

MEETING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, August 23, 2018, 8:00 a.m., Conference Room 214, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Campbell, Kile Johnson, Karen Nalow, Jeff Searcy and John Sinclair; (Gene Crump and Ann Post absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Zimmer, Stacey Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Robert Ripley and Matt Hansen of the Nebraska Capitol Commission; Lynn Johnson and J.J. Yost of Lincoln Parks & Recreation; Caleb Strate of the Nebraska State Building Division and Scott Gatewood of the DLR Group.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

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

Searcy then called for a motion approving the minutes of the regular meeting held May 31, 2018. Minor revisions were suggested. Motion for approval as revised made by Johnson, seconded by Campbell and carried 5-0: Campbell, Johnson, Nalow, Sinclair and Searcy voting 'yes'; Crump and Post absent.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT THE "501 DATA CENTER" AT 505 S. 14TH STREET IN THE CAPITOL ENVIRONS DISTRICT
PUBLIC HEARING: August 22, 2018

Members present: Campbell, Johnson, Nalow, Searcy and Sinclair; Crump and Post absent.

Scott Gatewood returned with further information on this project. There will be a pair of generators in the former small parking lot in the back. The alley is being converted to a pedestrian link with bike racks in the back. The project requires digging down quite some distance. The front entrance to the Data Center is not ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. In addition, the street drive currently comes in lined up with the alley. That will be removed and replaced with a sidewalk entrance. There will be a pair of generator stacks towards the back of the alley. They have added a ramp that takes you down to the parking structure for handicap access. They were asked to develop 3D models. Further, they were asked to pursue getting some parking placed on the street. The civil

engineers worked with the City and there is good and bad that was discovered. They discovered they really can't put ADA parking out front. The slope of the street is too steep. In order to solve that issue, they would have to raise the street. They proposed two courses of action. The first was rejected. It consisted of two ADA stalls out front. Because of the cross slope, the engineers proposed a solution of putting in a trench drain. Water comes from the south and passes by and heads to a curb inlet at the street corner. They proposed building up the street which would cause a water dam unless it would pass through a grate. It was either that or an area inlet. Both of those were proposed and the trench drain was rejected. As a consequence, they are showing standard parking in the front. They removed the contact panel of truncated domes so there is not an ADA notification element. There is bicycle parking in the alley. As you move through the alley, there is an ADA ramp down to the parking. As you approach the entrance, it is a gentle two percent rise and drop. He also mentioned that at the corner of the building today is a ventilation shaft that serves an existing radiator. It is a large grill where the radiator breathes. It is 17 feet below the grate. That is to be removed as part of this project. The grill would eventually be removed and return to vegetation. In addition, the building division has plans to eventually remove the cooling tower and air handler from the roof.

Searcy asked if this equipment is no longer in use. Gatewood replied it is still in use. There are plans to modernize some of that. There have been discussions as well about unifying the windows somewhat.

Ripley noted there appears to be an opportunity to plant a tree next to the alley entrance on the street. Gatewood stated that landscaping will be done by Campbell's Nursery. Ripley thinks there are trees in front of the building next door. He believes the colonnade of trees continues to the mall. Commissioner Johnson wondered what kind of trees. Lynn Johnson believes the trees are red oaks. Ripley stated that the Environs plan from the 1930's calls for a ring of trees to circumscribe the Capitol building.

There was discussion of the vent stacks for the generators and why the choice was made to attach them to the Data Center building. Gatewood stated the difficulty they face is there are windows on the building next door and it also has through-the-wall vents for the heating and cooling. They didn't want to attach the vertical pipes to that structure. Ripley believes there isn't much to anchor to on that building. This was designed as an office building named The Executive. Gatewood wishes there was another way to deal with the stacks. He supposes they could be enclosed. You could build a screen with a thin brick veneer. The existing exhaust pipe rises from the building. Due to its design, it backfires from time to time and rattles the building. Commissioner Johnson wondered if the color could be changed, perhaps a brown that is consistent with rest of the building. Gatewood stated that today, they are stainless steel. This was picked because any metals that rust would stain anything. He thinks a reasonable path in the future might be to enclose them. You would need eight foot wide by three foot deep. Nalow believes that they are far enough back in the alley to not have an impact. Campbell questioned if the pipes need to have the 90 degree angle. Gatewood believes this is due to the ventilation system in The Executive. They need to get it up and out. He would note that this is designed to support a canopy which would cover the walkway in the back. When that is constructed, it could be constructed to screen the horizontal section of pipe somewhat.

Nalow thinks it sounds like a great opportunity. Screening it would almost draw more attention to it. Gatewood added that the new tree added to the street will also screen the alley entrance in the future.

Commissioner Johnson commented that with deliveries, it seems that trucks double parked in the street detracts from the street and the Capitol. He knows there is talk about moving the deliveries to the north side. He thinks that is a great idea. Gatewood stated when you go through the front doors, they are banged up with deliveries. Part of the renovation prevents that from happening. The hallway is being narrowed to a pedestrian hallway. This no longer serves well as a delivery point. Deliveries will be moved to the north in the future. There are dock doors. They have talked about creating an entry system for deliveries with the door next to the dock door.

Sinclair wondered if Nalow has any experience with anyone going laterally across this type of front profile. It strikes him as awkward. Perhaps it is not as steep as he envisions. Nalow stated that the cross section shows it will be less than two percent. It shouldn't be an issue. Gatewood stated it will all be ADA accessible. It also gives us an opportunity to create a softscape and keep drainage from the alleyway.

Ripley would offer that in conversations with the State Building Division, it was noted that the stainless steel could be brushed to reduce the reflectivity. He believes a shroud over the stacks would create an even bigger visual. He also drove by this location a couple of times and realized you had to look very quickly in order to even see anything down this path. These presentations are only for the person who will go down this walkway. Commissioner Johnson questioned if you could see them from the tower. Ripley is sure you could see them from the tower, but he believes the Executive Building will screen the vast majority. He thinks this is about as discreet as you can make it. Campbell wondered why the pipes can't go straight up. Ripley answered that you would need a huge guy wire to keep them from falling over. Another thing to keep in mind, the visibility as you come down K Street, the stacks will be pretty discreet compared to the cooling towers they have now.

Searcy wondered about the natural weathering of a brushed stainless finish. Gatewood responded that this will be high strength stainless steel, not chromed. It will weather to a grayish finish.

Nalow believes the gray color will blend more into the sky view. Piping is not always desired, but this is where you would expect to see it.

ACTION:

Sinclair moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for work as described by the applicant, seconded by Nalow and carried 5-0: Campbell, Johnson, Nalow, Searcy and Sinclair voting 'yes'; Crump and Post absent.

Gatewood stated that this work will probably not happen until next spring. The generators arrive in November and it will take some time. There will be new electrical service for this building and the Capitol. Work will hopefully happen in spring, depending on weather. The generators may be in place and operating this winter.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Stacey Hageman stated that the City received a demolition permit for a house on S. 19th Street. It is in really rough shape. There was a number of complaints from the neighbors. Staff worked with Searcy and the Planning Director for a Certificate of No Material Effect. The owner hopes to replace it with something in the future. Ed Zimmer stated the same owner has the next house south, which may preclude him from building here. This is common ownership with the next lot, so it may not be buildable due to current regulations. Ripley inquired what the property is currently zoned. Zimmer believes R-6.

Sinclair fears for what could be built here. Zimmer stated that the standards require information about what a replacement could be. The owner is not in a position to tell us what comes next. We don't want to hold up demolition for a property that is in really poor shape. Stacey Hageman believes the owner is someone who doesn't own a lot of properties.

Campbell questioned if there is a requirement for this to not become an overgrown lot. Zimmer stated the basement would have to come out as well. City Ordinance stated that weeds can't be overgrown. This will hopefully be planted with grass.

- Searcy would like Zimmer to bring everyone up to speed with the status of Standing Bear and the U. S. Capitol Statuary Hall installation.

Zimmer said the Standing Bear Committee has met three times. A lot of attention is currently on funding for the unveiling and reception. The sculptor is working on the casting. Good work is being done on keeping things moving. The question is where the Washington, D.C. Bryan statue might come back and be located.

Searcy asked if there is still a conversation regarding the Denney Federal building. Zimmer replied yes. Also the National Guard Museum in Seward, NE. His preference would still be Centennial Mall, such as at the Federal building.

Searcy was told by someone that at one time, the Bryan statue was in front of the Capitol. Ripley replied yes, in the 1950's. It was the statue that is currently in front of Fairview. Matt Hansen noted that the 1947 placement of the other Rudulf Evans statue was somewhat political at the time. It was granted temporary placement at the Capitol and was later removed to Fairview.

Searcy believes this commission would only have review if the status was placed anywhere in the Environs. Zimmer agreed. He would recommended it would fit the standards with placement on the mall side of the Federal building.

Zimmer had hoped to have the Children's Museum work on this agenda. They were not ready. The parking lot scheme should come first.

- Hansen inquired if there are any updates about the shortening of the arms on the traffic signals crossing Centennial Mall. J.J. Yost doesn't have any updates. This is being worked on by Public Works & Utilities.
- Searcy noted that Ripley is on the cover of the September *L Magazine*. Ripley met with the Convention Visitors Bureau. There is a \$200,000 commitment to the four courtyards project, \$400,000 for restoration of landscaping. Endowment is the tricky part. Endowments can be tough to raise.
- Zimmer stated there may be a question about a Legislative Resolution regarding a study on parking in the vicinity of the Capitol building. Pansing Brooks would be very interested in the State master plan that has currently reached the Governor's desk. The Commission may be asked to have someone appear at that hearing in October. Ripley agreed. The more support you can get, the better. This is not a new issue. He has worked around the Capitol building for 40 years and parking is a perpetual problem.

Searcy asked if there is a master plan. Hansen replied yes, it is just not public yet. Zimmer added that it has not been released yet. Searcy questioned if it has to be adopted at the gubernatorial level. Ripley replied yes, it does.

- Ripley wondered about the future of the Capitol Environs district impact with regard to future Pershing Auditorium concepts and the role of the Capitol Environs Commission. Zimmer believes that a proposal would have to come through this commission. The process currently underway is that the City Council asked the administration to renew a standing invitation for anyone to offer proposals. The RFP (Request For Proposals) will be sent out again. He doesn't think there is an unwillingness to have something happen there. It is a key site. Searcy believes it is something to keep on the radar.

- Campbell would like an update on the Emerald Ash Borer. Lynn Johnson stated that there was a press conference yesterday. The Emerald Ash Borer has been found in Lancaster County. The treatment is only recommended to be started when the insect is within 15 miles. The recommendation has been for removal and replacement of ash trees. The treatment costs about \$275 a tree, depending on the size. Treatment must happen every year to every tree. This also creates scar tissue on the tree. The Mayor believes it is more effective to remove and replace the trees. Ash trees constitutes fifteen to sixteen percent of trees in Lincoln. There is the issue of Autumn Purple ash trees along a portion of Goodhue. Ripley believes the original vision was for a variety of species to avoid a problem like this. Zimmer believes the existing ash trees were planted in the 1980's. The commission expressed their appreciation for everything that Parks & Recreation has done on this issue.

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