

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Tuesday, August 5, 2014, 3:00 p.m., Room 210, County/City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tammy Eagle Bull, Tom Huston, JoAnne Kissel and Gill Peace; (Michelle Penn, Michele Tilley and Mary Anne Wells absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Marvin Krout, David Cary, Stacey Groshong-Hageman, Paul Barnes and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; and Hallie Salem of Urban Development.

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

Chair JoAnne Kissel called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Kissel welcomed Tammy Eagle Bull to the committee.

Ed Zimmer announced that Mary Anne Wells contacted him and indicated that she would be resigning from the Urban Design Committee due to scheduling conflicts with a new job.

Kissel then requested a motion approving the meeting record for the regular meeting held June 3, 2014. Motion for approval made by Huston, seconded by Peace and carried 4-0: Eagle Bull, Huston, Kissel and Peace voting 'yes'; Penn, Tilley and Wells absent.

BRIEFING ON SOUTH HAYMARKET NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY

Stacey Groshong-Hageman stated this is a study that Planning staff has been working on for about one year. A presentation has been give to City Council and Planning Commission. Last week, staff conducted a neighborhood open house. The study area is south of the Haymarket and west of 10th Street. The study area is bounded by "O" Street, 10th Street, "G" Street, 4th Street and the railroad mainline. There have been many changes in the last ten years.

Existing land uses in the area are primarily public, industrial and residential. In the 2005 Downtown Master Plan, future land uses showed a lot of public, green space and residential. There were findings in the Downtown Master Plan related to the South Haymarket. Since 2005, a lot of things have already happened in this area and

adjacent to this area. There are historic resources which have been identified in the South Haymarket. The South Bottoms neighborhood is to the south of this area. Staff has identified some historic sites that are potentially eligible.

Kissel questioned if the "K" Street Power Plant is eligible for historic designation. Groshong-Hageman replied that it could be a possibility for local designation.

Groshong-Hageman continued that existing design standards apply within the area. The Downtown Design Standards apply to B-4 and O-1 properties. There are also the Capitol Environs Design Standards in the J St. corridor, west to 5th Street.

Peace wondered if the Capital Environs Design Standards go that far already. Zimmer replied it was changed two to three years ago, primarily focused on height.

Huston questioned if these design standards are compatible with the vision for this area or will they create conflict. Zimmer believes they are generally compatible.

Groshong-Hageman stated that part of this study may be to look at specific design standards for the area. The floodplain goes into a large area of South Haymarket. There is a good potential for residential. Some examples of formerly industrial districts are Pearl District in Portland, Oregon and LoDo in Denver, Colorado.

The residential concept goes along with the Downtown Master Plan. There is a potential to develop new buildings and repurpose old buildings. This could provide 1,000 to 2,000 new residential units. The "K" Street power plant was looked at. Staff is looking at that as a catalyst for other development throughout South Haymarket. There is a good opportunity for some high density residential along "N" Street at 7th Street. Midwest Steel is currently located at 8th Street and "M"-to-"N" Streets. They have no current plans to move. 8th Street and "N" Street is a prime location for entrance into the Haymarket. 6th Street and "L" could accommodate high density residential. A concept for "J" Street shows a boulevard and row houses.

24 percent of South Haymarket land is in public ownership and includes StarTran, the LPD maintenance facility, District Energy, County-City buildings and LES. The study focuses on consolidating the government footprint. The parking lot north of this building could accommodate a four story building. The parking lot to the south could be developed as well.

20 percent of the area is industrial. J.A. Woollam at 7th Street and "M" Street is looking at expanding their facility. Staff is looking at an extension of "M" Street and how that would impact the expansion of their facility.

This is a good opportunity to improve the pedestrian spaces and right-of-way. "M" Street and "L" Street could be expanded to the west and Arena Drive extended to the south. There could be a one way pair with "M" Street and "N" Street.

There could be a large amount of open space created in this area. These could be in the lowest parts of the floodplain to also provide some flood mitigation. There is the possibility to enhance the landscape along 8th Street, the “J” Street boulevard, and the 9th Street streetscape. South from Canopy Street today is a prime location for a focal point. There is a lot of opportunity to provide active spaces. There could be a better buffer created for pedestrians along 9th Street.

In regard to parking, there is a lot of potential underneath Rosa Parks Way to develop parking spaces. The south half of the Midwest Steel block is another potential site for a future parking facility.

Staff will continue to get public input. A staff advisory committee has been set up and will work over the next few months to put together a draft plan. This will go back to an open house.

Peace thinks it looks great. There are a lot of opportunities. He is curious to see how this happens in the future. He questioned if this will be a specific request for proposal, block by block, or what is the strategy? Marvin Krout replied that the Public Building Commission owns two big parcels of land. Those are being remediated now. The City has chosen a potential redevelopment team for the “liner” buildings on the Lumber Works garage. There is a more immediate opportunity along 9th Street that involves the Public Building Commission.

Staff is sharing this vision with the Public Building Commission, and with their colleagues on the City Council and County Board. The South Haymarket plan envisions a more concentrated government complex between 9th and 10th Streets. We are thinking there are higher and better uses for a lot of the City and Public Building Commission properties. There are a couple of large warehouse spaces that might be available to relocate the boxes of government records being stored at the old “K” Street power plant.

Peace asked if there is a plan to move the storage boxes. Krout replied this is not a new proposal. There is a couple of large warehouse spaces that might be available. The Benesch building is another building on “J” Street which is another building that hasn’t had a lot of investment, but the County believes is the right place for the Crisis Center.

Krout stated that staff has talked to a lot of property owners. He thinks that most see the writing on the wall. They have plans for doing something else with their property down the road. StarTran will eventually grow out of their site. There is no place to expand. The Police maintenance garage could outgrow their space in six to eight years. Midwest Steel is a key property, but it costs too much for them to move right now.

Kissel mentioned that many years ago, she was involved in three studies for housing at the “K” Street building. It was daunting due to the fact that it is such a large building and would hold a lot of units. She might be a little skeptical about “K” Street. She questioned how

this will impact the South Bottoms Neighborhood. Krout responded that staff tried to make some street connections to connect them more to the downtown area. There is the idea of doing some special landscaping on 8th Street. Cooper Park is a great resource. Making the connection would be helpful.

Zimmer stated that perhaps Parks school and TMCO could serve almost as a hinge between South Haymarket and South Bottoms.

Huston wondered if the height requirements staff is envisioning will be similar to the West Haymarket. Zimmer replied that B-4 zoning has a patchwork of height requirements. Kissel questioned if people from the neighborhood attended the open house. Paul Barnes replied that several business owners and property owners attended. Groshong-Hageman stated that all of this information is online, along with presentation materials from the open house: <http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/long/sohay/sohay.htm>

reFORM

David Cary stated that staff is also working on a package of potential commercial design standards. He is here today to provide some background, where we are at and where we are going. ReFORM is a package of design standards and zoning changes that is intended to facilitate development and foster economic growth. We want to create places and raise the quality of development. This was a topic in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. This started with the idea of the creation of functional and nice places. Part of the background research looked at over two dozen communities. Columbus, Ohio has these types of design standards adopted. Omaha has had these on the books for about six years. They have updated them on almost an annual basis. Village Gardens is an example of a community in Lincoln that has design standards built in. A core piece of this proposal is pedestrian design standards and creating a streetscape. We want to create and require some free and clear area for pedestrians, a streetscape. This is broken down into corridors and centers. The zoning would carry the design standards with them.

The idea of corridors is to bring buildings closer to the street. We believe it will create a sense of place. Centers are areas that are typically in a more suburban setting. These are more inward facing and corridors are more outward facing. Building design standards are more aesthetic in nature. The point is to raise up the quality of the buildings in our commercial areas. Cary pointed out the areas where the proposed commercial design standards would and would not apply. He noted that the Downtown Design Standards have been in place for many years now.

There are some zoning changes that need to happen. Some corridor and design standards need to be created. There is a need for landscaping and screening requirement changes. There is also a need to have the zoning of some properties changed. Parking, height and setback, process improvements, residential in and near commercial development, landscaping and screening, are all areas proposed for changes. A lot of work was done last year. Staff is going out to meet with stakeholder groups. ReFORM

committees were convened and met. Staff considered the discussion and has an improved proposal. Those with already approved site plans in B-2 and H-4 zoning districts would be exempted from the proposed commercial center design standards. He pointed out that B-5 zoning would still have to abide by the new standards. Administrative approval was found to have little value. Proposals to allow one acre planned unit developments and accessory dwelling units were removed from the package. There is a very exciting concept of a new B-1 zoning district. It is very prescriptive, neighborhood friendly and has limitations on signage. This study involves a lot of detailed information. An executive summary, an index, the legislative format version of all the changes and a sketchbook that is a visual guide to the proposal, are all available online. The next step for staff is continued outreach. In September, 2014, we reconvene the reform Committee to review the feedback. Then, staff will meet with Planning Commission to get some final direction. In September and October, 2014, we will send out notices and hold informational meetings with impacted property owners. In October, 2014, we will probably make some adjustments and by the end of the year, come up with a formal package.

Peace inquired if these standards will be in the zoning ordinance or a separate document. Cary replied that some of the standards will be in the Design Standards where the other standards live, some will be in the zoning ordinance.

Huston wondered if there will be an exception process built into the regulations. He would like to look at the details.

Krout stated that there has been a lot of different feedback. As communities are evolving, we see a lot of different building products available in the market.

There was a question and answer session about a few specific properties in Lincoln and how this would affect them.

Peace questioned when plans are submitted, would someone from Planning review them for these standards? Krout affirmed that these would be reviewed, just like we do now for other standards.

Peace asked if there was any input from AIA. Krout believes the feedback was generally very positive.

Peace was struck by how many properties these standards will not apply to. He would like to see a process where these have an incremental approach. Krout believes this is a bigger step than what Omaha initially did. We are trying to cover a lot more area. These standards involve areas that are closer to neighborhoods.

Peace asked if there were any other cities that have adopted similar codes. Groshong-Hageman replied yes. Examples are Lawrence, Kansas, Columbus, Ohio, and many others.

Kissel inquired what would be the trigger for the new standards to apply. Krout replied that would depend on many factors and the depth of changes to a property.

Peace is hoping, and guessing, this will lead to people coming in with their plans earlier. If you invest your time and realize it won't meet the standards, then you could have a problem. It is important to get the word out.

Huston wondered if this will change the site plan process. He believes that preliminary site plans will have to show more detail.

Information is available at: <http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/long/reform/reform.htm>

FURNISHINGS FOR OUTDOOR DINING AREA, FIREHOUSE SUBS, 1317 Q STREET, SUITE 130

Zimmer stated that this information came in after the agenda went out. The owner wants to do a railing like Chipotle where the railing is just open along the sidewalk. It would be a simple black fence. They would not have a liquor license. This would meet the minimum width. It would be red umbrellas and black metal chairs.

Hallie Salem stated that they have one bike rack. She believes it is their intention to move the bike rack if needed. Panda Express is next door and has an awkward shorter gray fence.

Kissel believes that ideally, the building owner should be required to have some consistency. Salem stated that the City is the building owner. She believes this current proposal is better.

Huston questioned if we can require them to share a fence. Zimmer believes it would be up to the City to resolve the matter.

Kissel asked if this has already been to the sidewalk review board. Salem replied it has been sent out.

Zimmer noted they are suggesting their business name twice on the umbrella. Salem does not approve. Regulations state that you cannot advertise in the right-of-way and we haven't allowed this in the past.

ACTION:

Peace moved approval with the condition that the names be removed from the umbrellas and, contingent on the City resolving the issue of the two fences in their final solution, seconded by Huston and carried 4-0: Eagle Bull, Huston, Kissel and Peace voting 'yes'; Penn, Tilley Wells absent.

FURNISHINGS FOR OUTDOOR DINING AREA, CIVIC PLAZA

Zimmer stated that an outdoor dining area is being provided as part of the Civic Plaza/Lincoln Community Foundation Tower Square. While the area is not on a sidewalk, it is on public property so the City is applying a sidewalk café process. The Parks Dept. will have portable furniture. The Mayor has asked to review the sign on the west wall when it is ready. It hasn't been designed yet. The City has the right to review it.

Kissel asked about the size of the sign. Salem believes they could have a larger sign, but the agreement is to have a smaller sign.

Huston thinks this is a cool space and doesn't have a problem with tables and chairs.

ACTION:

Huston moved approval of the table and chairs as presented, seconded by Peace and carried 4-0: Eagle Bull, Huston, Kissel and Peace voting 'yes'; Penn, Tilley Wells absent.

Salem asked the members if they think it is fitting to have three different types of furniture in the Civic Plaza, or if the furniture should match.

Kissel likes the idea of having them different. If people move them around, we know where they belong. Salem concurred. That was the idea.

Peace stated that as long as it is good furniture, he has no objection to it being different.

Miscellaneous and Staff Report

- Zimmer gave an update on the 27th and "R" Street parking lot. Urban Design Committee referred this back to Public Works and the architect, who said they believe it was as good as they can make it work.

Kissel thinks once they decided to sell back some land, they were boxed in.

- Zimmer revisited the discussion on appropriate materials for city-assisted projects, typically redevelopment projects. Urban Development Dept. is seeking help in advising the Mayor on redevelopment projects. Perhaps we could come up with a little descriptive paper about the right and wrong times to use different materials, their strengths and weaknesses. We can assemble a list of comments and run them by this group. There are right and wrong uses for a variety of materials. We should try to draw something up that is a kind of guide on what to watch for.

Kissel thinks there was concern that sometimes a contractor doesn't use the materials correctly. There is a breakdown in the process.

Huston noted that just two months ago, we talked about the fact that thin brick is still masonry. Zimmer understands that a lot depends on the installation.

Peace stated that this group previously talked about enforcement, and the fact that Building and Safety's responsibility is code-based and life-safety oriented, not the type of exterior materials being used.

Huston recalls we were talking about if the City would subsidize the façade treatment through TIF. Zimmer noted that TIF is described as assisting projects to rise above the minimum.

Groshong-Hageman did a little research. She called the brick industry because she saw they had a blog. They posted an article about a thin brick discussion in Des Moines. She might follow up with that. She believes it is okay to have different expectations when public money is involved.

Kissel believes if you are going to propose other than full brick, you need to bring the material to show, and explain how you are going to construct it. Salem stated that this has been required on TIF. Zimmer does not think it is a fair expectation of Building and Safety to judge materials. Urban Development should be involved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.