

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: April 7, 2015, 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 210, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tammy Eagle Bull, Tom Huston, Gill Peace, Michelle Penn and Michele Tilley; (Emily Casper and Joanne Kissel absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong-Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; David Landis and Hallie Salem of Urban Development; Mike Davis and Brian Praeuner of StarTran; Kevin Abourezk of the *Lincoln Journal Star* and other interested parties.

Acting Chair Michele Tilley called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Tilley then requested a motion approving the minutes of regular meeting held March 3, 2015. Motion for approval made by Huston, seconded by Eagle Bull and carried 4-0: Eagle Bull, Huston, Peace and Tilley voting 'yes; Penn absent at time of vote; Casper and Kissel absent.

11TH & N BUS STOP IMPROVEMENTS

Brian Praeuner appeared to discuss the bus stop improvements. Mike Davis, Transit Manager for StarTran also appeared. Praeuner stated that this is the main transfer station at the Gold's Building. This is the best location for passengers. As StarTran continues to expand, this location won't work in the future. Many changes have happened in the Downtown area. There are areas of concern with regard to trash and cigarette butts, pedestrian safety and circulation and loitering. Many years ago, the idea of a fence was proposed. In discussions with the Police Dept., the fence was removed. The landscaping is poor. There is some unnecessary seating, blocked accessibility, overgrown vegetation and the area can be difficult to navigate. The seating today is staggered. Beside shelter 3, there is a building ventilation system under the cement bench for the Golds Building. They want to open the area up and make it safer. Some panels will be removed at the end of the shelters. Some off duty police officers have been hired to patrol the area at random times. It has been very effective. They are investing in some lighting under the Golds Building overhang. They are also considering an outdoor sound system and adding a bus pass vending machine. They have been working with the Downtown Lincoln

Association on low maintenance native plantings for the area. They will introduce larger no-smoking signs. He showed some pictures of the area.

Huston is interested in the comment that this is not the long term location. Praeuner would prefer an off-street location, perhaps a whole block where the buses could come in. There would be a shelter, bus pass purchasing and information, restrooms, etc. There could be different modes for parking, a bike stand, taxi cabs and such. They applied for a grant last year. They didn't get it, but ranked very highly. They plan on applying again this year. They plan on still being in the downtown area in a dedicated transportation area. It would be a good area for a bike share location.

Tilley inquired what time of day the off duty police officers are patrolling the area. Praeuner replied that based on his experience, it is in the late afternoon. It is at random times.

Tilley would like to see the ventilation system again. Praeuner stated this is the area that the top will be removed from the shelter. The seating will remain.

Tilley stated that perhaps the bench could be switched so the seating is facing the street. Huston thinks that is a plausible idea.

Eagle Bull likes the idea of plantings.

Huston wondered if anyone has considered the impact of this on other downtown plans such as the N Street Bike Plan.

Ed Zimmer stated that the construction south of this would love to have a more congenial neighbor.

Penn believes the whole area needs to be redone from an urban point of view. She questioned who is paying for this? Hallie Salem replied that the details are still being worked out.

Penn stated that if she can see an area that needs improvement, this is it. She is not comfortable walking down here. She doesn't know that the improvements being proposed will make her feel okay with the area. It is not enough yet, in her opinion. This is one of those where she feels like this is an ideal TIF project. There are issues such as security, safety and lighting. She was really hoping this would be more.

Tilley wondered if StarTran has explored completely redoing the area. Mike Davis replied that they are balancing this with an off-site multi-modal travel center. They can't see putting a lot of money in this site if we will be moving in the very near future. They applied for a TIGER grant last year. They are looking at applying again this year. They are trying to find a balance between what can be done now and what would they like to do in the future.

Eagle Bull asked if this stop would be abandoned. Davis replied no. This is a vital stop and will continue to be an active area.

Penn believes we have some really good examples in town. The UNL bus stop on Q St. by the Torn Notebook is a great stop. She would rather have two of those shelters and two open. There will be a need in the future to have a facility at this location. We can make this so much better. We can do urban design.

Huston wondered if a grant could include a retrofit of this site. Davis replied that this could be included as part of the grant. It could be submitted as the sole idea for the grant. The glass on the shelters was replaced in 2007.

Eagle Bull agrees with Penn. Perhaps this is something that can be planned and phased in steps. Huston agrees with Eagle Bull. He would like to see a phased plan as well.

Davis stated that the area is cleaned twice a day. They are looking now at stepping this up. The shelters are power washed once a month in the nicer weather. It was brought up being able to bring some art in the area, murals on the Golds Building or inside the windows facing out.

Davis stated that each glass shelter is about \$30,000.00. The expectation is the glass could be reused somewhere else because there is a lot of time left on these shelters.

ACTION:

Penn would not make a motion for approval. She wants to push this into something better. There are so many areas of Lincoln that look beautiful and this isn't one of them. Penn moved denial, seconded by Peace.

Salem wondered if this was a phased approach, if any pieces would be appropriate for removal, or if the members would approve the installation of lighting and music. Perhaps Star Tran could come back with some items for additional consideration.

Peace likes Penn's approach of denial. These are pretty small items. There needs to be a bigger plan, a better plan. Little improvements won't work. Without the roof on the shelter, everyone will back up under the overhang on the Golds Building. This needs to be a better plan. He would advise this body to encourage the city to get involved. It would be a great idea.

Penn would like to see some TIF money or a grant involved.

Eagle Bull agreed that she would like to see a phased approach and a long range plan.

Huston is supportive of not putting money in this site if there could be a better site elsewhere. A phased approach could work with this. He doesn't disagree with anything he has heard other committee members say. This is not an attractive area.

The members all agreed that they are interested in seeing a phased plan and a conceptual idea that has been thought through. They want to see how to take the bus stop and make it aesthetically pleasing. They are endorsing thoughtful change.

Motion for denial carried 5-0: Eagle Bull, Huston, Peace, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Casper and Kissel absent.

Miscellaneous

Sidewalk cafes:

Tom & Chee

Zimmer stated that Tom & Chee would like to have four tables on the 13th Street side. They have not yet been approved. This would be the same as the small square tables on the plaza. Chipotle's has tables up against the building. That is what Tom & Chee would like to do. It would be four tables, no railing and the same table as being used on the south side. It will require a sidewalk permit and a better drawing. They would like to have the same arrangement as seems to be functioning for Chipotle.

Salem stated it is their intention to bring the tables and chairs inside every night.

Amsterdam Falafel and Kabob

Zimmer stated that this establishment would like to have tables and chair on the dock on 8th St. There will another sandwich board on the building, on the dock. This is at the far end of the dock from the sushi place. This will allows more people on the dock.

Huston questioned the timeline for Tom & Chee. Salem replied that they just submitted an application for a sidewalk café. They are still working things out. The committee members agreed that they were okay with what was shown with regard to the tables and chairs, and these items are “no material effect”. Zimmer can review the final details.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.