

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, November 11, 2020.

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Friday, November 20, 2020, 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, Ann Post and David Quade; (Karen Nalow absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Collin Christopher and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Matt Hanson of the Capitol Commission; Doug Hanson of the State Building Division; Melissa Gengler with Historic Resources Group; Delaney Nelson with White Lotus Group; Jen Cross and Bill DeRoin of HDR; 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 meeting held August 28, 2020. Motion for approval made by Cuca, seconded by D. Johnson and carried 5-0: Campbell, Cuca, D. Johnson, K. Johnson and Quade voting 'yes'; Post absent at time of vote; Nalow absent.

SKY PARK MANOR REMODEL AND RESTORATIVE WORK TO THE EXTERIOR

PUBLIC HEARING:

November 20, 2020

Members present: Campbell, Cuca, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Post and Quade voting 'yes'; Nalow absent.

Melissa Gengler is a historic preservation consultant presenting this project on behalf of the project owners and developers. Sky Park Manor is within the Capitol Environs boundaries and also on the list of National Register of Historic Places. This is primarily a new systems upgrade.

The building was completed in 1963 and hasn't been changed since. It has some very dated systems. One of the more notable exterior changes will be new mechanical systems on the roof which require ventilation. New windows will also be installed on the 12th floor. The railing system, which is such a prominent feature of the building, will be restored while also bringing into compliance with relevant codes. The second-floor "Sun and Fun" deck, which includes a pool and a recreation area, will be renovated. And finally, the exterior will be repainted to match its original colors.

Regarding visual changes to the exterior, the roof currently has a sizable penthouse, elevator and mechanical systems. These components are original to the building, which is one of the tallest in the Capitol Environs area. Gengler presented photoshop images of the roof with the new design. The only new features to be added to the roof is a new piece of mechanical equipment and some small vents.

Regarding the interior, the floorplan will remain the same. The owner is exploring historic tax credits for the project, and preserving the floorplan makes that achievable.

K. Johnson asked what changes will be visible on the roof from the Capitol. Gengler responded that the only visible additions to the roof will be one new mechanical unit and the added vents, which will only be visible from the equivalent floors of the Capitol Building. From the street level, those additions will not be visible from a pedestrian point of view.

Gengler continued that several new windows are proposed. All original windows will remain that are undamaged and do not need replaced. Adjacent to the laundry room, they are proposing to expand the area and add new windows for a fitness area. They will match the new windows to existing as close as possible.

Additional cables will be added to the balcony railings to bring them up to code. The railings will be repainted as well. There are panels that divide the balconies, which will be repainted and retained where needed. They intend to stick to the original color palette.

Post noted that some of the porches are enclosed. She inquired if they are individually owned. Gengler stated that they are not owned, but that people just added what they wanted over time. The enclosures will be removed and reopened.

K. Johnson inquired if any additional structural work will be done to the railings. Gengler stated that for exterior tax credits, it must be as original as possible. She showed what the new railings will look like. Additional vertical elements will be added, along with additional horizontal elements to bring the railings to code. The added horizontal element will be a cable rail that will be close to invisible. A lip will also be added to the balcony floor to keep things from rolling off the decks.

Gengler stated that the 2nd floor above the parking garage has what was is called a “Sun and Fun” deck. It wraps around the building from the east to the south. The pool is original, and will be retained. There are large concrete planters, as well as a dimensional concrete wall system. The putting green that was part of the original design is gone. It was replaced with a planting area that was removed due to its excess weight. The pool has been leaking and causing damage in the garage. The whole area will be retained and restored. The pool will be rehabbed and new tile added. The green space will remain. The lights fixtures are original. Those will be retained as well. In order to meet code, one more course of CMU (concrete masonry unit) will be added to the wall.

Campbell questioned who is doing the project. Gengler replied Sampson Construction. She also noted the exterior of the building will be repainted to match the original colors, which was an off-white with bluish gray trim.

Quade asked about the location of the new mechanical unit. Gengler pointed out where it would be located. There is CMU around the unit. For historic tax credits, they did not want to see anything added to the existing unit. This will be added and painted out to match the original.

Quade believes it will be good to get rid of the existing balcony enclosures. Gengler agreed. There is not consistency in the appearance.

D. Johnson sees this all as very appropriate. Campbell and Cuca agreed. Post believes it will be great to see it restored to its former glory. K. Johnson agreed as well. It will be nice to see this restored.

Cuca asked about occupancy. Gengler responded it is about half occupied. Tenants will be relocated to one side while the other half is being done and vice versa. She noted there is still a fallout feature in the basement.

ACTION:

Cuca moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work as proposed, seconded by Post and carried 6-0: Campbell, Cuca, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Quade and Post voting ‘yes’; Nalow absent.

PERSHING SITE DISCUSSION:

Collin Christopher stated that the City has hoped to reuse or redevelop the site as far back as 2014 when the Pershing Center hosted its last concert. Redevelopment of the block was a major focus of the 2018 Downtown Master Plan. This spring, the City received a number of proposals

for redevelopment of the block. The one presented today is what was chosen by the Redevelopment Committee and approved by the Mayor. City staff is currently working with the developer's team to establish a schedule and put forth a redevelopment agreement. This is just a first look at this point, as the project won't be voted on until 2021.

Delaney Nelson, who is representing the developer, gave an overview of the redevelopment. They have been working closely with the City. There is so much history here. For the last 100 years, this has been a community hub. They wanted to think about how they can transform and bring these project components into a development on this site. The project mission is to honor the legacy of Pershing. They want this to be a catalyst project that builds imagination and lifestyle. They thought about what that means to Lincoln, and looked at the Mayor's plan for affordable housing and explored how to implement mixed income, mixed use components to the project, along with a public library. The one hundred proposed units will be affordable. They also want to explore if there is an opportunity to have a wellness or childcare component. Knowing that on-site parking is essential to the project, an underground garage is being proposed. Her favorite part of this project is the integration of greenspace in a downtown project and creating a park-like space. She thinks that is the piece that pulls the project together.

Jen Cross of HDR stated that in their overall thinking about the site, the great view and vista to the Capitol building is key. They went to a large group of community stakeholders and held a workshop earlier this year. They walked the existing site to review opportunities and constraints. They also completed a survey with the stakeholders, and the view of the Capitol came out of that survey as a key issue to address. They looked at other downtown buildings with the group, and the Community Foundation building across the street and the Wells Fargo Bank building ranked high in terms of visual preference. They looked at materials already in use in the Capitol Environs District. They want to create a space that will evolve with the community over time. They are going for a neutral and defined pallet. They also looked at the mural and researched how to reuse it or what to do with it. They looked at how to make art a key component of the project, in one form or another.

Bill DeRoin of HDR was also involved in the charrette. As part of the survey effort, they talked through some aspects of building design and materiality. It was more about finding the right character and features. They identified important elements. Transparency was important, along with blending interior and exterior spaces. They wanted clean lines and forms, simple and elegant, rich and expressive texture. It is important to bring timeless aesthetics to the site. They want this to be enjoyed for years to come. They understand the Capitol Environs guidelines with regard to materials, but there could be some opportunities for high-quality metals as accents to more traditional materials.

Cross showed an aerial rendering of the space. The library would flank the southwest corner. The details of that space have yet to be determined. The building to the north of that would likely

include daycare and an exercise facility. In between those two buildings will be the greenspace. She noted that the intent on Centennial Mall is to build up to the property line and maintain some existing street trees. She believes that respecting those alignments are critical. She showed some areas for possible outdoor seating or dining. She is anticipating the parking being underneath the development.

K. Johnson asked how many cars the parking garage would hold. Cross doesn't have an exact number yet. They are working with the City on what is needed. K. Johnson questioned how much of the block footprint would be parking. Cross believes about 75 percent.

Cross continued that they want to make sure they have access to the wellness center. They don't want to create any additional conflicts with traffic. There could be a possible drop-off/pickup lane for the library.

DeRoin stated that they intend for this project to meet the height requirements of the Capitol Environs District. For the west elevation facing Centennial Mall, they felt it was important to have a strong presence. Greenspace is important to that view. This is the case on the east side as well, which would include more of the residential component. The north elevation reacts strongly to the context of N Street, where there is a bike lane. They saw the opportunity for perhaps a health and wellness center along that end with lots of windows. On the south, they felt it was important to draw people into that site with the library and housing components. Perhaps there could be dining or retail along this end as well, in order to help draw people in. One of the big ideas for the design, as they looked at the greenspace, was to look for ways to keep it activated. He believes the program types they are proposing would allow that to happen. There is the opportunity for concerts or other events. They believe the proposal includes a unique blend of uses and programming opportunities that could be used to promote healthy living and lifestyles. They felt it was important to have a 360-degree view for safety. They want the whole space to be active, and to draw people in. They are building to the height limit, but understand the Capitol view is important. The library on the south corner will give great views. The south and west facing units will have a view to the Capitol. Likewise, the history and impact of the mural is something they want to pay homage to. They will look at how that gets integrated at a later stage of design, but one idea they've considered is perhaps a digital mural or artwork. Resiliency is an important consideration that should be addressed with this design. They want to use long lasting materials, but maintaining some flexibility in the design is important. Sustainability is also key. Not just in terms of building materials and systems, but also in creating and encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Having so many different resources within one block is really important to the success of this project. He wrapped up the presentation by showing a video fly through of the area. He pointed out the different areas of the block. He thanked everyone for their time.

Campbell questioned the library space and greenspace. DeRoin reiterated that this is just initial ideas at this point, but that perhaps there could be greenspace on the roof. The actual library design still needs to go through a process.

Cuca wondered about the potential movie space shown. DeRoin noted it is all conceptual at this point, but that there could be a screen. They haven't worked through the final elements at this point. Cuca asked how many housing units are being proposed. DeRoin replied that they are anticipating about one hundred units.

K. Johnson inquired how many housing units would be affordable. Delaney believes they would all be in the 50-80% range for Area Median Income (AMI). 80% units are consistent with market rate. They will go through a formal market study.

Quade knows the obvious interest is in the library. This is a great vision and hopefully the City can make something like that happen. It looks like a lot of great things can happen here. He is curious how much of the public displays will happen and the height of the building. He is curious if there will be a mechanical element or something on the roof. He imagines something like that will have to be integrated. He would like to keep clean lines on the roof.

Delaney stated the library piece is separate effort. The public art piece will be a longer process. The housing piece could be considered a likely Phase 1 of the project.

Cuca is curious what happens to the existing mural. Cross stated they are looking at options to document the mural in some way. It is possible that it could be reintegrated digitally or reused in smaller pieces. They are looking at all options.

K. Johnson thinks that preserving the mural digitally is a unique aspect.

Post inquired about what funding/financing options are being considered for the affordable housing component. She asked if tax credits, like Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), are being considered. Delaney responded that there are a lot of details to be ironed out yet, but that the LIHTC is one of the options being considered.

K. Johnson would echo Quade's comments about the clean lines of the roof. It would be helpful to keep the roof clean.

Post sees a lot of great things incorporated into this. She is excited to see how it happens.

K. Johnson appreciates the opportunity to view this.

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Christopher stated that the joint meeting with the Nebraska Capitol Commission for November had been postponed. The plan is to reschedule the joint meeting for December 10, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. at the State Capitol. He doesn't believe a separate Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission meeting will be needed for December. He also stated that the draft for the 2020 NCEC Annual Report had been included in the Commissioners' packets, but since they would be reviewing that report at the joint meeting in December, there was no need to go over it at this time.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.