

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: September 13, 2016, 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 214, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman, George Wesselhoft and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Wynn Hjermsstad of Urban Development; Tony Polk; Chris Erickson of City Ventures; John Badami and Daniel Siedhoff of DLR Group; Jason Kress; Pat Maloy; Jesse Franklin; Kevin Abourezk of the Lincoln Journal Star; and other interested parties.

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

Penn then requested a motion approving the minutes for the regular meeting held August 2, 2016. Motion for approval made by Huston, seconded by Kissel and carried 4-0: Huston, Kissel, Peace and Penn voting 'yes'; Tilley absent at time of vote; Casper and Eagle Bull absent.

Penn stated that she is more than thrilled and excited to see the plan for the Lincoln Children's Zoo as successful. Kissel and Peace agreed. Penn would like the Mayor to know how thrilled she is about this. Huston agrees, this will be a better project with this new design. Zimmer believes that is the power of good advice. Kissel sees this as a good move for the Health Dept. as well.

MIXED USE REDEVELOPMENT AT 48TH AND LEIGHTON (CITY VENTURES, DLR GROUP)

Members present: Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley; Huston declaring a conflict of interest; Casper and Eagle Bull absent.

Huston declared a conflict of interest, he represents City Ventures.

Chris Erickson of City Ventures appeared. He stated that this has taken a lot of time and effort. He is excited to bring it to the rest of the community and see what everyone thinks. He is excited about what is being brought forward.

Daniel Siedhoff showed a view of the site. With the architecture and quality of this node, there will be a lot of activity and density to this space. The architecture and the nuance of the neighborhood has been studied. There is a large building to ultimately be demolished. Part of Phase One is to re-face a building. 46th St. stops on the north. They want to reconnect the community. Siedhoff doesn't believe that traffic patterns on 48th St. and Leighton Ave. will be wildly affected. Building One is retail with apartments above, Building Two is ground level residential. The goal is to keep a lot of the parking. Creation of a plaza type space is desired. The site will need to be raised three feet for floodplain. There will be roughly 185 apartments at market rate in Building One. There will be many amenities, including a pool. Secured parking will be located north of Building Two. There will be tons of overflow parking. They tried to incorporate a lot of brick, building openings and windows. There will be a connection bridge between the two buildings. There will be a lot of walkable spaces.

Erickson stated that the lower building being refaced is not part of the TIF (tax increment financing) application or part of the construction plans. This is just a concept at this point.

Siedhoff reiterated that the building has to be raised three feet, and keeping some existing access points is needed. This will be similar to what is going on with the Haymarket docks. There will be ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible ramps. There will be a small landscape buffer. There is a circular type space with community seating and opportunities for community engagement spaces. As part of the vetting process for new tenants, a medical office tenant has expressed interest. They would prefer two levels. There would be apartments above. There would be a different kind of entry relationship. As you come into the environment, you engage with the large corner buildings. The bridgeway space provides a good opportunity for a sign. There would be brick along the base of the corner buildings, along with metal panel materials and flat painted HardiePlank siding in between the two materials. There is a connection on the north side. There would be fencing and screening. The intention was to be a little creative with the stair towers. It is important that the lobby and fitness space are in the middle. This is a great vibrant living space. The upper levels would be residential. Outdoor spaces are key. It is important to showcase the amenity space.

Kissel asked Siedhoff to talk more about the landscape. Siedhoff stated there will be a lot of natural grasses. There is a great opportunity with this space. Kissel understands it is more of a vision at this point. Siedhoff agreed. There isn't a landscaping plan yet. What is being shown today is the most current plan.

Penn asked what the TIF will be used for. Erickson replied it will be used for site acquisition and to raise the site out of the floodplain. It will also be used for connecting the roadways, a lot of site development, reconnect the community, grading, site prep and a little façade enhancement. The proposal functionally connects the streets. Kissel questioned if this will feel like a local street with a lot of street trees. Siedhoff replied yes. Operationally, the plaza piece will be used. The developer has created a relationship with the local farmers market. Kissel wondered if that is part of the bid. Siedhoff believes so. Zimmer stated that it will be nice to get the farmers market off a gravel lot.

Peace believes this is a well thought out plan and will be a nice project. He is looking forward to seeing this get built.

Kissel inquired if there will be any changes to the existing parking. Erickson stated that the Hy-Vee is now closed. As time goes on and leases come up for renewal, everyone's vision will be discussed. Tenants won't be pushed out. In existing Building One, there is currently a vacancy. Everyone has been asked to wait until this project was designed. Regarding the medical office option, an opportunity came up for a larger medical space. Erickson stated it would be a great tenant if he could land them. Daily employment on the site would be great and it would add needed services to the neighborhood.

Penn really likes the brick. In some recent housing projects, there has been criticism that they look the same architectural wise. She can see they might feel that way. She feels the brick is an element we haven't seen in a while. She likes the pool connection. She is curious about discussion of the Hy-Vee she has seen on social media. People really want a grocery store in this area. Is there a possibility for a grocery store that people think is necessary in this area? Erickson stated that Hy-Vee has goals. Those goals are to operate a successful business. Two Hy-Vee stores were opened near each other. The new Hy-Vee on 50th St. and O St. was opened. He doesn't feel like their vision for this property is in competition with that. Hy-Vee has been a great partner. There are other sites in this neighborhood and corridor and that can support a grocery store. There are other locations in proximity that can service that need. There is limited opportunity for a grocery store in this space.

Penn questioned if the rents will be market rate for the housing. Erickson replied yes. Penn believes people are thrilled to see a development on this side of the city. She would like to see more affordable housing being built. Erickson stated that if you look at employees within walking distance, there are some highly paid people who work for the University of Nebraska. They get in their car and drive home to another neighborhood. He thinks they can start to retain a lot of those highly paid people in this neighborhood.

Kissel wondered if there is a bike trail that runs through the property. Erickson believes there is a bike trail that follows the major drainage way, but not through this property. There are public sidewalks. The intent is to use the land efficiently, but he doesn't really want to give up eight feet to accomplish a bike trail.

Kissel stated that even though the applicant hasn't provided a landscape plan, it looks like the intent is good. Do you want to extend the same approach to landscaping? Erickson replied that it is their intent to continue this into the next phase.

Tilley thinks this is great. She is glad to see more development in northeast Lincoln.

ACTION:

Kissel moved approval of the redevelopment proposal as submitted, seconded by Peace and carried 4-0: Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Huston declaring a conflict of interest; Casper and Eagle Bull absent.

NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN STANDARDS APPEALS:

Members present: Huston, Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley; Casper and Eagle Bull absent.

- **Infill house at 4030 Calvert Street (Jason Kress)**

Jason Kress stated that he bought this property about a year ago. It was a condemned structure. He cut down a lot of trees. He wants to build a single-family house on the site. He considered many design options, but landed on something that is different. It is a bit more modern, but fits his needs. Kim Todd has offered this as a landscape project for her University class.

Penn questioned what is being appealed with this application. Zimmer replied that the Neighborhood Design Standards are difficult to apply to this project since there is no street frontage. It is accessible by the alley. It is a buildable lot. He is proposing a single-family house on a buildable lot. Building and Safety agrees that this is a buildable lot. Several standards address buildings on either side or across a streetscape. This has none. There used to be a back alley that provided an additional access. Kress added that both have been converted to permanent easements. Zimmer continued that this lot was created in the early 1940s. It was occupied as a single-family residence. He can't look at a streetscape because there is not one. Our standards don't give much information on what to do in this unusual case. It doesn't have a conventional streetscape. He couldn't approve this at staff level. The Planning Director could approve it, but he felt this application needed a little more public exposure, and review and advice from this Commission.

Huston doesn't recall such a unique space in 30 years of reviewing. Zimmer noted this was a legal residence. It was addressed between the two houses on Calvert St. He pointed out the letters of support that were provided by the neighbors. Kress added that a neighbor granted him an additional permanent easement.

Pat Maloy, 4047 Sheridan Blvd., appeared. He is a neighbor. This is a very obscure space. What he sees from the design is nothing that is historic to the neighborhood. It looks like a modern garage. He was hoping it would look like a carriage house and fit in better with the neighborhood. Neighbors will have to look at this every day. This doesn't fit in the neighborhood. Even the roof line doesn't fit. It is very intrusive. He is in opposition to this design. He is happy the shed has been knocked down.

Zimmer stated that property owners within 200 feet of this application were notified of today's meeting for the opportunity of public hearing.

Jesse Franklin, 4102 Calvert St., appeared. He has some concerns. He and his wife use the alley on a daily basis. It is how they access their garage. He wondered what happens to the alley if it has a developed property facing it as its street. He inquired if there are any necessary improvements that have to be made to the alley. Huston is not aware of any obligation. Zimmer added that this house has been there for 60 years, he doesn't foresee anything new. Franklin continued that he is concerned with people speeding through the alley. He wants to keep this as an alley. As far as the design of the house, it is not in sync with the houses around it, but he feels it will be low profile enough to not stand out.

Kress noted the lower profile enables him to not impact the surrounding trees.

Kissel questioned if there is anything about this lot that could change in the future. Will it always be a buildable lot? Zimmer replied that as the code reads, this remains a buildable lot. The zoning code can be changed by City Council with the Mayor's signature, it could become a non-conforming lot, but it would still be buildable. Never say never, but this is a buildable lot and he doesn't foresee that changing. It is a characteristic of the Neighborhood Design Standards that style is not necessarily addressed. If this were in a historic neighborhood, he would have language to say this should look like a carriage house. The standards here are less precise.

Kissel believes this is idiosyncratic on many levels. She doesn't have trouble with the style, but she wonders if a new context for this house is being created. She would like to see a great project and even encourage other good things to happen on the alley. She would like to see this better for everybody, but she doesn't have an end to that story. She is curious if the City has done any rethinking to keep an alley or insisting it is used for infrastructure. Is it time for the City to be more active and see the alley as more of a good place? Zimmer stated that departmental reaction was, this was here before and legal. The property ran down. He envisions this alley as better with a new house on it. It will be used every day and have a more active caretaker.

Kissel thinks the City could facilitate a good outcome for everyone. Zimmer believes that Urban Development sometimes has limited grant funds available to help with rocking an alley. Kissel wondered who will plow and maintain the alley in the winter. Kress plans on having the snow removal done. He has also factored rocking the alley into his budget.

ACTION:

Huston moved approval of the appeal and the proposed design due to the uniqueness of the site and the attempt to comply with the Neighborhood Design Standards in a unique manner, seconded by Kissel.

Penn inquired what material will be used for the walls. Kress was planning on horizontal metal siding on the lower half and vertical metal on the upper half, with a darker color on the lower half. Penn asked if financing has been obtained. Kress replied it is in process. Penn questioned why the applicant picked a modern style instead of something more contextual. Kress has been in design and construction his whole life. This is mostly for ease of constructability. He doesn't think it is economically feasible to build something historic today or if you can, the cost is prohibitive.

Kissel was taken aback by the style when she first saw the design. She started to look at this as being nestled in between the trees. She can see this as being a very livable space. This is a unique design.

Kress plans on landscaping the whole area. He doesn't want to mow. He believes it is important to note that all three sides had eight foot high, solid wood slat fences. They are all gone except the one on the south. He will take that down when construction is finished. He believes all the neighbors are happy to see something happen on the site.

Franklin believes it is a matter of security to have someone living back there. He encourages Kress to move ahead with his plans. Maloy thinks it would be nice to have someone living back there. He doesn't want to see this design in a 100 year old neighborhood. He wishes a nod would have been given toward a historic neighborhood. He also understands the price point.

Peace likes it. He thinks it will look great. When he thought of this property, there are a few examples of more modern architecture within a block or two. He believes this will fit in just great.

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

Zimmer noted that this application can be appealed for 14 days.

- **Infill house at 2525 R Street (Michael Harpster)**

Stacey Groshong Hageman stated that this application has been withdrawn. The applicant has been unable to secure financing.

- **Garage conversion at 4919 Glade Street (Tony Polk)**

Tony Polk appeared on behalf of his parents. The existing property has pre-platted lots. His parents would like to turn a garage into a single-family dwelling. It would be a roughly 1,400 square foot single-family home. Building and Safety has said we need a driveway and parking. He was proposing a driveway with back to back parking. That doesn't meet the current design standards.

Tilley asked what the challenges are with the Neighborhood Design Standards. Hageman replied that the standards don't allow parking between your building and the street. Zimmer noted that grew out of certain apartments in the Near South neighborhood with the parking in front on the street face. Neighbors have driveways, but this places all the parking in the front yard. Staff can't approve this and the Planning Director felt this needed to appear before this commission. Hageman stated that a second issue is the building face on the street side. They are removing a door for a window. Standards require the building face to have a door.

Kissel wondered if the applicant could do a porch on this side. Hageman replied that they could, but it is not required.

Polk stated he is okay with keeping the door on the front. That is not the issue. There is more of an issue with parking. Parking has to be in the rear and can't be in the front.

Kissel noted that you do see shared driveways in older parts of town. Zimmer replied yes. By easement, you could continue to use the parking in back.

Kissel stated that sharing the parking seems like a good solution. Polk believes that is probably what is going to happen. He questions what happens down the road. What if these two properties are

separated? He is thinking of the future. Huston questioned if there could be a waiver of design standards in the future. Zimmer stated that this is being looked at as a new principle building. If in ten years someone puts in a driveway and it didn't rise to neighborhood design standards, it is not a zoning violation to have parking in the front yard. Huston believes that if for example, in ten years, someone wants to get rid of the joint easement and put in a driveway and needs a curb cut, he doesn't believe it would trigger the Neighborhood Design Standards. Zimmer agreed. When the time comes down the road, he believes a driveway could be installed.

Polk withdrew his application for appeal. He will leave the front door in the front façade and will utilize shared parking.

STAFF REPORT:

- Zimmer stated that the Lincoln Children's Zoo has released the new and improved plan. South of A Street will be used for true overflow parking. There is an intention to create a driveway connection between the parking lot and the entrance. The circle is intended to house the old Thompson Fountain that was at 11th St. and J St., which is currently in Parks & Recreation storage. This will enhance the space. The comments from this commission and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee were very aligned, albeit from different perspectives. The Zoo, Mayor and Parks & Recreation took all the comments very seriously. Draft minutes were delivered immediately. It was clear that this commission's members were all zoo supporters and wanted it to remain and expand, but within its strengths. There has been a lot of movement in the last month. A lot of people worked hard to make this happen. Lynn Johnson from Parks & Recreation and Judy Halstead from the Health Dept. worked together to make use of the empty third floor space at the Health Dept. He believes the new space will accommodate the staff from the Muny Building as well.

Kissel appreciated the heads up. It was very respectful. Tilley agreed. It is so rewarding when we look at stuff and try to give it a vision and she can see projects becoming better because of the comments of this group. Huston believes this commission should be commended for the vision. Zimmer agreed. This group helped the City see the vision for the triangle down the road. George Wesselhoft from Planning is in attendance today. He is working on a list of zoning changes. One key change is the south parking lot. They need a special permit to expand and be approved. It retains old business type zoning. Zoning will be changed to match the neighborhood. The zoning text will also be changed to allow for off-site parking for a zoo. Landmark designation of the Yeager building comes with the package as well.

- Clark Enersen Urban Design Award

Tilley stated that this award is coming up once again. If anyone has any potential nominations, she would like to gather them for an October meeting and tour in November.

- Telegraph District

Zimmer believes we are close to hearing about more information on the next round of the Telegraph District. Lots of work has gone on with this. He believes that elements of the master plan and the next set of buildings might be ready for commentary as soon as next month.

There being no further business, the joint meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.