



NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

The Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission will hold a meeting on **Friday, September 25, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.** in the County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, in **City Council Chambers** on the 1st Floor. For more information, please contact the Lincoln City/Lancaster County Planning Department at 402-441-7491.

AGENDA

September 25, 2026

1. Approval of meeting record from August 28, 2026

Discuss & Advise

2. Cameron the Capitol Cat sculpture
3. Staff report & miscellaneous

AT THIS TIME, ANYONE WISHING TO SPEAK ON AN ITEM

NOT ON THE AGENDA, MAY DO SO.

ACCOMMODATION NOTICE: *The City of Lincoln complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 guidelines. Ensuring the public's access to and participating in public meetings is a priority for the City of Lincoln. In the event you are in need of a reasonable accommodation in order to attend or participate in a public meeting conducted by the City of Lincoln, please contact the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights at 402-441-7624, or the City Ombudsman at 402-441-7511, as soon as possible before the scheduled meeting date in order to make your request.*

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NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER -

APPLICATION TYPE For Discussion Only

ADDRESS/LOCATION Cameron the Capitol Cat Sculpture on Goodhue Boulevard

DISCUSSION DATE September 25, 2026

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS August 28, 2026

APPLICANT Nebraska State Senator Jana Hughes

STAFF CONTACT Collin Christopher, 402-441-6370, cchristopher@lincoln.ne.gov

RECOMMENDATION: DISCUSSION ONLY AT THIS TIME

Summary of Request

This is the continuation of an item from August, in which Nebraska State Senator Jana Hughes submitted a request for a preliminary discussion about the potential to locate a new sculpture within city right-of-way, near the southeast corner of Goodhue Boulevard and H Street. The subject of the sculpture is Cameron the Capitol Cat and is to be designed by sculptor Benjamin Victor. Victor is well known in Lincoln for his previous works in the Capitol Environs, including both the Standing Bear and Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte sculptures on Lincoln Mall.

During that discussion, the Commission raised concerns about approving a sculpture for Cameron. At the heart of those concerns was the acknowledgement that the subject matter of the sculpture was not significant enough to compare to other approved sculptures like those on Centennial Mall or in the Nebraska Hall of Fame.

Based on the feedback received in August, the applicant has modified the proposal in two significant ways:

- 1) **Location** – While the original approach was to locate the sculpture within city right-of-way, the applicant is now interested in locating the sculpture on State property near the adjacent parking lot. This change in approach would effectively transfer all maintenance responsibilities from the City of Lincoln to the State of Nebraska.
- 2) **Sculpture Design** – The concept for the sculpture shown in August was to locate Cameron on a formal pedestal and to position him in a sitting position. The new proposal shows Cameron sitting on a limestone slab that essentially functions as a bench.

Photo mock-ups of both the original and modified proposals can be found under **Attachment A – Renderings** at the end of this report.

Compatibility with the Design Standards

The design standards do address monuments and public art, as well as the high standard of design required for proposals in close proximity to the Capitol and the importance of improvements playing a subordinate role in enhancing its setting. For the purposes of this discussion, the current proposal is being considered by staff to be more of an art piece than a monument. The relevant standards and guidelines have been provided below for reference:

Design Standard 1: Setting

The Capitol should dominate the District and other improvements in the area should play the important, subordinate role of providing its setting.

Design Standard 2: Proximity

The nearer a property is to the Capitol, the greater responsibility it bears in the District. Buildings and other improvements facing Capitol Square shall meet very high standards for design, construction, and maintenance. Improvements facing the Capitol Malls shall also meet high standards. Other improvements within the District but not facing the Square or the Malls shall not intrude upon the Capitol's setting and shall contribute to the overall quality of the District.

Design Standard 3: Memorials and Monuments

Installation of monuments and memorials shall be based on the symbolic program established at the Capitol. Capitol Square is considered a complete and finished design, and therefore no memorials shall be added to the Capitol grounds. The Capitol itself is a memorial and has integral memorial spaces (the Nebraska Hall of Fame and Memorial Hall). Memorials may be considered for addition to the Malls, within their overall design guidelines, assigning memorials of statewide or national significance to Centennial Mall, and individual memorials to the other malls.

Guideline 3.1:

Addition of memorials and monuments facing Capitol Square (not on the Capitol grounds) and on the Malls will be evaluated within the same guidelines as other improvements such as buildings and landscape features, stressing compatibility with setting, high-quality design, and appropriate materials.

Design Standard 4: Public Art

Public art can enliven an urban environment, enrich pedestrian experience, and stimulate interaction between artist and viewer. In the District, public art, like all other improvements, is subordinate to the overall purpose of enhancing the Capitol. The Commission encourages the addition of public art to the District, while applying the same standards of fitness to place and quality of materials required of other improvements.

Guideline 4.1:

Proposals for placement of public art in the District should consider and describe the relationship of proposed works to their immediate surroundings and to the Capitol.

Guideline 4.2:

Two types of public art which may be appropriate in the District are:

- *monumental works, of national or international significance;*

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- *pedestrian-scale works.*

Guideline 4.3:

Mall master plans may identify specific locations for public art, and works may be commissioned or purchased to strengthen the context of these locations.

Guideline 4.4:

Poorly maintained public art is detrimental to the District. Works should not be installed (whether acquired by gift or purchase) unless accompanied by an endowment for long-term maintenance.

Guideline 4.5:

Temporary installations of public art which are not part of a Mall's master plan may be appropriate within the Capitol Environs District if located so as not to face a Mall or Capitol Square.

Guideline 18.2:

Provide seating in as many locations as appropriate. Benches should:

- be of high quality, refined materials,
- have backs,
- be readily available commercially or easily repaired in-house,
- be of neutral colors,
- be placed along edges to take advantage of shade and allow pedestrians to be close to circulation but not in it.

To provide seating opportunities for conversation, combine benches, trash cans, ash urns and small tables of similar construction and installation.

Guideline 18.6:

Retaining walls, seating walls, planters, and other vertical landscape features should be constructed of durable materials, preferably masonry; neutral or natural colors; horizontal lines; no exposed form lines or form-tie holes.

Recommendations/Action

This item is for discussion only at this time. However, staff has reviewed the preliminary proposal in-depth at this point and is supportive under the following conditions:

- The sculpture is located on State property as currently proposed and that a comprehensive maintenance plan has been identified by DAS staff to ensure its long-term viability.
- The final selected materials are durable and complementary to the Capitol and its environs.
- The final design of the sculpture proposal reads more as interactive art than monumentation.

From staff's perspective, there should be room within the environs for a fun, engaging piece like this and Goodhue Boulevard and the space identified near the State parking lot seems like a logical place for it to be located.

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ATTACHMENT A – RENDERINGS



Photo mock-up of the proposed Cameron the Capitol Cat sculpture, as presented in August



Revised photo mock-up of the Cameron the Capitol Cat sculpture, to be presented in September