

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Tuesday, May 6, 2014, 3:00 p.m., Room 113 – Bill Luxford Studio, County/City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Eley (Eley Partners); Bradley Buser (Prime Design); Mark Hunzeker and Derek Zimmerman (Baylor Evnen); Buck Kiechel (Kiechel Fine Art); David Wiese (Architectural Design Associates); Kyle Brasch (Sandquist Construction); Annette McRoy (North Bottoms Neighborhood Association); Walt Bleich, Steve Spratlen, Mona Spratlen, Brian Mihulka (Citizens); Dick Young (Concorde Management); Jennifer Brinkman and Josh Berger (Tetrad Property Group); Tim Gergen, Dennis Scheer and Eric Silvey (The Clark Enersen Partners); Wynn Hjermsstad (Urban Development); Tim Sieh (City Law); Marvin Krout, Ed Zimmer, Stacey Hageman, Paul Barnes & Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

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

Chair JoAnne Kissel called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Adoption of meeting record of UDC meeting of April 9, 2014.

Sullivan moved approval of the meeting record of April 9, 2014, seconded by Peace. Motion carried 5-0. Kissel, Peace, Penn, Sullivan and Wells voting 'yes'. Huston abstaining; Tilley absent during vote.

Landscape plan for vicinity of Building IV (greenhouses), Nebraska Innovation Campus (TIF-assisted project, The Clark Enersen Partners)

Scheer stated that last month the committee reviewed the street tree plan at Innovation Campus. They have been doing some shade modeling. He presented a summary of different heights of trees and their impacts on the greenhouses. If the trees were 20' tall, they would have a shade problem on the greenhouses for 1 hour in April and in September through October. If the trees were taller than that, they would have an impact in the winter as well. A 30 foot tall tree would have an impact for 2 hours from April through June and August through October. 40 foot tall trees would have an impact for 4 hours from April through June and August through October. 50 foot tall trees would have an impact for 5 hours from April through October. There is no impact on the greenhouses if they select a tree that is under 12 feet tall.

There are three trees under 12 feet tall on the list of City approved right-of-way trees; these include Sargent crabapple, Adirondack crabapple and Camelot crabapple. They are requesting the Committee to allow this shorter tree. They plan to space these trees closer together than typical with larger street trees. The impact of shade on the greenhouses is important. Even an hour of shade has an adverse impact. The University would like to market these greenhouses so that there is full sun. Silvey presented images of the impacts on the greenhouses with the various tree sizes. Scheer stated that they would like to use the Sargent crabapple tree.

Peace stated that at the last meeting, he doesn't believe the committee was saying that they have to do street trees. He believes the charge was to do something special there. He would like to see grasses, berms and shrubs instead of trees. Scheer stated that he believes the trees are the right approach, as he believes they can do something visually pleasing there. The public landscape in the right-of-way acknowledges the use of the building. They want to make the rest of the landscape work with this and the landscape plan of the private property is well-developed with a palette of native plant materials.

Wells stated that her understanding was that the developer was going to focus on the interior of the site, not the right-of-way trees.

Scheer stated that they are trying to work with a native palette for the rest of the landscaping. There are native grasses and perennials and shrub masses around the parking lot.

Sullivan stated that he does not believe the Committee was focusing on the right-of-way. He recalls the discussion being that the shorter trees interrupts the rhythm of the 40 foot trees around it. He would rather embellish the private development. Scheer stated that they will use 12 foot tall plants on the private side as well to incorporate it together.

Tilley stated that if there is a great landscape plan, you don't need to screen it with street trees. Scheer stated that the interior landscape is going to be a great landscape.

Berger stated that initially the University was opposed to any street trees, but they went back to them with the shade study, and they were okay with the shorter street trees.

Penn stated that they were expecting berms and tiered landscaping as a trade-off for no street trees. It seems that there is a disconnect on what they were expecting.

Sullivan stated that it feels very rigid. Scheer stated that the design team does not feel strongly about having street trees. If you are doing a 12 foot tall planting, you need to space it with a rhythm. The street tree is more for the driver.

Henrichsen mentioned that the adjacent area is not downtown. It is a fairly high speed roadway, so there is a benefit of having the street trees between the pedestrians and the road.

Wells stated that in the original design of the parkway, there were trees in groups of three with large spaces between which gives it a more informal feel, so she encouraged them to look at what is there today. Sullivan stated that he likes Wells' idea of a little variety.

Wells moved to retain the street trees but look at clustering them for a more informal design, seconded by Huston. Motion carried 6-0. Huston, Peace, Penn, Sullivan, Tilley and Wells voting 'yes'; Kissel abstaining.

**PCE-Geist Expansion (TIF-assisted redevelopment project) 1711-1801
Yolande Avenue (The Clark Enersen Partners)**

Gergen stated that this is a building that is going to be a sister building to what was built 10 years ago on their adjacent property. It is a full brick façade on the side that faces Yolande, and a simpler metal industrial construction to the south, at a considerable distance from the street.

Zimmer stated that this comes to the Committee because it is a TIF project.

Sullivan moved approval of the plan as submitted, seconded by Penn. Motion carried 4-0. Peace, Penn, Sullivan and Wells voting 'yes'; Huston, Kissel and Tilley abstaining.

**Y Street Apartments (TIF-assisted redevelopment project), North 10th & Y
Streets (Elsey Partners)**

Elsey stated that they are a student housing company. They are attracted to the site at 10th & Y Streets because they believe that if people can walk places, it is better than them driving places. It is a really dynamic site right off the pedestrian bridge. There are existing homes there right now, which are mostly rental properties. There are twelve structures there. They are proposing 126 units with 210 bedrooms. There will be studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom apartments. They don't rent only to students. They anticipate some young professionals.

Sullivan asked about the zoning. Krout stated that this is zoned R-4 with some industrial. That district allows single family, duplexes and apartments up to 14-15 units per acre if you do a community unit plan (CUP). The request is to rezone it to the highest residential category of R-8. This allows up to 70 units per acre. They are also asking for a code amendment to do a CUP that gives them more flexibility on the setback.

Buser stated this is a challenging site. The railroad has a huge impact on the site which forced all the buildings to one side of the site. You end up with a lot of area for surface parking lot. That lot is well screened on the south and east sides. There are landscape islands with trees. The apartment building has a pair of courtyards for sunlight and air for interior apartments. A pool is shown in the east courtyard. The main entry near the southeast corner is a plaza with planters within the hardscape plaza. They anticipate most of the pedestrian traffic from the pedestrian bridge. It is in the floodplain so the building is required to be lifted up. The alley is very narrow and unpaved and they want to widen it and pave it. This would help tie the project back into the neighborhood. Most of the façade is a fiber cement panel system and a large amount of brick. The materials on the backside of the building are mostly brick with wide lap siding.

JoAnne Kissell asked if any of the citizens attending had comments. Bleich stated that at first he was not interested in selling but he feels the Elsey brothers have worked well through some of the problems. Generally, he feels it is important to do proper development in the City and he hopes the project goes forward.

Tilley asked Bleich if most of the area's tenants are students. Walt stated that he agrees with that.

McRoy stated that most of her neighbors are not students. There are a lot of rentals in the neighborhood, but she has seen young professionals and young families or people in transition. Her concern is to understand how the urban design standards would allow a multi-story building into an historic neighborhood.

Kissel stated that this is a neighborhood that the urban design standards would apply, so new development would need to adhere to those standards. The Committee does not typically deal with change of zone issues. They will be interested in talking about the scale of this project.

Elsey stated that they feel like the area is separated from the rest of the area.

Zimmer stated that the Neighborhood Design Standards apply to all residential zoned properties. One of the standards states that in areas where there is no prevailing pattern, such as in a CUP, the dwellings must have neighborly design characteristics while respecting the creative design elements fostered by CUPs. If we were doing a single infill parcel on an established block, we would look at the pattern of what is on the block. As proposed, this project would have no pre-existing neighbors within the Y Street blockface, and there are no residential buildings on the south side of Y between 10th & 12th. So here it is a matter of interpreting how the proposal fits the area in a broad sense, and if there are elements that would make it fit the neighborhood better.

Kissel asked if there is a plan for the parcels around it. Krout stated that there is not a plan to the level of detail that you would like to see. There is a redevelopment plan for North Bottoms but it is very general and does not designate zones that might be higher or lower density.

Tilley asked if the median alleviates some of the traffic issues. Elsey stated that there have been some traffic engineering studies regarding student housing. Because of the walking distance to the University, the traffic generation would be ½ of a typical apartment complex. Buser stated that the traffic median forces the right-in, right-out. He added that a formal traffic study has not been done, and it is not required. Zimmer commented that the median would force a right-turn only onto 10th Street.

Wells stated that she feels it is the right location for apartments, but she is not sure about the density. There is no open space or green space on the site. Elsey stated that it doesn't work financially to do less than what they are proposing.

Buser stated that there are a lot of constraints on the site. It is very disjointed, but this block is urban in nature and not suburban. If you go three blocks north versus three blocks south, they are two totally different places.

Kissel stated that she does not see it as an urban setting; she sees it as historical. The design solution is urban, but she doesn't see the area as urban context. She would be uncomfortable if it weren't for the challenging buffer that is crying for an identity, but she is not sure this is the right buffer.

Huston stated that he likes the different variations in height, and he feels it deals more appropriately with the transition. Based on the Neighborhood Design Standards, the orientation of the CUP and the existing neighborhood, that made him more supportive of the project.

Tilley asked if this neighborhood has a historic designation. Zimmer stated that it does not have a historical designation, but it is national historic register eligible.

Peace stated that he likes the project. They have shown they are working with the scale, they have added the median, and they are paving the alley. He thinks this might be a nice transition and a way to anchor the property.

Sullivan stated that his concern is on the next block north and what is going to happen to those properties on that next half block. He would like to see the indoor exterior space converted to the north side of the building. This is a tall wall up against single family residential. He thinks this is a good buffer between industrial and the neighborhood, but he is concerned with the half block north. He also believes they need to reconsider the parking lot. He does not feel it is fair to the houses north to have an unscreened parking lot immediately behind them.

Sullivan asked McElroy what neighbors are saying. McRoy stated that there is a neighborhood meeting scheduled by Eley next week. Neighbors are concerned about traffic and the change of zone and TIF. They are going to comment on issues of design standards and zoning.

Eley stated that they have talked to owners of the properties on the north side, and they have prepared a Phase II plan for the north side, but it is only in the initial phases. He feels that is a valid point on how that transition occurs on that block.

Sullivan stated that he believes the design needs a better response to the properties on the north side of the block.

Sullivan asked how much space is between the alley and the building. Buser stated that it is approximately 10 feet. Sullivan asked if that could be pushed back to create more of a buffer. Eley suggested that perhaps a fence could be put on the north side of the alley to create a buffer.

One of the neighbors in attendance pointed out that the majority of the houses on the south side of Charleston adjacent to the project area use the alley to access parking in their rear yards.

Penn asked if there is a subarea plan for this area. Huston stated that it may not be a bad idea to have a subarea plan for North Bottoms.

Krout stated that it is not an historic district, but the scale would be much different facing Charleston.

Huston moved approval of the project subject to continuing to address the concerns of the neighborhood to the north and screening of the parking lot and the scale issue as it transitions to the north, seconded by Peace. Huston, Kissel, Peace, Penn, Sullivan, Tilley and Wells voting 'yes'.

Kiechel Art Gallery Project (TIF-assisted redevelopment project), 1208 O St. (Ernie Castillo, Urban Development)

Zimmerman stated that they are proposing an art garden on the rooftop at 1208 O Street. There is a glass railing that will serve a deck. From the O Street side, you will be able to look up and see rooftop sculptures. There is LED lighting washed against the existing façade. They will replace the windows to be more energy efficient. They will have a projector with art images that will project along the sidewalk that abuts the building. They are keeping the existing building. This will provide value to the O Street corridor with some artistic elements.

Tilley asked if they have addressed the light for the neighbors. Kiechel stated that there is currently quite a bit of light from the various buildings. The only place where the light might spray out is if they did some LED on the elevator shaft. There will be some lighting that shoots down so the deck can be illuminated.

Huston asked what kind of usage they expect for the deck. Kiechel stated that it will be for special occasions. They feel it will be a neat addition to downtown.

Wells asked who will regulate what images can be projected. Zimmerman stated that there are terms in the redevelopment agreement as to what can be projected. There will not be advertising.

Sullivan moved approval the project, seconded by Penn. Motion carried 6-0. Huston, Kissel, Penn, Sullivan, Tilley and Wells voting 'yes'; Peace absent.

Public Art Licenses:

Granite Hi-Chair, 12th & R Streets

Zimmer stated that the City has received a request from Sheldon Museum to place a piece of public art at 12th & R Streets. They would like to place it on the median on R Street on the very far north end opposite Sheldon. It is a large granite high-chair that is 12 feet tall and about 3

feet wide. He mentioned he had asked the Sheldon representatives if they had a concern with damage or people attempting to climb on it, and the Sheldon felt it was not a concern.

Huston asked if there are any issues with sight triangles. Zimmer stated that Public Works has looked at it, and there are no issues.

Sullivan expressed a concern with the safety of the piece with people attempting to climb it.

Tilley commented that she feels it is a beautiful piece of art and will be a great addition.

Huston moved approval of the public art license for the granite high-chair at 12th & R Streets, seconded by Tilley. Motion carried 5-0. Huston, Kissel, Penn, Tilley and Wells voting 'yes'; Sullivan voting 'no'; Peace absent.

Pitch, Roll, Yaw, NW corner of NW 12th & W. Adams

Duncan Aviation has commissioned a local sculptor to sculpt a paper airplane in steel.

Sullivan asked if Building & Safety has looked at it for the sign standards. Zimmer stated that it is not considered a sign as there is no advertising on it. It is at the public turn to the airport.

Tilley asked if there would be signatures on it. Zimmer stated that it would have a small plaque, and signatures of Duncan employees on the support structure. Tilley noted that she feels the signatures shouldn't be dominant.

Penn commented that she feels it should not compete with the corridor landscape plans.

Huston moved approval of the public art license for the sculpture at NW 12th & West Adams, subject to it being compatible with the corridor, seconded by Penn. Motion carried 6-0.

Huston, Kissel, Penn, Sullivan, Tilley and Wells voting 'yes'; Peace absent.

Misc. and staff report: schedule of up-coming meetings, up-coming items

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:31 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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