

**IN LIEU OF
DIRECTORS' ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
ADDENDUM
Monday, July 26, 2021**

I. CONSTITUENT CORRESPONDENCE

1. Arnold Heights Blight Decision – Linda Brown
2. Sodo parking – Marcelline Hutton
3. Nine-Mile Prairie/Housing Development – Nancy Becker
4. Resolutions 4f. and 4g. effects on Nine-Mile Prairie – Marilyn McNabb
5. Commercial Development on South 70th Street and Pine Lake Road – Kenneth Kiewra, Ph.D.
6. Housing near Nine-Mile Prairie – Charles Yost
7. Airport Position on Blight Designation – David Haring
8. Housing Project near Nine-Mile Prairie – Lynne Fritz
9. Preserving Prairie Land – Carolyn Harp
10. Nine-Mile Prairie – Kathy Jensen
11. Nine-Mile Prairie – Mark Daharsh
12. Nine-Mile Prairie – Dwayne Wilson
13. Yankee Hill street funding 21R-314 – Russell Miller
14. Northwest 48th Street Development Area – LaVonne Hanlon
15. Council decision on Arnold Heights – JoEllen Polzien
16. Northwest 48th Street Development Area – Gene Hanlon
17. Custom Embeds – Dave Cotton
18. PUD Change of Zone request CZ21020 – Mary Roseberry-Brown
19. Nine-Mile Prairie and Environs area – Melissa Baker
20. Nine-Mile Prairie – Foster Collins
21. Nine-Mile Prairie – Bethany Brunsman

Angela M. Birkett

From: Linda R Brown <lindar1brown@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2021 2:16 PM
To: Council Packet; Mayor
Subject: Arnold Heights Blight Decision
Attachments: Six Prairie-Saving Alternatives final 071821.docx

3745 Garfield St
Lincoln, NE 68506-1028
July 22, 2021

Dear Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

Re: Boundaries for Blight and Extreme Blight in Arnold Heights

I want to go on record to oppose any blight or extremely blight amendment, which draws the boundary beyond the housing area in Arnold Heights. I ask the Council, whenever they are faced with a decision about the area surrounding Nine-Mile Prairie, to do their best to incorporate the findings of the Nine-Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan April 2020. Putting the boundary of the blighted area north of W Cuming is in conflict with the Nine-Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan.

Sandra Washington, Tammy Ward and Jane Raybould have agreed to meet with me, Marilyn McNabb, Jon Oberg, Bill Oberg and W. Don Nelson, to discuss alternatives. Please see the attached document with our six alternatives to consider. We are also learning of additional alternatives as more and more people become aware of the issues. Being deliberate about this process is also the point of today's editorial in the Lincoln Journal Star.

Thank you for giving your best efforts for our city.

Linda R. Brown
Cell: 402-318-1522
Land line: 402-489-2381

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Linda R. Brown
3745 Garfield
Lincoln, NE 68506
402-489-2381
lindar1brown@gmail.com

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us.
When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may
begin to use it with love and respect." Aldo Leopold

Six Prairie-Saving Alternatives 7/18/2021

Introduction

Defenders of northwest Lincoln's rare tallgrass prairies have joined together to present the Lincoln City Council with seven "win-win" and "give and take" alternatives to a current proposal before the council, offered by the city Urban Development Department, which would eliminate over 20 acres of tallgrass prairies in northwest Lincoln and replace the prairies with residential housing that could be funded with tax-increment financing.

Five individuals, all supporters of Nine Mile Prairie, a 230 acre grassland listed on the National Register of Historic Places, developed the alternatives to conform to the recommendations of the UNL Nine Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan for the tallgrass properties in question. The UNL plan recommends several area properties for protection from development because they are a key part of the Nine Mile Prairie ecosystem and are needed as a buffer.

The prairie defenders also cited the need to follow the provisions of the current 2040 Lincoln Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2016. In the plan, native prairies, riparian corridors, and freshwater wetlands are set out as three "Core Resource Imperatives" (p. 3.4). The plan explains: "Plants and animals do not exist in isolation.... Implementation of [Lincoln Comprehensive] Plan 2040 needs to respect biological connections that exist today and provide responsive means for maintaining those associations." Specifically on point, Lincoln's current policy states "Strategies for Native Prairies: Acquire buffer areas around prairies...." (p. 3.6).

The alternatives, listed below, also fulfill requirements for initiatives in the Lincoln Climate Action Plan: "Continue to support prairie restoration and protection of natural resources" (Initiative 99); "Continue to support...partnership with landowners to preserve native prairie, wetland areas, and other natural resources" (105); "...improve soil health, sequester carbon, and maintain natural systems (106); "Create a Carbon Sequestration Plan. This plan would involve... grasslands and native prairie." (108).

The six alternatives are the product of sorting through suggestions from many likeminded Lincoln citizens who became alarmed upon reading in newspapers that the city was considering a proposal to use tax-increment-financing in a way that would lead to destruction of certain local tallgrass prairies and degradation of others in the Nine Mile Prairie environs. Public notice had not been sent to property owners directly affected by the Urban Development (UD) sponsored resolution or to those adjacent to the areas proposed for blight-related development. The record does not indicate whether the city Planning Commission was aware of the environmental implications of the resolution, as there is no mention of them in the staff report. The resolution was handled by the Planning Commission on its consent calendar.

The six alternatives below were assembled by Marilyn McNabb, Linda R. Brown, W. Don Nelson, and Bill and Jon Oberg, who welcome further input and discussion. After city council member Tammy Ward obtained a two week delay in consideration of the UD resolution (which delay expires July 26), council member Sandra Washington invited those named above to review the resolution and present possible options that address both affordable housing and environmental protection. The first of four meetings was held on July 15th, dealing with legal, factual, and planning process questions, with a second meeting to be held in August to discuss substantive alternatives.

Three win-win alternatives to the Urban Development proposal

1. ARNOLD HEIGHTS EAST. Locate new affordable housing east of Arnold Heights in the area where zoning is now planned as commercial, to create a walkable community near the Arnold Heights shopping center and thereby avoid the traffic problems that would be created by the UD proposal now before the city council. The UD proposal would require residents to use the Arnold School road for entry and exit and create traffic bottlenecks on NW 48th. This alternative would save the prairies for carbon sequestration, habitat, recreation, and education. There are multiple wins in this alternative; it complies with the UNL Master Plan, the current city Comprehensive Plan, and the Lincoln Climate Action Plan. It would likely pass any federal and state environmental impact assessment, which the UD proposal may not, because of science-based reasons identified in the UNL Master Plan.

2. WEST ADAMS STREET. Annex property on West Adams Street, as identified in the Lincoln Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan, and build affordable housing at that location, which has over 100 lots available and an owner eager to devote them to affordable housing. Save the prairie parcels as in option 1. There are also many wins in this alternative and it complies with the UNL Master Plan, the current Comprehensive Plan, and the Lincoln Climate Action Plan. The same might also apply to other area properties that are under consideration for affordable housing, south of Arnold Heights. The Lincoln Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan of December, 2020, identifies two such properties with 76 and 42 parcels that are candidates for affordable housing. (The Lincoln Housing Action Plan does not identify any property in the UD proposal for the purpose.)

3. PRIVATE PURCHASE. Allow private purchase of the 17 acre city-owned tallgrass prairie parcel, located west of the Arnold Elementary School, for conservation and carbon sequestration, so as to get immediate payment for it and put it on the tax rolls. A buyer is available. Build affordable housing at sites identified in options 1 and 2. This would be a multiple win alternative as well as it complies with the UNL Master Plan, the current city Comprehensive Plan, and the Lincoln Climate Action Plan. It would pass any environmental impact test as it would not change the current use of the parcel as part of the Nine Mile Prairie environs buffer.

Three give-and-take alternatives to the Urban Development proposal

1. SCIENCE-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS. Contract with The Flatwater Group, which assisted in writing the UNL Master Plan, to identify affordable housing areas within the Nine Mile Prairie environs that would not destroy or degrade key, high diversity habitats. This option may involve trade-offs, depending on the areas identified. The option complies with the recommendations of the UNL Master Plan, the current Comprehensive Plan, and the Lincoln Climate Action Plan. It provides an opportunity for in-depth scientific consideration of various alternatives.

2. CARBON SINKS. Consider the 17-acre city-owned tallgrass parcel, along with another publicly-owned 3-acre parcel in an adjacent riparian area, as carbon sequestration sinks, for research, recreation, education, habitat, and buffer for Nine Mile Prairie, to which the parcels are connected through other prairies. Establish a trail through the properties for recreation and for education about tallgrass prairies, wetlands, and riparian woods, eventually to be connected to Nine Mile Prairie as recommended in the UNL Master Plan (p. 5.5.2). Allow housing development in other nearby areas. This option involves give and take, as habitat and connectivity to Nine Mile Prairie are preserved but other areas of lesser biodiversity are lost to development. This option complies with the UNL Master Plan, the current Comprehensive Plan, and the Lincoln Climate Action Plan.

3. SOIL HEALTH. Seek federal and state funding for soil health improvement on the city-owned parcel as well as other properties in the Nine Mile Prairie environs, to build up the carbon sequestration capacity of the whole area. This would be a part of the federal "30 x 30" effort to conserve 30% of America's land by 2030. It is based on the results of a Minnesota research effort that demonstrated the carbon sequestration value of leaving lands undisturbed and how improving soil health "may greatly increase carbon capture." (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-08636-w>). This is also a give-and-take option as it would potentially allow for development of nearby, less habitat-rich property while preserving parcels with high biodiversity. The option complies with the UNL Master Plan. It would be an action achievement for the Lincoln Climate Action Plan.

Other Alternatives

The process of developing alternatives is continuing, with additional options under consideration for possible discussion at the August meeting, following the agenda framework set forth by Council Member Washington. They will be informed by any "give and take" feedback received in response to the six alternatives listed above, a process suggested by Council Member Ward in discussion of her July 12th motion to delay.

Angela M. Birkett

From: marcelline hutton <mjhutton@live.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2021 3:11 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Sodo parking

Dear council members,

Upon reflection. I'd like to note that Sodo's plan to develop businesses might not be so good for the neighborhood. Parking is already crowded in the area, and if they decide to tear down houses to make parking lots for businesses, I think that would destroy the character of the neighborhood. I've noticed that businesses nearby have often gone out of business due to lack of customers. The two I think of are a barbershop on 13th street near the Cornhusker hotel, and the restaurant at 11th and K St.

Thank you for considering the delay of the sodo plan.

Sincerely,

Marcelline Hutton
1130 H St. #308
Pioneer house

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

Angela M. Birkett

From: Nancy Becker <nbecker180gmail.com@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2021 3:37 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Nine Mile Prairie / Housing Deveopment

I think it's important to discuss the alternatives to the Raybould Resolution prior to the resolution being introduced. It is more appropriate to discuss all alternatives looking for common ground before final discussions/resolutions. I believe it is only fair to follow the science as presented in the UNL Master Plan rather than quickly move on to the next topic. A resolution which looks at both the Prairie and the need for housing at the same time would be a win-win plan and that would be the best resolution.

Angela M. Birkett

From: Marilyn McNabb <mmcnabb1@windstream.net>
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2021 1:21 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Resolutions 4f and 4g effects on Nine Mile Prairie

Lincoln City Council Members:

Here <https://vimeo.com/525814840> is a delightful 10 minute video with UNL's School of Natural Resources Dave Wedin out at Nine Mile Prairie. He talks about how rare remnants of Tallgrass Prairie are. At about 8:10 minutes,

he points out that good management of buffer areas around Nine Mile Prairie is essential. Private lands under the US Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program contribute to protection of Nine Mile Prairie.

What's the right size for a buffer? For that you need a study like the [Nine Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan](#).

Dr. Wedin has published 97 academic articles. He supervised students working on the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch. He is co-leading a \$1.8 million National Science Foundation grant to study the biocomplexity of the Sandhills.

Thanks for your attention.

Marilyn McNabb

Angela M. Birkett

From: Kenneth Kiewra <kkiewra1@unl.edu>
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2021 1:38 PM
To: Council Packet; Mayor
Cc: ROYCE MUELLER
Subject: City Council Hearing July 26, 2021 on Commercial Development on South 70th Street and Pine Lake Road
Attachments: Lowe's Opinion.doc; Planning Commission.doc; News Release.pdf; 2003 Letter.pdf; article.pdf

Dear City Council Members and Mayor:

I stand with my Country Meadows' neighbors in strongly opposing the building of new storage units on 70th Street and Pine Lake Roads. Neighbor letters clearly articulate the myriad reasons why this proposal should be defeated. I want to add to those concerns by saying that Country Meadows has seen some city planners, council members, and developers ravage the city's comprehensive plan for this subarea several times in the past 20 years, a plan that should still be fully intact today. (That's what comprehensive plans are for.)

Faced with commercial development, Country Meadows has also reached agreements and compromises with commercial developers over the years, only to see them renege on those promises as soon as the concrete is poured. Finally, let me point out that prominent elected officials, like former Mayor Don Wesely and former councilman Johnathan Cook, have recognized the problems inherent with altering the comprehensive plan and building commercially in this subarea. They warn future officials to protect this area. The attached documents illustrate these views and offer a glimpse into the long-standing issues and problems with commercial development in this area.

I hope for these and other reasons my neighbors offer, you will vote no on this proposal.

Thank you.

Ken Kiewra
Country Meadows Resident

Kenneth A. Kiewra, Ph.D.
Professor of Educational Psychology
240 Teachers College Hall
University of Nebraska
Lincoln, NE 68588-0345
kkiewra1@unl.edu

Website: <https://cehs.unl.edu/kiewra/>

May 9, 2005
Lincoln Journal Star

The Lowdown on Lowe's

We disagree with the recent *Journal Star* editorial, "Lowe's plan should get friendly look." The editorial contends that a Lowe's home improvement center built near 66th and Highway 2 would boost economic development, provide convenient comparison shopping in a corridor of home improvement stores, and do so with minimal traffic...wrong, wrong, wrong.

Lowe's adds nothing unique to an area already saturated with places to buy a toilet. Who needs it? Just down the road stand Home Depot, Menards, Tractor Supply Company, and Wal-Mart. Adding Lowe's does not pump more money into the economic system; it simply drains it from a nearby store. Homeowners still buy just one toilet, and Peter is robbed to pay Paul. Remember how Pay Less Cashways and Sutherlands were once the Highway 2 home store kings?

Do we really want shoppers flitting from store to store comparing prices on a box of galvanized nails? There are heavy costs associated with the Lowe's plan. Foremost is traffic. According to traffic studies, traffic on Highway 2 will nearly double from 14,000 cars per day to 26,000 cars per day. That volume of traffic and another stoplight will snarl traffic along one of Lincoln's main east-west arterials. The Planning Department is against this project because Highway 2 simply cannot handle the additional traffic. Moreover, substantial traffic will spill into the adjacent Country Meadows neighborhood. Its rural roads will suddenly carry 1200 more cars a day.

Another cost is diminishing one of Lincoln's premiere entryways and Capitol View Corridors. City leaders point to North 27th Street, Cornhusker Highway, and West O Street as city entryways marred by poor planning and strip malls. We should not let Highway 2 go down this road. Former Mayor Don Wesely's recent promise to block commercial development here is fresh in our minds. And, the ink is still drying on the Sub-Area Plan endorsed by city officials just two years ago ensuring no commercial development in this area through 2025. City leaders should honor this promise and protect this plan.

The developers plan to squeeze the big Lowe's box in a residential area is flawed for another reason. The plan calls for 32 upscale homes to be built abutting the Lowe's site. Who is going to buy these homes—people who have to have a crescent wrench NOW? When the store is built and the residential property does not sell, won't the developers be clamoring for more commercial development on their site? There is a fresh history of developers not following through on their agreements right down the road. The Home Depot developers promised that there would be no 24-hour businesses when they sought city approval, but they stood before the City Council just two years later trying to amend that promise.

Developers have tried to force commercial development at the Highway 2 and 66th Street site for 12 years. And, for 12 years, neighbors and city leaders have said no. Former planning commissioner Greg Schwinn said it best, “Commercial development on this spot is like trying to stick a square peg in a round hole.”

Let’s face it, the only one who really benefits from approval of this project is the developer who bought a tract of land zoned agricultural speculating that someday people will grow tired of fighting commercial proposals or will for some reason believe that Lincoln must have a glut of big box home improvement stores despite increased traffic, broken promises, and the blatant misuse of land.

Kenneth and Christine Kiewra

To: Planning Commission Members
From: Kenneth A. Kiewra
Re: Hearing on Apples Way
Date: April 27, 2005

My name is Kenneth Kiewra. I have been a professor of educational psychology at UNL since 1986. I have been a resident of Country Meadows neighborhood for 12 years. I am writing about a developer's proposal for commercial development on the Apples Way property along Highway 2 between 56th and 66th Streets.

I am strongly against this proposal for the following three reasons.

Promise and Plan

When the Home Depot shopping center was built despite overwhelming opposition by area neighborhoods, Mayor Don Wesely addressed the neighborhoods and media and made a promise. He promised that there would be no further commercial development between 56th and 66th Streets along Highway 2.

Mayor Wesely was then instrumental in working with neighborhoods, city planners, and the council to draw up and approve a sub-area plan that ensured his promise that there would be no further commercial development in that area.

Our city leaders today must honor this promise and protect this plan. It is wrong to violate an approved plan that city leaders just a few years ago believed was in the best long-term interest of the city.

Expert Analysis and Recommendation

The planning staff, as you know, has considered the developer's latest proposal for commercial development and has rejected it. Their expert analysis led to the conclusion that commercial development is wrong for this location. The planning staff has reached this same conclusion for 12 years. City leaders should continue to support the recommendation of planning experts.

Unprofessional Means

The developer, Mr. McCombs, has, in my opinion, used unprofessional means to try and develop Apples Way commercially. First, he has tried to wear down neighbors and city leaders by repeatedly proposing commercial development on this location. Repeated rejections have not deterred him. He keeps making commercial proposals hoping that eventually neighbors will stop caring and leaders will relent. He told me several years ago that homeowners can only fight commercial development so long before they get tired and give up.

Second, Mr. McCombs has tried to coerce our neighborhood into supporting his commercial development plans. Several times he has threatened to develop the land with higher commercial density if we did not accept his original plan. He used this strong-arm tactic again this time telling neighbors he would build high density housing if we do not accept the proposed plan for a mix of residential and large scale commercial. This threat has a few neighbors thinking that large scale commercial development on the far portion of the land is a necessary evil.

Please tell Mr. McCombs, “no commercial development now or in the future.”



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508, 441-7511, fax 441-7120

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 30, 2000

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Diane Gonzolas, Citizen Information Center, 441-7831

MAYOR ANNOUNCES COMPROMISE FOR 70TH AND HIGHWAY 2

Mayor Don Wesely announced today he has negotiated a compromise to ease the impact of the proposed retail project at 70th Street and Nebraska Highway 2 and reduce the threat of retail strip mall development east of 56th Street along the highway.

Developer Mary Jo Livingston has agreed to the Mayor's request to substitute office space for the grocery store and other retail space proposed on the eastern half of her land. The proposed Home Depot retail store would remain on the western part of her property.

In addition, Livingston pledged that the land she owns north of Highway 2 near the Pine Lake area will be developed as residential or residential transition, alleviating concerns for adjacent homeowners.

"I know that this compromise will not satisfy every person who has expressed a concern about this proposed project," Wesely said. "But in my opinion, this is a reasonable arrangement that achieves a reasonable resolution to this controversy."

Wesely said the compromise will:

- * Allow Livingston's company to develop the land, which was designated in 1998 for commercial use in the Comprehensive Plan;
- * Reduce the impact on residential neighbors, who have asked for lower density, by substituting office for retail use on part of the property; and
- * Ease concerns that development at 70th and Highway 2 will start a domino effect resulting in commercial sprawl along this important entryway to Lincoln.

The City Council will be asked to amend the proposed project before voting on it at its regular meeting Monday, December 4. If the Council adopts the compromise, Wesely said he will sign it.

Wesely also urged the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Commission and City Council to adopt the Highway 2 subarea plan as drafted by the City-County Planning Department. The Commission held a hearing on the plan November 29 and is expected to vote Wednesday, December 13.

- more -

70th and Highway 2
November 30, 2000
Page Two

"The subarea plan provides for sizable commercial development at 70th Street and at 84th Street on Highway 2," Wesely said. "I think that is enough. Other land yet to be developed along the Highway 2 corridor should become something other than high-density retail space."

Wesely said he has been contacted about the future of Highway 2 by many people, including residents of southeast Lincoln and developers interested in pursuing projects in the area.

"As the community grows to the southeast, we must have a blueprint for developing Highway 2 that allows for economic development but does not create a strip mall environment or harm nearby neighborhoods," the Mayor said. "The subarea plan written by the planning staff provides that opportunity and that protection."

Country Meadows Homeowners Association

April 28, 2003

Christine Kiewra
6400 S. 66th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68516

Dear Planning Commission and City Council Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Country Meadows Homeowners Association to express our support for the Southeast Lincoln/Highway 2 Subarea Plan as it was originally written. We do not support any of the amendments that propose changing designations from urban residential to commercial in the Subarea Plan. Our Association was opposed to the approval of commercial zoning at 70th and Highway 2 for the Willowbrook Shopping Center (including Home Depot) and we attended many public meetings, fully participating in the process to approve the Subarea Plan just two years ago.

Country Meadows residents have many concerns about additional commercial space being added along Highway 2. Our primary concern relates once again to a commercial proposal at 66th Street and Highway 2. Repeated requests to change this land from residential to commercial have been debated and defeated. Nearly 10 years ago, Shopko purchased this land and requested a commercial designation in order to build a large shopping center--not even as dense as the one currently proposed. City planning staff, the City Council, and Mayor Johanns all recognized the catastrophic effects that would have on the area and defeated the proposal. Even at that time, good planning guidelines indicated the need to keep the area residential. The staff report noted that the Trade Center was intended to be the buffer between Country Meadows and commercial development and that nearby intersections could not sustain the increased traffic. Since that time, the land remained Low-Density/AGR.

* When the Highway 2 Subarea Plan was proposed just two years ago, there was yet another request to change this property to commercial and that was defeated. Mayor Wesley went on record saying that he would veto any additional commercial development in the Subarea. City Council Chair

Cook said that he wanted all future City Council members to remember the pledge not to allow any additional commercial development in the Subarea.

Country Meadows residents continue to oppose commercial development in this area for the following reasons: 1) Increased traffic on Highway 2 and South 66th Street, 2) Sufficient commercial development already approved to serve the area, 3) Increased lighting, noise, and litter, and 4) Diminished aesthetics.

Traffic

Traffic on Highway 2 is at its capacity. This is a busy city entryway and it cannot handle the additional traffic generated by yet another shopping center. The only route for Country Meadows residents to drive north, east, or west from our neighborhood is to enter Highway 2 from 66th Street. That intersection is without a stoplight or turning lane and the speed limit has recently been raised to 55 mph. These factors already make it a difficult and dangerous intersection.

South 66th Street was built as a narrow, asphalt, winding county road without street lights, curbs and gutters. It is intended as a street only for residents and it is not able to handle increased through traffic. Parking is allowed on both sides of the street and when cars are parked along it there is barely room to drive down the road. There are no sidewalks so the narrow street is also used by pedestrians and bicyclists.

A connection between South 66th Street and a commercial development would dramatically increase traffic on the street. Even having a commercial development next to the neighborhood without connections would significantly increase traffic on the street according to city planning staff.

Sufficient Commercial Development

Highway 2 is an important and beautiful entryway into Lincoln as well as a Capitol View Corridor with sufficient commercial development. Currently the largest shopping center in Lincoln is under construction at 84th and Highway 2. The Willowbrook Shopping Center is about half built at 70th and Highway 2. There are established centers at 56th and Highway 2-- Edgewood, Alamo Plaza, and the Trade Center. The Trade Center (which includes less intense commercial development) was approved as the western

buffer between our neighborhood and commercial development. Any more commercial development will make Highway 2 one long strip mall.

Studies indicate south Lincoln is already over-retailed. Moreover, there is a lot of land already designated commercial that is vacant or undeveloped. These indicators show that market need is not what it is driving the requests for increased commercial designations.

Lighting, Noise, and Litter

Commercial development brings with it large lit parking lots, noise from delivery trucks and other vehicles, loud speakers, and many people. It also brings litter from fast-food restaurants and other shopping stores. These would all intrude on the quiet country feel of our neighborhood. Area residents purchased our homes knowing that we were along a highway and that we would eventually be part of the city, but we believed the Comprehensive Plan (which designated adjoining property as residential) would protect the integrity and property value of our investments.

Diminished Aesthetics

The proposed commercial development diminishes the aesthetic quality of a primary Lincoln entryway and Capitol View Corridor. Many times city leaders point to North 27th Street, Cornhusker Highway, and West O Street as examples of city entryways that have been marred by poor planning. Each of these entryways contain strip mall after strip mall rather than clustered, high-quality shopping centers. As one drives into Lincoln from the east on Highway 2, one notices commercial centers with large set backs, beautiful, low-density housing, and a bike path and green space along the Highway. Any additional commercial along Highway 2 will create the same strip mall effect as so many other city entryways.

Large scale commercial development at 66th Street and Highway 2 mars this area containing several beautiful neighborhoods including Country Meadows, Family Acres, and Southfork. The partners considering purchasing the land have indicated that commercial development will necessitate dramatically changing the topography of the land by leveling its rolling hills and clearing the trees to pave enormous parking lots.

Change of any kind often meets neighborhood resistance. Our neighborhood recognizes that change will come and that is why we initially and continually support the Subarea Plan. We would love it if the land would remain corn fields and horse barns but we know that won't happen. We supported the change from Low Density/AGR to Urban Residential in the Subarea Plan. That is the only land usage Country Meadows will support.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Kiewra, President
Country Meadows Homeowners Association

Controversy: Neighbors still displeased with mayor's amendment

Council OKs Nebraska 2 development

BY J. CHRISTOPHER HAIN
Lincoln Journal Star

Mired in controversy and hand-scrapping, a proposed shopping center along Nebraska 2 cleared its final hurdle Monday. The Lincoln City Council.

The council voted 6-1 to approve a retail development at 70th Street and Nebraska 2, including a Home Depot and five other businesses. Council members also approved an amendment, worked out last week by Mayor Don Weseley, turning the project's east half into office zoning instead of retail.

Developer Mary Jo Livingston

promised an attractive shopping center that neighbors will grow to accept. Neighbors, meanwhile, attacked the mayor's so-called compromise as anything but.

Councilman Jonathan Cook said the entire episode should result in a prohibition on future commercial development along Nebraska 2 between 56th and 84th streets, as Weseley pledged last week.

"I would hope future elected officials would understand that," Cook said.

The lone vote against the southeast Lincoln development came from Council Vice Chairman Jeff Fortenberry. He said he could sup-

Inside/3B

City Council delays discussion on the proposed northwest Lincoln subdivision, Ashley Heights.

port an office park at the location but not a "big-box retail" development.

Neighbors had opposed the shopping center as inappropriate for a parcel of land surrounded by housing. Livingston said the property is inherently commercial because it is bounded by three major arterials: 70th Street, Nebraska 2 and Pine Lake Road.

Councilman Jon Camp, who represents southeast Lincoln, said the office zoning on half the property was a positive change because it would cut back the shopping center's hours of operation.

Livingston said native plantings, an architectural theme of cultured stone, grassy setbacks and other amenities will make her commercial development more palatable to surrounding residents.

"The neighbors will realize this really isn't as bad as they thought," she said.

But several neighbors who spoke to the council Monday said

the only truly sensitive development to surrounding neighborhoods would be entirely office space.

"The compromise was made without any consultation of the neighborhoods," said Bob Olson, president of the Pine Lake Association. "I don't know how you can have a compromise with only one side."

Robert Northrup, 7420 S. 70th St., said the council wasn't listening to adjacent neighbors.

"You represent us... I don't understand," he said. "It's just purely money speaking."

At one point, Council Chairman

Jerry Shoecraft tried to cut off testimony from neighbors as non pertinent. The development was on the council's agenda for action only.

But an associated annexation agreement had public hearing Monday, and neighbors used the hearing to address the Livingston development.

"I think we better stick to the subject matter," he said.

Tom Thorsen, real estate manager for Home Depot, said if the company can begin construction in early spring the store could open by late summer.

Reach J. Christopher Hain at 473-7223 or chhain@journalstar.com.

Four residents testified in favor of the development, but none live in adjacent neighborhoods.

There's lots of possibilities for shopping mall.

She said the project will negatively affect traffic, neighbors and the Nebraska 2 entry to the city. Plan may designate the property commercial but the council need not give the zoning the developer is asking for, which allows a large

Christine Kiewra, president of the adjacent Country Meadows Homeowners Association, said the project is less about good design and more about bad planning.

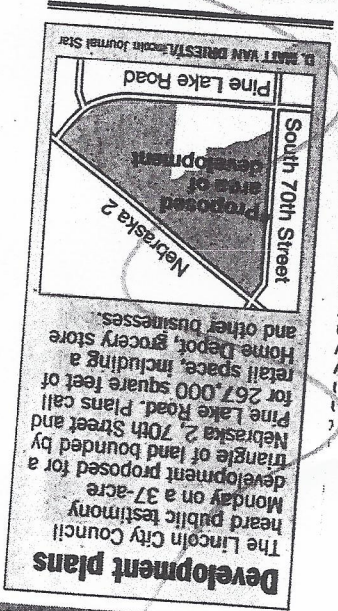
But that's not the point, said Victoria Northrup, 7420 S. 70th St.

And project architect Kim Todd said the building will have an architectural theme, dark-sky lighting and muffled loudspeakers to diminish its impact on neighbors.

Oh, let's hide it with pine trees approach," said the project's landscape architect, Kim Todd.

Continued From 1B

Retail



CAL

Angela M. Birkett

From: Charles Yost <yoyost41@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2021 1:52 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Housing near 9mile Prairie

I am strongly opposed to any plan to put new housing in the area near 9 mile Prairie. Putting new affordable housing is a good idea but it should be in the parts of the city that are already developed and need renewal.

Charles Yost

Angela M. Birkett

From: Haring, David <d.haring@LincolnAirport.com>
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2021 2:34 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Airport Position on Blight Designation
Attachments: AirportPosition_Blight_Designation.PDF

Good afternoon Council Members:

I hope you are having a pleasant afternoon and staying cool in the toasty temps!

Attached for your review and consideration is a memo outlining the Airport's formal position on the blight designation conversation. As always, should you have any questions, feel free to reach out and let me know.

Have a great weekend!

Dave

David S. Haring, A.A.E.

Executive Director

Phone: 402.458.2400 | Fax: 402.458.2490

Lincoln Airport Authority | P.O. Box 80407 | Lincoln, NE 68501

dharing@lincolnairport.com | www.lincolnairport.com



July 23, 2021

Mr. James Michael Bowers
Chair
Lincoln City Council
555 S. 10th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Subject: Blighted and Extremely Blighted Determinations for the “Northwest 48th Street Redevelopment Area”

Chairman Bowers and Members of the Council:

As you know, the Airport Authority of the City of Lincoln is a late-comer to the discussion regarding the proper boundaries of the “Northwest 48th Street Redevelopment Area.” The failure to include the Airport Authority within the groups and individuals originally receiving notice of this proposed action was unfortunate but understandable. Nevertheless, because of the Council’s willingness to defer action on this matter, we feel that we have had an opportunity to formulate a sound position as to what lands under the control of the Airport Authority should and should not be included within the blighted/extremely blighted determination.

However, since the last delay of this matter by the City Council on July 12th, we have not had an opportunity, through meetings or otherwise, to explain our position, but have obtained only anecdotal evidence from phone calls as to what may be transpiring. Hence, with this letter, we propose to set forth certain salient points for your consideration in making your ultimate decision on the blighted/extremely blighted determination, and give you, for what it is worth, our position.

Background on Environmental Concerns

If we boil this down to its essence, this whole dust-up as to what should or should not be included within the blighted/extremely blighted determination is driven by the existence of Nine Mile Prairie (the “Prairie”), some one-half mile beyond any property line of Airport controlled lands. The Prairie exists largely through the willingness of the Airport in 1983 to convey to the University of Nebraska Foundation some 229 acres of ground comprising Lot 5 in Section 2, Township 10 Range 5 and Lot 9 in Section 1, Township 10 Range 5 for what was

frankly less than fair market value. (See Instrument No. 83-2396 in the Lancaster County Register of Deeds.) The main entrance to the Prairie is located upon property licensed by the Airport to UNL.

The Airport Authority has no issue with those whose estimable goal is to protect and preserve the Prairie for its use as a park-like area that provides a unique location for the study of various forms of native plant and wildlife. Where we differ with those friends of the Prairie is exactly what it takes to provide adequate buffering of the Prairie from other development.

Representatives of the Airport Authority sat in on the meetings of the ad hoc Committee that reviewed and approved the Nine Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan developed by the Flatwater Group. While certainly some buffering is desirable, the Airport Authority commented, in April of 2020, that no national or industry standard was cited that defined or recommended a certain distance around locations such as the Prairie to keep it protected. There appeared to be nothing that justified the arbitrary determination that the “environs” of the Prairie should include a mile or more of property distant from the Prairie boundary. There should be some basis for requiring geographical protection for the Prairie beyond a mere arbitrary line on a map. The Airport Authority received no substantive response to this comment.

We say the above not to disparage the efforts of those who want to protect the Prairie but instead highlight, first, that the Airport has already done much to accommodate the Prairie and find it ironic now that those efforts to accommodate are coming back to apparently bite it and, second, that the assertions of those who suggest that development of the Airport properties in question will somehow harm the Prairie are lacking a scientific basis for such an assertion.

The Blight/Extreme Blight Proposal as it Presently Exists

The current proposal before the City Council would designate property running from Fletcher Street south to Holdrege Street and from Northwest 48th Street west to Northwest 57th Street as blighted/extremely blighted. Why does approval of the redevelopment area with these boundaries make sense? For these reasons:

- This was the area recommended by the well-respected firm of Hana:Keelan. This firm is very knowledgeable regarding these types of studies.
- The effect of approval of the blighted/extremely blighted designation is two-fold. First, it creates an option for the City and future developers to utilize tax increment financing in the event that a developer wishes to utilize tax increment financing and is willing to submit a proposal to the City requesting the same. At that point, of course, the City has great latitude in imposing restrictions, some of which might be of great benefit from the standpoint of environmental protection.

The other benefit of this designation, of course, is that which impelled the Urban Development Department to suggest it in the first place, i.e., the goal of allowing eligible single family

property owners in the blighted/extremely blighted area to obtain a tax credit as authorized by state law. Does this encourage development? Yes, it encourages the development of affordable housing, which is also a primary goal of the City of Lincoln. The Urban Development Department should be commended in attempting to further this goal, and the fact that Airport Authority property might be a beneficiary (at least the R3 and R5 zoned properties) is not something that should deter the Council from pursuing this laudable goal.

- Not including the almost quarter section of ground north of Arnold Heights North Addition will neither encourage nor discourage the development of that property. That property is currently zoned agricultural and it will be fully within the control of the City Council to determine, in the future, whether that property should be re-zoned. Frankly, the Airport Authority believes it should be, abutting as it does a major arterial and being across from a commercial/industrial area. With a blighted/extremely blighted determination, this property, given its current extremely low assessed value, could, when developed, generate a considerable amount of tax increment funds to finance City infrastructure in the area, including the development of recreational facilities, or for whatever other public purpose would be beneficial to the residents of Arnolds Heights. However, if this property is not designated as blighted/extremely blighted now, it will never be in the future. There is simply no way that a study could honestly show, independently, that 138 acres of bare agricultural ground meets the statutory definition of blight and substandard-ness.

The Airport Authority's Position

Having pointed out the above, and recognizing this decision is solely one to be made by the City Council, the Airport Authority posits the following:

It is to some extent of no consequence to the Airport Authority whether you determine that the Airport Authority property is blighted/extremely blighted or not. The Airport Authority neither initiated nor encouraged the inclusion of its property in this study. We would suggest, however, that it is probably of significant benefit to the City's affordable housing goal to at least include within the designation all of the Airport property immediately south of the north line of Arnold Heights North Addition. That would include both the Airport's 17-acre tract of R-3 land and the 3-acre tract of R-5 land. Whether these properties are designated as blighted/extremely blighted or not, the Airport Authority will soon be asking the City to honor its 2007 commitment to the Airport Authority to accommodate the Airport Authority's efforts to sell the property and use the proceeds for its ongoing major projects. Thus, the Airport Authority's preference would be that the blighted/extremely blighted designation include all properties south of the Arnold Heights North Addition limits.

As regards the 138 acres of Airport-controlled property north of Arnold Heights North Addition and south of Fletcher Avenue, the Airport Authority is largely indifferent. There are certainly no immediate benefits flowing to the Airport Authority with inclusion of this property in the

designation, and it is highly unlikely that the property will ever be developed for residential purposes. Whether a commercial or industrial development on the property would find benefit in being included within a blighted/extremely blighted area is speculative at best. However, it seems reasonably clear that it is the City's loss, not the Airport Authority's per se, by your foregoing the option of being able to offer tax increment financing on a future development on this property.

I hope that adequately explains the Airport Authority's position.

Regards,



David S. Haring, A.A.E.
Executive Director
Lincoln Airport Authority

Angela M. Birkett

From: Lynne Fritz <lynnerfritz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2021 2:35 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Housing Project near Nine Mile Prairie

While I firmly support affordable housing projects and believe Lincoln needs to develop more of this type of housing, I urge this development without encroachment or infringement upon the important native grasslands at Nine Mile Prairie. Preservation of native prairie has properly been adopted as part of Lincoln's Climate Change plan. Nothing should be developed to adversely affect the preservation of native prairies recognized as important under that plan. Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Lynne Fritz, lynnerfritz@gmail.com

Sent from my iPhone

Angela M. Birkett

From: CHARP3@neb.rr.com
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2021 3:11 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: preserving prairie land

I know you are considering allowing a proposal to designate approximately 20 acres of unplowed prairie land near Nine Mile Prairie as extremely blighted as part of a plan to develop housing in the area.

- The recently adopted Lincoln Climate Action Plan supports protection of prairies, native grasslands and other natural areas as necessary components of Natural Climate Solutions.
- There are plenty of other suitable locations for development of affordable housing. Please support affordable housing development in locations which do not involve destruction of irreplaceable natural areas such as these.
- Once the acres of unplowed land are gone, THEY ARE GONE. Please consider alternatives, so that this prairie plot can remain unspoiled. There are so few such acres remaining.
- Affordable housing is a huge need in our community. Please support those who want to build - in other areas - so that those housing needs can be addressed.

Thank you for your attention to my message.

Carolyn Harp - 2905 S 41st St. - 02-261-6897 - (Tom Beckius is my Council representative)

Angela M. Birkett

From: Kathy Jensen <kathy.moore.jensen@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2021 4:39 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Nine Mile Prairie

Dear Council members.

I was raised in Lincoln but do not live in the Lincoln area now. I do know that Nine Mile Prairie is important to all of us throughout the state. We cannot lose irreplaceable natural areas to build homes. While finding places to build affordable homes is very important, we need to find places that will not harm our fragile environment. Please consider another place for these living spaces. Thank you for your time and understanding.

Kathy Jensen
1101 North Brass Ave
Juniata Nebraska 68955
402-469-4985

Angela M. Birkett

From: Mark Daharsh <mdaharsh5@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2021 7:27 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Nine Mile Prairie

Dear Council Members,

I respectfully ask you to vote no on the resolution to declare the area adjacent to Nine Mile Prairie blighted. This has become a rare sanctuary for not only native flora and fauna but also for we humans who are so desperately in need of a quiet reprieve. As a teacher I took my classes there, as a retiree I now take myself and my grandchildren. This is a gem that should not be designated blighted but protected, and expanded - NOT DEVELOPED!!!

I appreciate all of your hard work to bring new growth and jobs to Lincoln but this should be a clear exception. There are other options that should be explored first. This is also your responsibility. Please for the sake of nature, climate and humanity take this leap of faith and SAY NO to developers and protect this rare area. Thank you,
Mark Daharsh, Lincoln

Sent from my iPhone

Angela M. Birkett

From: Dwayne Wilson <dwaynewilson44@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2021 11:08 PM
To: Council Packet
Cc: Mayor
Subject: Testimony for Hearing on City Council Blight decision that could impact Nine Mile Prairie
Attachments: PRAIRIES AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION.docx; Dr. Maharjan research paper.docx; Six Prairie-Saving Alternatives Linda Brown final 071821.pdf

My name is Dwayne Wilson R.P.

I am a retired pharmacist, Living in Lincoln with a concern of anything that will impact in any way the current Environs of the Nine-Mile Prairie.

I can also claim membership to the Wachiska Audubon Society, which provides to me educational information concerning the prairies that they manage, as well as other Nebraska prairies such as the Nine-Mile Prairie.

On March 22, 2021, the Lincoln city council approved the Lincoln Climate Action Plan with these commendable goals regarding prairies and the environment:

Continue to support prairie restoration and protection of natural resources.
Continue to support the Lincoln Parks Foundation and Parks and Recreation Department Land Trust initiative, working in partnership with landowners to preserve native prairie, wetland areas, and other natural resources.
Create a Carbon Sequestration Plan. This plan would involve an analysis of Lincoln's tree canopy, parks and greenways, open lands, composting activity, open water areas, impervious surfaces, grasslands, and native prairie.

The Urban Development Department, claiming ignorance, had not revealed to the council that the UNL Center for Grassland Studies had recommended in 2020, after a scientific review, that the two publicly owned parcels should be protected from development.

Also previous councils and mayors have done with regard to Lincoln's rare grassland prairies, when they have discovered that their actions would endanger them, which if precedent is needed, this should suffice in that respect.

To add to this precedent, there is a long-term study that was carried out in Minnesota, a brief summary is included in included Prairie and Carbon Sequestration attachment. It also shows how abandoned land, including land near and not near the Established Prairies should be helped to increase the lost biodiversity to eventually reach the ability of the Original Undisturbed Prairie to Sequester Carbon. For our consideration, this land could be considered as the land we are referring to as the Environs of the Nine-Mile Prairie.

We could also consider the work of one of our own, a researcher from the University Of Nebraska. He has offices at the University of Nebraska here in Lincoln, as well as The University of Nebraska Lincoln's Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scotts Bluff.

Dr. D. J. Nye, a researcher from the University of Nebraska, has defined the *"Soil Health Gap"* that is defined as the difference between soil health in an undisturbed native soil and current soil health in a cropland in a given agroecosystem. Soil Health Gap can be determined based on a general or specific soil property such as soil carbon. Soil organic carbon were measured at native grassland, no-till, conventionally tilled, and subsoil exposed farmlands. Soil Health Gap based on soil organic carbon was in order of no-till < conventional till < subsoil exposed farmland and subsequently, maximum attainable soil health goal with introduction of conservation practices would vary by an existing management practice or condition. Soil Health Gap establishes a benchmark for soil health management decisions and goals and can be scaled up from site-specific to regional to global scale.

A benchmark can be a reference soil health in uncultivated/undisturbed native soil in an agroecosystem and that will allow determination of a gap in soil health in a managed cropland. In most cases, native soils will have higher scores for soil health indicators than cultivated cropland in a given agroecosystem. Such score- or soil property-based benchmark will be a location specific because of the climate and its effects on soils. At places where it is difficult to find native virgin land, soil from nearby farmstead or close to farm fences that are not cultivated or minimally disturbed can be used to determine the soil health benchmark. However, a farm fence would be a poor reference area in the Great Plains, since the fence-line soil has probably been disturbed in the past and has received dust from repeated wind erosion events that result in a poor representation of native soil.

The changes in the Soil Health Gap as we get further from the Native Soil of the Nine-Mile Prairie would be an indication of reduction of Carbon Sequestration.

With these considerations and the availability of better options for development, as shown in the attachment covering development alternatives would indicate to me that we should increase the acreage included in the Environs of the Nine-Mile Prairie, not commit to anything that would take acreage away from the Environs, not just including overall acreage, but also the distance from the edge of the Prairie to the far edge of the Environs.

That concludes the Testimony of my opinions at this point in time.

Dwayne Wilson R.P.
1901 South 48th Street
Lincoln, NE 68506

PRAIRIES AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Using Native Grasses and Forbs for Carbon Sequestration

August 23, 2019 / CRP (from USDA, CONSERVATION AND BIOENERGY)

<https://www.fdcenterprises.com/>

Tallgrass Prairie and Carbon Sequestration

<https://tallgrassontario.org/wp-site/carbon-sequestration/>

A new study from researchers at UC Davis finds that grasslands are likely to be more resilient carbon sinks than forests as the climate changes. Grasses store more of their carbon underground, leading to fewer carbon losses from fire or drought 10, 2018.

Soil carbon sequestration accelerated by restoration of grassland biodiversity.

This Minnesota study confirms the feeling that Original Established and Undisturbed Prairies should not be disturbed.

It also shows how abandoned land, including land near and not near the Established Prairies should be helped to increase the lost biodiversity to eventually reach the ability of the Original Undisturbed Prairie to Sequester Carbon.

In my opinion, it shows that if we want to build one the most efficient Carbon Sinks, a means of doing this is to preserve our Undisturbed Prairies and start now with rapid replacement of vegetation on abandoned land, is the forced planting of Native Plants of several species NOW.

It was amazing to me, that it would take as long as it does to replace a removed ecosystem, but if you consider the length of time that it takes to grow a good tree, this gives a better perspective.

You can skip to the Discussion and Methods section of this paper as a lot of the paper is more detailed than the average reader would need to get the picture.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-08636-w>

Data availability

If needed to send some initial heads-up to the Climate Task Force, reference could be included as follows:

All data used in our analyses can be found at the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve website, <http://www.cedarcreek.umn.edu/research/data>. Data on the multi-diversity restoration are part of the “e120” experiment of the Cedar Creek Long-Term Ecological Research program; data on natural succession are from the “e014” and “e054” experiments. Data on soil C concentration for the 32-species plots are from the “e248” experiment.

Dr. Maharjan's research work

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989420305680>

Six Prairie-Saving Alternatives 7/18/2021

Introduction

Defenders of northwest Lincoln's rare tallgrass prairies have joined together to present the Lincoln City Council with seven "win-win" and "give and take" alternatives to a current proposal before the council, offered by the city Urban Development Department, which would eliminate over 20 acres of tallgrass prairies in northwest Lincoln and replace the prairies with residential housing that could be funded with tax-increment financing.

Five individuals, all supporters of Nine Mile Prairie, a 230 acre grassland listed on the National Register of Historic Places, developed the alternatives to conform to the recommendations of the UNL Nine Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan for the tallgrass properties in question. The UNL plan recommends several area properties for protection from development because they are a key part of the Nine Mile Prairie ecosystem and are needed as a buffer.

The prairie defenders also cited the need to follow the provisions of the current 2040 Lincoln Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2016. In the plan, native prairies, riparian corridors, and freshwater wetlands are set out as three "Core Resource Imperatives" (p. 3.4). The plan explains: "Plants and animals do not exist in isolation.... Implementation of [Lincoln Comprehensive] Plan 2040 needs to respect biological connections that exist today and provide responsive means for maintaining those associations." Specifically on point, Lincoln's current policy states "Strategies for Native Prairies: Acquire buffer areas around prairies...." (p. 3.6).

The alternatives, listed below, also fulfill requirements for initiatives in the Lincoln Climate Action Plan: "Continue to support prairie restoration and protection of natural resources" (Initiative 99); "Continue to support...partnership with landowners to preserve native prairie, wetland areas, and other natural resources" (105); "...improve soil health, sequester carbon, and maintain natural systems (106); "Create a Carbon Sequestration Plan. This plan would involve... grasslands and native prairie." (108).

The six alternatives are the product of sorting through suggestions from many likeminded Lincoln citizens who became alarmed upon reading in newspapers that the city was considering a proposal to use tax-increment-financing in a way that would lead to destruction of certain local tallgrass prairies and degradation of others in the Nine Mile Prairie environs. Public notice had not been sent to property owners directly affected by the Urban Development (UD) sponsored resolution or to those adjacent to the areas proposed for blight-related development. The record does not indicate whether the city Planning Commission was aware of the environmental implications of the resolution, as there is no mention of them in the staff report. The resolution was handled by the Planning Commission on its consent calendar.

The six alternatives below were assembled by Marilyn McNabb, Linda R. Brown, W. Don Nelson, and Bill and Jon Oberg, who welcome further input and discussion. After city council member Tammy Ward obtained a two week delay in consideration of the UD resolution (which delay expires July 26), council member Sandra Washington invited those named above to review the resolution and present possible options that address both affordable housing and environmental protection. The first of four meetings was held on July 15th, dealing with legal, factual, and planning process questions, with a second meeting to be held in August to discuss substantive alternatives.

Three win-win alternatives to the Urban Development proposal

1. ARNOLD HEIGHTS EAST. Locate new affordable housing east of Arnold Heights in the area where zoning is now planned as commercial, to create a walkable community near the Arnold Heights shopping center and thereby avoid the traffic problems that would be created by the UD proposal now before the city council. The UD proposal would require residents to use the Arnold School road for entry and exit and create traffic bottlenecks on NW 48th. This alternative would save the prairies for carbon sequestration, habitat, recreation, and education. There are multiple wins in this alternative; it complies with the UNL Master Plan, the current city Comprehensive Plan, and the Lincoln Climate Action Plan. It would likely pass any federal and state environmental impact assessment, which the UD proposal may not, because of science-based reasons identified in the UNL Master Plan.

2. WEST ADAMS STREET. Annex property on West Adams Street, as identified in the Lincoln Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan, and build affordable housing at that location, which has over 100 lots available and an owner eager to devote them to affordable housing. Save the prairie parcels as in option 1. There are also many wins in this alternative and it complies with the UNL Master Plan, the current Comprehensive Plan, and the Lincoln Climate Action Plan. The same might also apply to other area properties that are under consideration for affordable housing, south of Arnold Heights. The Lincoln Affordable Housing Coordinated Action Plan of December, 2020, identifies two such properties with 76 and 42 parcels that are candidates for affordable housing. (The Lincoln Housing Action Plan does not identify any property in the UD proposal for the purpose.)

3. PRIVATE PURCHASE. Allow private purchase of the 17 acre city-owned tallgrass prairie parcel, located west of the Arnold Elementary School, for conservation and carbon sequestration, so as to get immediate payment for it and put it on the tax rolls. A buyer is available. Build affordable housing at sites identified in options 1 and 2. This would be a multiple win alternative as well as it complies with the UNL Master Plan, the current city Comprehensive Plan, and the Lincoln Climate Action Plan. It would pass any environmental impact test as it would not change the current use of the parcel as part of the Nine Mile Prairie environs buffer.

Three give-and-take alternatives to the Urban Development proposal

1. SCIENCE-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS. Contract with The Flatwater Group, which assisted in writing the UNL Master Plan, to identify affordable housing areas within the Nine Mile Prairie environs that would not destroy or degrade key, high diversity habitats. This option may involve trade-offs, depending on the areas identified. The option complies with the recommendations of the UNL Master Plan, the current Comprehensive Plan, and the Lincoln Climate Action Plan. It provides an opportunity for in-depth scientific consideration of various alternatives.

2. CARBON SINKS. Consider the 17-acre city-owned tallgrass parcel, along with another publicly-owned 3-acre parcel in an adjacent riparian area, as carbon sequestration sinks, for research, recreation, education, habitat, and buffer for Nine Mile Prairie, to which the parcels are connected through other prairies. Establish a trail through the properties for recreation and for education about tallgrass prairies, wetlands, and riparian woods, eventually to be connected to Nine Mile Prairie as recommended in the UNL Master Plan (p. 5.5.2). Allow housing development in other nearby areas. This option involves give and take, as habitat and connectivity to Nine Mile Prairie are preserved but other areas of lesser biodiversity are lost to development. This option complies with the UNL Master Plan, the current Comprehensive Plan, and the Lincoln Climate Action Plan.

3. SOIL HEALTH. Seek federal and state funding for soil health improvement on the city-owned parcel as well as other properties in the Nine Mile Prairie environs, to build up the carbon sequestration capacity of the whole area. This would be a part of the federal "30 x 30" effort to conserve 30% of America's land by 2030. It is based on the results of a Minnesota research effort that demonstrated the carbon sequestration value of leaving lands undisturbed and how improving soil health "may greatly increase carbon capture." (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-08636-w>). This is also a give-and-take option as it would potentially allow for development of nearby, less habitat-rich property while preserving parcels with high biodiversity. The option complies with the UNL Master Plan. It would be an action achievement for the Lincoln Climate Action Plan.

Other Alternatives

The process of developing alternatives is continuing, with additional options under consideration for possible discussion at the August meeting, following the agenda framework set forth by Council Member Washington. They will be informed by any "give and take" feedback received in response to the six alternatives listed above, a process suggested by Council Member Ward in discussion of her July 12th motion to delay.

Angela M. Birkett

From: Russell Miller <neb31340@twc.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 24, 2021 12:02 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: fro russell miller about 21R-314 Yankee Hill street funding

From : Russell Miller 23 July 2021
341 S. 52
Lincoln, NE 68510

To : Lincoln City Council

Subject : Comments and suggestion concerning 21R-314 Yankee Hill Road Improvements

Hello,

This Yankee Hill project from 40th to 48th street was originally projected to cost \$3.5 million. The 1/4 cent sales tax (LOTM) was to provide \$1 million and impact fees plus developer loans were the remaining \$2.5 million.

Today we know that the low bid by Constructors was \$6.28 million. This agreement (21R-3114) will require the City to provide \$2.5 million in LOTM sales tax money.

LOTM money is divided into 3 pots : Existing Street Improvements (73.5 % of sales tax), Growth Projects (25%), and RSTD (1.5%).

The Growth Projects have totally committed their 25% allocation to various projects and there is no additional \$1.5 million of Growth money left for this Yankee Hill project, UNLESS a different Growth project forfeits its LOTM money. There have been 4 other Growth project bids that have been awarded this year.

The temptation will be to use Existing Street Improvement money to make up the difference. But Existing Streets have over 350 miles of streets to improve which the voters were promised in the sales tax campaign of 2019. In other words the Existing Street program is fully committed and cannot spare any money for these Growth projects.

I am requesting the Council attach a paragraph to the 21R-314 Attachment that states that all sales tax money will be from LOTM Growth portion and ZERO money from LOTM's Existing Street portion.

NEW BUT RELATED SUBJECT

It is often overlooked how little growth or new developments contribute to Lincoln's tax base. It appears most homes that are being built in the Yankee Hill area are being assessed at approximately \$300,000. Which means their TOTAL property tax bill would be \$6,059. HOWEVER the city only receives \$843 which does not even pay a single month's salary of a police or fire person. It is obvious these recently developed areas are being subsidized by all of Lincoln's property taxes.

These subsidies take tax money that should be used to improve our neighborhood street infrastructure and, instead, subsidize new development projects. To correct this financial inequity, about 20 years ago Impact Fees were developed. The Impact Fee concept was that new developments would be assessed a one time fee that would pay for the impact caused on the City's infrastructure. The developer/realtor coalition have successfully fought Impact Fees by preventing them from increasing with inflation so that today impact fees are a relatively insignificant amount.

The consequence is the under funding of the 2 Yankee Hill projects : Yankee Hill (S. 40 to S. 48) and Yankee Hill (S.56th to S 70th). The Yankee Hill (56th to 70th) project wants to use LOTM Existing Street Improvement money to resurface a street that is outside City limits.

The LTU's street department receives funding from wheel tax (\$ 9.5 million), federal & state allocation (gas tax \$7.4 million), impact fees (\$4.2million) and, now, LOTM (1/4 cent sales tax \$12.9 million) and the recently issued Highway allocation bonds (\$15 million).

Historically, Lincoln's interior or existing streets were not repaired because money was used for streets serving growth developments. THIS HAS TO BE STOPPED. Lincoln now has 350 miles of streets that graded red (requiring reconstruction) and yellow (requiring rehabilitation). Supposedly the LOTM sales tax was to correct that, BUT these 2 Yankee Hill projects indicate nothing has changed.

IT IS CRUCIAL THAT THE COUNCIL INFORMS LTU'S STREET DEPARTMENT AND THE DEVELOPERS THAT LOTM's "EXISTING STREET IMPROVEMENT FUNDS " CANNOT BE TOUCHED. THIS can be accomplished by requiring the request by 21R-314 be funded from LOTM Growth portion.

Thank you,
Russell Miller

Angela M. Birkett

From: LaVonne Hanlon <librarianlavonne@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 24, 2021 3:23 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: NW 48th Street Development Area designation: Agenda items 4f & 4g 21R-235 and 21R236

I'm writing in opposition to Agenda items 4f & 4g 21R-235 and 21R236 concerning the proposed NW 48th Street Development Area. Although providing more affordable housing is an admirable goal, including the 20-acre section west of Arnold Elementary School and north of West Cumming Street is a poor choice, in my opinion, for the following reasons:

- The 2020 Nine-Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan, developed by the UNL Center for Grassland Studies and the Nine-Mile Advisory Committee, supports leaving this unplowed section and surrounding green spaces as critical buffers to protect Nine-Mile Prairie.

- Development of this area conflicts with Lincoln's newly approved Climate Action Plan, which calls for preserving native prairie areas and other natural resources and enhancing our carbon sequestration inventory.

- Undeveloped prairies and grasslands are not "extremely blighted" areas, and as such should not be considered for tax increment financing under existing state statutes.

- Situating housing developments in these areas may increase flooding risks along the creek bed, increase lighting pollution, eliminate habitat corridors to Nine-Mile Prairie, and adversely impact bird and pollinator habitats.

I believe we can develop affordable housing more successfully in other areas while protecting Nine-Mile Prairie and other environmental resources for generations to come. Please reconsider development of this area.

Sincerely, LaVonne Latham Hanlon

Angela M. Birkett

From: JoEllen Polzien <jwpolz1@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 24, 2021 4:12 PM
To: Council Packet; Mayor
Cc: JoEllen W Polzien
Subject: Council decision on Arnold Heights

Importance: High

Dear Council Members and Mayor:

Please take under advisement the background on development in Arnold Heights, including Wachiska Audubon's written request of June 11, 2021 that blight be limited to the housing area on W. Wilkens Street.

Additionally, the University of Nebraska developed a Nine-Mile Environs master plan that should be the primary guide to any and all development decisions in the 2050 Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,
JoEllen W Polzien
2808 Ponca St.
Lincoln, NE 68506

Angela M. Birkett

From: Gene Hanlon <gene.hanlon@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 24, 2021 4:37 PM
To: Council Packet; James M. Bowers; Richard W. Meginnis; Tom J. Beckius; Jane Raybould; Tammy J. Ward; Sandra J. Washington; Bennie R. Shobe
Subject: Opposition to the NW 48th Street Development Area designation (Agenda items 4f & 4g 21R-235 and 21R236) on July 26, 2021 Public Hearing

Dear City Council Member:

I am writing to oppose 21R-235 and 236 and ask that this be part of the “official record” for the public hearing. In my opinion, the unplowed 20-acre area west of Arnold Elementary School and the area north of West Cumming Street should be removed from the NW 48th Street Redevelopment Area.

I fully understand that the purpose of these resolutions is to allow individuals who purchase homes in the area to obtain credits of \$5,000 on their taxes. However, these resolutions also lay the foundation for plans to develop the two parcels identified above and request TIF funding for affordable housing.

As I outlined in my email on July 12 on this issue, I am opposed for the following reasons:

- Including undeveloped land surrounding Arnold Elementary School as a blighted area eligible for development for affordable housing is in conflict with the 2020 Nine-Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan by the UNL Center for Grassland Studies and the Nine-Mile Advisory Committee. Experts in prairie management and preservation have designated these unplowed areas as critical buffer to help preserve the Nine-Mile Prairie. I believe that Urban Development and Planning Department staff should follow these experts' recommendations for prairie preservation.
- The proposed redevelopment is also in conflict with recently approved Climate Action Plan recommendations related to preservation of native prairie areas, natural resources and sequestering of carbon (recommendations 99, 105, 108). In approving the Climate Action Plan, many City leaders said that it is important for the City to follow science in developing environmental policy, yet, as previously noted, policymakers are ignoring scientific expertise outlined by the Nine-Mile Prairie and Environs Master Plan.
- Designating undeveloped prairie and grasslands as extremely blighted appears to be a stretch in complying with blighted and substandard definitions in state statutes for tax increment financing.
- A housing development on undeveloped prairies and riparian areas will not only reduce the City's carbon sequestration inventory but also increase the flooding risk in the creek directly north of Arnold Elementary School, eliminate habitat corridors to Nine-Mile Prairie, increase lighting pollution and adversely impact the bird and pollinator habitat for Nine-Mile Prairie and surrounding green spaces.

I fully agree with *The Lincoln Journal Star's* editorial on Thursday, July 22, “Lincoln Can Craft Win-Win for Nine-Mile Development” (https://journalstar.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-7-22-lincoln-can-craft-win-win-for-nine-mile-development/article_9ae0db88-9229-5b49-9977-fd608bde22f8.html). The resolutions before you are clearly not a “win-win.” I ask that you table these resolutions and direct the City Urban Development and Planning Departments, as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update, to study alternatives and identify the best approach to developing affordable housing in Air Park while protecting the environs of the Nine-Mile Prairie for future generations.

The only way that the City can successfully achieve goals of the Climate Action Plan is to make sure that all development is evaluated through a “climate lens” that ensures that all proposed projects and initiatives are assessed in advance for their effect on greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions and climate resilience. Please take the time to consider this impact and plan accordingly.

Respectfully,
Gene Hanlon
2710 Ryons St.
Lincoln, Ne 68502

Angela M. Birkett

From: EXTREME IRON WORKS Custom Platework & Engraving. <cottond53@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 24, 2021 11:07 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Custom Embeds

To whom it may concern.

My name is Dave Cotton. Owner operator of Extreme Iron of Gretna Ne.

I have invented and produced an advertising avenue so to speak. It is a permanent concrete embed that I can build from a simple jpeg logo design of a local business that would sign a lease agreement with the city .

Now this local business would lease advertising space from the city that owns the sidewalks downtown in high traffic locations. One intersection could bring in a few thousand per month this could be a substantial change in the deficit.

This is a patent pending device that I as well as other structural engineering professionals, property development companies, construction companies, and concrete companies and professional finishers have given this a positive response.

The Mayor of Gretna has plans to put different directional embeds in the walking paths.

Please take a moment to open the file below a you will see the custom concrete embed samples that I have personally presented to company owners and or engineering firms.

I do feel that all initial start up fees , such as 1 section of sidewalk to be replaced with custom logo, and phone number. One business per corner only.

Its money laying on the ground !!

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/JVfrvjnGcQPEj5yU6>

Angela M. Birkett

From: Mary Roseberry-Brown <mroseberrybrown@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 25, 2021 1:19 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: PUD change of zoning request # CZ21020

July 24, 2021

Dear Council member:

Please delay the July 23, 2021 vote on this request. The issues need a much more thorough review.

At the July 19th City Council meeting, Sandra Washington asked Kent Seacrest which would take precedence- the original zoning for the neighborhood or the overlay. He answered that the overlay would take precedence. His answer was certainly a game changer. It means all the guidelines as to what would be allowed in the original residential zoning for the targeted area would now not be in effect in preference to the guidelines in the proposed Application CZ21020.

In light of Seacrest's answer we need to go a whole lot further in restrictions. We need to go back over current zoning restrictions that are in place for "retail stores" and "personal services" and add the relevant ones back in. Suggestions just off the top of my head besides pawnbrokers, tobacco specialty shops, and delayed deposit service service include: adult sex shops, "head shops," indoor and outdoor shooting ranges, tattoo parlors, banks, outdoor dog boarding kennels, vehicle car sales, vaping stores, outdoor restaurant dining with alcohol, video game stores, ax throwing, gasoline stations, and anything else producing loud noise and/or odor.

It is much easier to set out guidelines and restrictions now rather than change them with amendments if this application is approved. For a citizen to request an amendment is quite costly and time consuming. It would also be relatively easy to apply for a zoning exemption.

The question comes to mind-if the overlay takes precedence over zoning restrictions, would something illegal in the whole city such as prostitution or drug sales, then be legal as a "Personal Service" or "Retail Store" in the overlay area? I do not know.

Also, I still do not think outdoor dining with alcohol should be allowed. Such situations are often very loud with people shouting This would not be fair to residents trying to sleep or to rest.

There also need to be very very specific guidelines and requirements for building design which would assure that any new building be residential in design.. These guidelines should also reflect the historic nature of the neighborhood.

Any business taking up more than 1000 square feet would be required to provide parking. This often would mean more parking lots. I consider parking lots as being destructive to a residential neighborhood. There should be a requirement that these parking lots be completely screened with landscaping.

Again, please delay the whole request until a lot more careful thinking goes into it.
Thank you.

Mary Roseberry-Brown
1423 F Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
phone 402-477-8282

Angela M. Birkett

From: Melissa Baker <mellomixer30@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 25, 2021 10:51 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Nine Mile Prairie and environs area

Hello. I want to send a personal email, but also this plea comes from the marrow in my bones that feels this is not right! I am opposed to any development in the Nine Mile Prairie area coming before you all tomorrow. I ask you please take the time and not rush this housing project idea, or give in to any pressure by those who seek to profit.

The recently adopted Climate Action Plan supports natural climate solutions with preserving native grasslands, prairies and eco-buffers. UNL's Nine Mile Prairie Master Plan states this is a necessary local ecosystem. It would be a tremendous disappointment to see this area in conversation destroyed. Once these natural spaces are removed or damaged it's ripple affects stretch further than most people may think. Please save this natural space and seek solutions that do not endanger and disrespect the fragile nature of the few wild spaces, and wildlife, we have left to protect.

In Hope,

Melissa Baker

Angela M. Birkett

From: Foster Collins <fostercollinsjr@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 25, 2021 11:28 PM
To: Council Packet
Subject: Blighted designation for developing land adjacent to Nine Mile prairie

Dear City Council Members

Please resist the pressure to designate this parcel as blighted, and please consider whatever measures you have at your disposal to help preserve this important parcel as a buffer to preserve our jewel of a remnant of native prairie. I know you have heard many more articulate than I give you our reasons for wanting this parcel preserved. Buffers are more important than ever as global warming and pollution encroach on this fragile ecosystem. If this buffer is developed the pressure will be directly on the remnant of the prairie itself, and that is an unacceptable situation.

Please take care to insure that future generations will have access to the type of land the pioneers found when they came to this place. There is so little of it left, and our scientists, educators, and artists need to be able to experience these kinds of places, so important to us as our heritage.

Thank you for your attention,

Foster Collins

2100 Calvert Street

Lincoln, NE 68502

(402) 617-6907



Virus-free. www.avg.com

Angela M. Birkett

From: Bethany <bbrunsm@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2021 7:26 AM
To: Mayor; Council Packet; James M. Bowers; Richard W. Meginnis; Jane Raybould; Tammy J. Ward; Sandra J. Washington; Bennie R. Shobe; Tom J. Beckius
Subject: Please preserve unplowed prairie near Nine Mile Prairie.

Hello Lincoln City Council Members and Mayor.

I wanted to take a moment to comment on the action item on the City Council agenda today related to the blight designation of land adjacent to Nine Mile Prairie. We need to support both the development of affordable housing and the protection of our environment according to the recently-adopted Climate Action Plan. We should not need to choose between them. Please find another area to designate as blighted that does not include the land adjacent to Nine Mile Prairie.

Thanks,

Bethany Brunzman
7911 Red Oak Rd, Lincoln, NE 68516
402-327-0805
bbrunsm@gmail.com