled for City Council public hearing on April 6. The redevelopment plan does reflect the proposed site plan.

Committee members applauded Assurity on the plan and for staying in the center of the City.

Enersen Urban Design Award

Zimmer presented photos of the Harris Overpass, which is a public project for consideration for the Enersen Urban Design Award. Suggestions for a private award included the housing project on Vine Street (Liberty Village) and the 9th and South Street Grill.

A motion was made and seconded to award the Harris Overpass project the public award and the Liberty Village housing project the private award. Motion carried 5-0. Berry, Kissel, Penn, Scholz and Sullivan voting 'yes'; Eckert and Wells absent.

Staff Report/Misc.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

***Please note that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Urban Design Committee. ***

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