

## MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Tuesday, June 3, 2014, 3:00 p.m., Room 210, County/City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tom Huston, JoAnne Kissel, Gill Peace, Michelle Penn, Michele Tilley and Mary Anne Wells. Scott Sullivan absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Elsey (Elsey Partners); Bradley Buser (Prime Design); Wynn Hjermsstad & Ernie Castillo (Urban Development); Marvin Krout, Stacey Hageman & Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Urban Design Committee

Chair JoAnne Kissel called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

### **Adoption of meeting record of UDC meeting of May 6, 2014.**

Huston moved approval of the meeting record of May 6, 2014, seconded by Peace. Motion carried 5-0. Huston, Kissel, Peace, Penn, and Wells voting 'yes'; Tilley absent during vote; Sullivan absent.

### **Discussion of exterior materials on redevelopment projects (UDD).**

Krout stated that this agenda item is a request from the Mayor for the Urban Design Committee to review exterior building materials. The Mayor is interested in advice on what to look for in the future. Krout added that since Elsey was here presenting on another item, he asked them to give their opinion on building materials.

Buser stated that they are proposing a brick veneer on their Y Street Apartments. It is a thin brick made of kiln-fired clay and is very durable. That allows them to do the full height façade. It can be installed on a metal panel or over a stucco base. They are also using the cement panel systems.

Kissel asked if this ties in to the Neighborhood Design Standards (NDS). Krout stated that the NDS are very broad. He was more interested in projects where the city is providing money.

Peace stated that he is not opposed to thin brick. Thin brick is indistinguishable when it is installed correctly and like real brick would be installed.

Hjermsstad stated that the Mayor has asked in meetings if a project is using real brick. She commented that it would be useful if there was some mechanism whereby this discussion from the Committee could be relayed to the Mayor.

Penn stated that she doesn't believe the Committee has ever said 'no' to a specific product. We want to take the broadest allowance for design ability, and the way to do that is not to disallow materials.

Hjermstad stated that in terms of TIF projects, the Mayor wants to get good quality products that will stand up over time and be sustainable.

Kissel stated that the durability of the product is important. When the City's money is in a project and it looks like it is going to be torn down in 20 years, that doesn't look like a good use of the City's money. Construction is also another part of the process.

Buser stated that the weak link of thin brick is the product that it is applied to. The wood behind the brick will deteriorate faster than the brick.

Huston stated that there should be a process where materials and colors are identified. The redevelopment agreement does include several reviews by the City.

Hjermstad stated that there are process concerns as well from the redevelopment agreement to applying for the building permit.

Kissel stated that there are multiple areas to consider that warrant further discussion.

### **Y Street Apartments (TIF-assisted redevelopment project), North 10<sup>th</sup> & Y Streets (Else Partners)**

Else stated that they have redesigned a few things for the Y Street Apartments and gained 3 extra parking stalls. The general consensus at the last meeting was to screen things and minimize the impact to the north. They are proposing some tall, slender columnar plants and a landscape median which will screen the parking lot and the headlights going to the north.

Buser stated that there are watershed issues so they have retaining walls on the south side of the project. They have done some landscaping to spruce up the front of the project. They are taking more right-of-way, which is bumping up to 13' to accommodate the floodplain issue. Most of the other items in the project remain. There is still the entry plaza with the landscape planters. There is a stair-step transition with the height of the buildings.

Wells questioned the arborvitae in the median. She suggested using ornamental grasses and hearty shrubs. The arborvitae will have gaps and a variation in height. She also suggested adding some variety.

Penn asked how many parking spaces will be used. She wondered if the road adjacent to the residential will be used. Else stated that the majority of that will not be used. Penn commented that the landscape screening is a good idea.

Kissel asked about the neighborhood meeting. Buser stated that it went as well as expected. Many of the complaints were mentioned in the previous meeting, such as parking, fire access, the busyness of Y Street, and environmental contamination of the site. There was not a lot

about density. Elsey stated that DEQ did some soil samples and found that there wasn't enough contamination for further study. Buser stated that there were concerns if they were meeting the no-fill requirements of the area. There were some people who were very encouraging as they felt it would establish an edge and create an identity. No one addressed the appearance of the building. The comments seemed to be more functional. There were approximately 40 people there. The vast majority of the comments were related to traffic.

Kissel commented that they have addressed the concerns the Committee expressed at the last meeting.

Peace stated that he likes the wall as it grounds the building and softens it and makes it look like it's not a building in the floodplain. He commented that it would be nice if there was a more obvious front door to the building. Buser noted that the most obvious front door would be on the southeast corner. Peace stated that just a little more celebration of that entrance would make it obvious that it is the front door.

Wells moved to approve the project with the changes discussed, specifically to look at the plant materials and screening and to change the plant materials to ornamental grasses, shrubs and shade trees, seconded by Huston. Motion carried 6-0. Huston, Kissel, Peace, Penn, Tilley and Wells voting 'yes'; Sullivan absent.

#### **Parking Lot at 27<sup>th</sup> & R Streets (Scott Sullivan and Ernie Castillo of UDD).**

Castillo stated that in continuing the redevelopment on N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street, the City purchased two properties on N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street: 344 N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street and 350 N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street. These are vacant properties and in disrepair. 2715 and 2721 R Street are two single family homes that made the area hard to redevelop as the owners were not interested in moving. 340 N. 27<sup>th</sup> is a very busy convenience store. They talked with the N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street Business Association and hired an architect to design the parking lot. They want to landscape it and make it look nice. They will lease the lot to the convenience store. They are using TIF for the design and construction of the lot. The North 27<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District will maintain the lot. There is an irrigation system. 2715 R and 2721 R bought 22.5 feet from the lot south and 2715 R bought 8 feet from the west. Part of the project is a turn lane/deceleration lane onto R Street to the east and paving the north-south east-west alleys.

Wells stated that there is a fence along the west side with some berming about 1-1.5 feet high. They are proposing honey locust trees. There is a 6 foot sidewalk next to the turn lane. There are some shade trees of 90% coverage of evergreens and ornamental grasses. On the north side, there will be a 6' solid fence. Up against that will be shrubs and ornamental grasses with wood mulch. On the west side, there is a 6' chain link fence with ornamental grasses and shade trees. The two islands each have a shade tree, some shrubs and low-growing sumacs with wood mulch. There are power sources for outdoor events and food trucks.

Castillo stated that without the two properties, it made it hard to redevelop the whole area. They felt if they could lease it to the tenant and create a functional parking lot, they are eliminating blight and bettering the current situation. They are estimating construction costs at \$115,000-\$120,000 for the parking lot.

Kissel asked if all the parking is for the convenience store as it seems like a lot of parking for that use. Castillo stated that it is. Hjernstad stated that the parking lot may not be full, but it will get a lot of use. Right now, there is a food truck right up against the building, and there is the potential for more food trucks.

Penn stated that she is surprised that you go into the decel lane and then almost make a u-turn to get into the parking lot. Castillo stated that Public Works has reviewed the plan and approved it.

Krout stated that the right-turn lanes don't do a lot to reduce traffic congestion. Hjernstad stated that they had many discussions with Public Works and Law because the access was not going to be granted.

Kissel stated that they applaud the heavy use of landscaping, but questioned if there are other alternatives that makes this a more logical layout. Hjernstad stated they have reviewed this with Public Works and the engineer. It is a landlocked little piece of land, and it's not perfect, but it is the best alternative.

Tilley stated that this is a great improvement, but questioned if people will use the parking lot as planned. Wells stated that she thinks people will figure it out.

Huston moved approval of the project highlighting the attractiveness of the landscaping and improving the blighted neighborhood. Kissel offered a friendly amendment that they would encourage them to look at an improvement to the layout. Castillo stated that they could ask the engineer to provide a response to the Committee on the layout. Wells stated that they could look at extending the island to the north so there is a visual barrier and a cue that the driver has to take a right.

Motion carried 6-0. Huston, Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Wells abstaining; Sullivan absent.

### **Resolution.**

Krout stated that we prepared a certificate for Scott Sullivan, whose term on the Committee has expired. He has been a member of the Committee for 14 years and brings a lot of expertise to the table.

**Misc. and staff report: upcoming items.**

Krout stated that he received a call from Parks & Recreation on the unveiling on June 6 of 'Reflection' which is a statue in the roundabout at 9<sup>th</sup> and Salt Creek Parkway in North Bottoms. This is art that is being relocated. He noted that this Committee should have been a part of the decision-making process.

Kissel commented that she had said that she was going to try to organize a table at the Arts Council Award for the Committee, but they were sold out.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 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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