

MEETING NOTES

Advanced public notice of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website. In addition, a public notice was emailed to the Lincoln Journal Star for publication on Wednesday, January 20, 2021.

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Friday, February 26, 2021, 8:00 a.m., City Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Campbell, Heidi Cuca, Delonte Johnson, Kile Johnson, Karen Nalow, Ann Post and David Quade.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Collin Christopher and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Lynn Johnson from Parks & Recreation; Bob Ripley of the Capitol Commission; Doug Hanson and Michelle Potts of the State Building Division and other interested parties.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

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

K. Johnson then called for a motion approving the minutes of the regular meetings held November 20, 2020 and January 29, 2021. Motion for approval made by Campbell, seconded by Cuca and carried 7-0: Campbell, Cuca, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade voting 'yes'.

PLACEMENT OF AN INSCRIBED PLAQUE ALONG THE SPIRIT OF NEBRASKA PATHWAY

PUBLIC HEARING: February 26, 2021

Members present: Campbell, Cuca, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade

Lynn Johnson stated this item is for review and approval of a bronze plaque along the Spirit of Nebraska Pathway. The typical process is that the Parks and Recreation department brings the text for new plaques along the pathway to this commission for review. Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte was the first Native American to achieve the status of being a medical doctor in the U.S.

Parks is also involved in the development of a portrait sculpture of Dr. La Flesche Picotte, funded by a generous donor. The proposed placement is on the east side of Centennial Mall between the Scottish Rite Temple and the Nebraska State Parking Garage. Parks is working with Clark & Enersen to provide details for the sculpture niche and how it will be placed along the mall. This sculpture will be back in front of the commission in a few months with more detail.

K. Johnson asked about the text for the plaque. L. Johnson stated there are very specific guidelines with regard to the number of lines and characters.

Campbell wondered if it would read better if it were two sentences. She would suggest ending the sentence at Doctor, before proceeding with the next sentence. L. Johnson will check if that meets the guidelines for the number of characters.

K. Johnson asked if the plaque had been ordered yet. L. Johnson replied that it had not, because they wanted to wait until the formal approval. The process for the plaque typically takes about 6-8 weeks.

Post questioned why the proposed text after the comma refers to Dr. Picotte as Susan. She wondered about the logic between the difference. L. Johnson responded that it all goes back to the number of characters allowed. They struggled with the limitation, and tried to get as much content as possible.

Nalow noted that her name is already listed in the text, and suggested that the line could read 'she' instead of Susan. With the status of Doctor, it seems odd to refer to her by her first name. L. Johnson agreed that 'she' would read better in place of Susan and might allow more room for the two sentences as suggested by Campbell.

D. Johnson asked L. Johnson to speak a little more about the portrait. L. Johnson stated that the sculptor, Ben Victor, was selected and agreed to do this work. He did the Standing Bear sculpture and is the only artist to have three sculptures in the Capitol in Washington, D.C. They have been working with the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs regarding the quote. The timing of this project is important. Last year, the Nebraska State Legislature determined that Columbus Day will be Indigenous People's Day in Nebraska. They are planning on the unveiling of this statue for the first Indigenous People's Day (October 11, 2021).

K. Johnson thinks it would be great to have two sculptures by Ben Victor on Centennial Mall.

ACTION:

Post moved approval with the possible text changes from 'Susan' to 'she' or 'Dr. Picotte' and the edit to two sentences, as deemed appropriate, seconded by Cuca and carried 7-0: Campbell, Cuca, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade voting 'yes'.

PLACEMENT OF A PEDESTAL AND PLAQUE TO BE LOATED ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF 1526 K STREET, HIGHLIGHTING THE HISTORY OF "THE PROTECTING HAND" SCULPTURE

PUBLIC HEARING:

February 26, 2021

Members present: Campbell, Cuca, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade

Michelle Potts State of Nebraska with Doug Hanson director state building commission

Michelle Potts stated this item relates to "The Protecting Hand" sculpture on the original Woodmen Accident and Life Company building. The artwork was commissioned by a private company. Passersby don't understand the association. The DAS wants to design a plaque that would provide some history and context for how this piece of art came to be at a State building. They have been working with Assurity and a potential third party to make a non-profit donation for the funds to do this. They wanted to have this reviewed so they can proceed. The language will be back in the next month or so for final review and approval. This would be for approval of the pedestal and plaque design and materials.

K. Johnson asked about the location. Potts is not sure of the exact location yet. They want to make sure they don't block or hinder the accessible ramp. K. Johnson inquired if they are thinking this would be located between the street sidewalk and the building. Potts replied yes. It will be on private property.

Nalow appreciates the use of materials and the sensitivity in relation to the Capitol Environs district and the Capitol building.

Doug Hanson stated this would also tie in with Centennial Mall.

K. Johnson inquired if this would be the same coloring as Centennial Mall. Potts stated they are still looking at the plaque design. When they return, they will show more detail.

Campbell is trying to picture how this will look. She likes the pedestal and plaque. Potts noted the sign for the building is a unique placement. They will look at making sure they don't clash. Their ideal timeline would be to return in one to two months with more details.

ACTION:

Post moved approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness, contingent on the application coming back for approval of the specific language and placement location, seconded by Quade and carried 7-0: Campbell, Cuca, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade voting 'yes'.

2020 ANNUAL REPORT:

Christopher stated this is the same report as what was presented previously. There was not a quorum at the last meeting to take action on it.

K. Johnson likes it very much.

ACTION:

Motion for approval made by Campbell, seconded by Cuca and carried 7-0: Campbell, Cuca, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade voting 'yes'.

LINCOLN MALL DESIGN STANDARDS FOR MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS:

Christopher reminded the group that there was a desire for some additional design standards for monuments and memorials along Lincoln Mall. He presented a draft at last month's meeting. He also noted that he had recently talked with L. Johnson about limiting future proposals for monuments, memorials and works of art on Centennial Mall. He stated that this text change is addressed under Guideline 22.6 in the handout provided to the commission. The change doesn't restrict additional monuments on private property and still encourages surface treatment plaques like those on the Spirit of Nebraska Pathway. Larger installations like additional sculptures along Centennial Mall would be limited in the future.

L. Johnson read the proposal and agrees with it.

Nalow wondered if these standards would allow horizontal and vertical surface treatments. Christopher responded that they would, and that he would modify the text to clarify this.

K. Johnson asked for an opinion about seating on Lincoln Mall. He wondered if more is needed or whether staff believes the seating is adequate. He questioned if it was installed using TIF (Tax Increment Financing). L. Johnson stated the benches were part of the original design when it was renovated. He does think it was funded by TIF dollars. The benches on Lincoln Mall have been a bit of a challenge. The city has been contacted about concerns regarding people sleeping on them. They have temporarily removed some of them. He feels there are currently an appropriate number of benches on the Mall. They are regularly contacted to have them removed, but he

believes they add to the historic nature of the Mall. He would encourage keeping what is there and not adding more.

K. Johnson noted the bus stops that are located in the area. Christopher thinks the proposed design standards related to seating are meant to ensure that installations that are considering added seating do so in a way that doesn't conflict with pedestrian activity on Lincoln Mall. However, it is possible to take that further and state that added seating should be discouraged.

Post would like section 23.5 clarified that these are all currently used design standards. Christopher stated that 23.5 would be all new language. There was very limited language for monuments. This is an attempt to in some ways restrict future installations by setting a high standard. Post noted that many of the items are already part of the guidelines, without specific reference to monuments. Christopher stated that these new standards for elements like landscaping and seating are specific to how they relate to a proposed monuments or memorials.

Nalow likes what Christopher is suggesting. She doesn't necessarily think seating should be discouraged, but it should be addressed in some way.

K. Johnson asked if the Mari Sandoz would be a monument. Christopher believes it would be. K. Johnson wondered about a plaque, something horizontal on a concrete base, or vertically attached to something. Christopher stated that in his mind, a plaque doesn't qualify as an art piece or sculpture. To him, the Spirit of Nebraska Pathway plaques on Centennial Mall, for instance, are a separate category that would not be addressed by these standards. He doesn't believe surface treatments on the ground or a wall are a sculpture. He sees a plaque on a stand as perhaps part of a larger installation in many cases.

Nalow believes that the Mari Sandoz is more of a historical marker, not a plaque. K. Johnson inquired if that came before this commission. Nalow replied yes. Christopher noted that although this would come before the commission, he doesn't think it would necessarily be addressed with these new standards as currently written. There is not a lot of language that would limit those kinds of plaques, but that language could be added. K. Johnson said he would feel more comfortable if there was language to address those installations, particularly along the Mall. He would like the standards to speak to the quality of materials, language, placement, etc.

Nalow feels that overall, visual cluttering of the Mall detracts from the view of the Capitol, and addressing that is the ultimate goal. K. Johnson agreed.

Post questioned the phrase 'appropriate size'. She sees the Dr. Picotte installation as a monument. What kind of scale do we feel is appropriate? Scale, what does it mean? Christopher stated this addresses Lincoln Mall, not Centennial Mall. The language is purposely general in nature so the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission can review and address the particulars of

an application. He doesn't know that we want to dig down too specific with too many limitations. Post agreed. She is curious what pedestrian scale means. Christopher sees differences between Centennial Mall and Lincoln Mall. What is appropriate for one might not be for the other. Christopher will make changes based on what he heard today. He will bring a draft back for review next month. At some point, this Commission will need to make a recommendation to move the draft forward for official approval. The text amendments will then go on to Planning Commission and then City Council for final approval.

The Commission thanked Christopher for his work on this.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Christopher noted that at the meeting last month, there was not a quorum. The Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU) residential rehabilitation project was in front of the commission for review. There had previously been concern from the commission about the removal of pavers along Lincoln Mall, as well as the alignment of crosswalks and ADA ramps across S 14th Street. He believes the plans that LTU presented in January addressed all of the commission's previous concerns, and that the streetscape would not be changed in any meaningful way. As a result, a Certificate of No Material Effect was issued for the project, with the approval of K. Johnson and Planning Director David Cary.

K. Johnson agreed a certificate was appropriate. He noted that Bob Ripley and Matt Hansen were there to address any of their concerns as well. On G St., there will be new sewer pipe installed. No formal ramping would be installed until that is done.

Christopher stated that with those changes, he felt the project was consistent with the current design of the Mall.

- Nalow suggested that future commission meetings be moved to an 8:30 start time instead of 8:00 a.m. on Friday. It is difficult to arrive at 8:00 with her children's school schedule. Post agreed. Christopher stated that staff will change the meetings to a start time of 8:30 a.m. He also mentioned this group will most likely meet on Fridays through the end of 2021.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.