

MEETING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, October 25, 2018, 8:00 a.m., Conference Room 214, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Zimmer, Stacey Hageman, Teresa McKinstry, Paul Barnes and Andrew Thierolf of the Planning Department; Robert Ripley and Matt Hansen of the Nebraska Capitol Commission; Lynn Johnson and J.J. Yost of Lincoln Parks & Recreation.

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 August 23, 2018. Motion for approval made by Sinclair, seconded by Campbell and carried 5-0: Campbell, Crump, Johnson, Searcy and Sinclair voting 'yes'; Nalow absent at time of vote; Post absent.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE CONCEPT OF INSTALLING A BRONZE STATUE OF WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN ON THE L-M BLOCK OF NEBRASKA CENTENNIAL MALL IN THE CAPITOL ENVIRONS DISTRICT
PUBLIC HEARING:

October 25, 2018

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

Ed Zimmer stated that at the last legislative session, a bill was passed to request the architect of the U. S. Capitol to allow the exchange of Nebraska's representative statues from Statuary Hall in the Capitol. The plan is to replace J. Sterling Morton with Willa Cather. The statue has not yet been executed. William Jennings Bryan will be replaced with Chief Standing Bear using the same mold as at Centennial Mall. A donor is paying for the casting, installation and return of the Bryan statue to Nebraska. Ed is on the committee with responsibility for providing the

Standing Bear statue, along with some responsibility for placement of the Bryan statue when it comes back to Nebraska. There have been two formal suggestions as to placement. One is at the Nebraska National Guard Museum in Seward. Included is a letter from the Mayor of Lincoln offering placement on public property at either 12th and O Street or Centennial Mall at the M Street block. This is request for approval of a concept for the Centennial Mall location, with the detailed design of that installation yet to be developed and approved.

This block of Centennial Mall had an alley at mid-block on the east side. This space currently has numerous transformers and other utility features. Installation of the Bryan statue, with an appropriate landscape backdrop, could screen this sub-optimal view. The Standing Bear Committee hasn't made a recommendation yet on placement of the Bryan statue. This item is before the Environs Commission for approval of the concept because of the Commission's jurisdiction over Centennial Mall.

Searcy inquired how the Standing Bear Selection Committee is involved and why their approval is necessary. Zimmer responded that they were charged with getting the Standing Bear statue to Washington and unveiled, and the Bryan statue returned to Nebraska. This won't happen until maybe February or March of 2019.

Ripley questioned the scale of the Bryan statue depicted in the agenda. Zimmer responded that it is a little larger than a human, but not as large as the Standing Bear statue. Bryan is currently displayed in Statuary Hall. There has to be some shuffling of statues in the hall due to the height of Standing Bear. Judi gaiashkibos's daughter is an attorney doing pro bono work in Washington, D.C. related to this.

Ripley questioned the future placement of the Willa Cather monument. Zimmer responded that hasn't been decided yet. He has heard it is not likely to be directly within Statuary Hall.

Ripley noticed that 12th and O Street is being offered as well. Zimmer stated that the Mayor is not as enthusiastic about that location. That block is likely to be developed. Campbell believes there is currently a red statue located there. Zimmer noted yes, "Solar Semaphore" would have to be moved.

Hansen wondered if the Bryan statue been indoors its entire career. Zimmer replied yes. Hansen questioned if any provisions are being made for it to be located outdoors. Zimmer agreed if place outside, it would require ongoing maintenance. Hansen would recommend a surface treatment before it sees weather. Lynn Johnson stated that Parks & Recreation works closely with Jensen Conservation. There is some money remaining from Centennial Mall. They would probably set aside some funds for an endowment for conservation activities.

Ripley believes some kind of substantial backdrop would obviously be needed, trees or wall. Otherwise it will be a statue trying to plug a hole in a vacant alley. Zimmer noted that perhaps there rather than another niche wall, landscape material might accomplish the needed

screening and backdrop. Hansen likes the columnar green wall that is depicted. Ripley added that this location gets a lot more foot traffic. Johnson stated there is some significant utilities underground there. J.J. Yost added there is a utility box that has an underground conduit running straight west to the State Office Building. It would have to be placed north of that. Crump wondered about the existing light. Yost wouldn't want to move it. It might be a nice placement for the statue. He does not believe it would be in conflict with the statue. Zimmer stated it would take some study.

Searcy believes there are a number of reasons that this location makes sense. This would be an addition to the great work that has been accomplished on Centennial Mall. This location makes sense to him. Campbell agreed. Nalow thinks this is a great opportunity for this area. Sinclair agreed. He thinks the problem is more difficult than we realize. It needs to be studied, but the location is a win. Johnson likes the location. He likes that the statue would be overlooking the map.

ACTION:

Crump moved approval of the concept of installing the William Jennings Bryan statue on the L-M block of Centennial Mall, seconded by Nalow and carried 6-0: Campbell, Crump, Johnson, Nalow, Searcy and Sinclair voting 'yes'; Post absent.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Briefing on Lincoln Downtown Master Plan by Planning staff

Paul Barnes stated that this is the Downtown Master Plan that has been in the works for nearly a year. There have been various events such as a survey, meetings and open houses. The final meeting is next Tuesday in the Railyard. The Downtown Master Plan is a partnership plan with the City of Lincoln and the Downtown Lincoln Association. We have quite a few exciting ideas for downtown over the next ten to twelve years.

Andrew Thierolf showed the area of the Downtown study area. It is the area consistently identified as Downtown. There were several different committees. There was the Project Committee, the Steering Committee and five working groups focused on specific topics. There were two public meetings. There was an open house in April with over 200 attendees and personnel from PUMA (Progressive Urban Management Associates). In May, there was a charrette and another open house with over 200 attendants. There was an online survey with over 1,700 responses. Common themes were vibrant, livable, kid friendly; a wider range of housing options; more greenspace, shaded, seating and accessible; a central library; revitalize O Street; designate an area for music and art; activate the Pershing site and a diversity of businesses.

The consultants prepared a market assessment and development forecast. The strongest market segment is projected to be residential demand. They project moderate office demand of approximately 382,000 to 682,000 square feet over the next ten years. There is currently 523,000 square feet of vacant office space downtown. Niche retail demand is projected at approximately 112,000 to 190,000 square feet over the next ten years. There is currently 193,000 square feet of vacant retail space downtown. Hotel demand is primarily boutique properties with less than 75 rooms. An additional feasibility study needs to be done to determine any demand for a convention center. The airport holds us back from a bigger space. We would look at a convention center for more regional or statewide conferences.

The big theme is Downtown is the Center of Opportunity. There is a thing called superstar cities where millennials have been flocking to the last couple of decades. Now, the cost of living is moving those people out. They are moving to smaller markets in search of affordable living and quality of life. Lincoln should capitalize on these trends. A lot of generations are drawn to Downtown living. We need to work on amenities such as parks, services and unique retail. We need to encourage new housing types.

This plan is organized around five major catalyst projects. The first one is the Pershing block. Instead of identifying a specific proposal, we have identified a few options and pointed out the pros and cons. A civic use on the west half of the block and a civic plaza on the east was one concept. The consultants believe this concept would be the biggest catalyst. Other options show a smaller mixed use or office use. Another proposal shows a different orientation of the buildings. Another proposal shows options for residential uses and the last one shows a large mixed use residential building on the Pershing block. They are broad concepts.

Searcy noted a plan showed a possible new Federal garage. Thierolf noted that there would be numerous Federal requirements.

Crump wondered about the YWCA building. Zimmer responded there have been numerous discussions, but he hasn't heard anything concrete.

Thierolf continued that the Federal garage discussion is at least several years away. The next project is West Park in the South Haymarket. This was identified in the 2005 Downtown Master Plan and the South Haymarket Plan. A lot of this is JPA land today. It has floodplain or floodway pieces, not great for redevelopment. We heard a lot about a dog park downtown. There are a couple of different options proposed for a park space.

The next project is more general. It looks at enhancing the O Street corridor and enhancing the curb appeal. It would look at identifying supporting projects for rehab or infill. SCC (Southeast Community College) is a potential redevelopment site. SCC is interested in a new facility.

Ripley wondered if SCC is looking for more space. Thierolf believes they would like a different layout that works better for them. Barnes added they have a lot of students that transfer to

UNL (University of Nebraska Lincoln). Thierolf believes enhancing the connection to UNL would be a strong point for SCC.

Thierolf continued that the 11th Street and M Street greenways are another idea. This looks at arranging the streetscape for additional green space. Changing these to two lanes with parallel parking gives almost 57 feet of green space within the existing right-of-way. M Street would be a similar idea. It has 20 feet less of right-of-way. This is all conceptual at this point.

A music district is another concept. This capitalizes on what we already have. There are a lot of existing music venues already. This would be focused on 14th and O Street, but would connect with existing venues. There are a lot of music venues on O Street. There are existing alleys and outdoor spaces that could be enhanced. Possibly special pavers or something could be added to 14th Street. 14th Street is closed at points for festivals and outdoor activities already. A big piece of this is programming and capitalizing on what is already there.

Ripley wondered about 14th Street and a bicycle route. Thierolf stated that 13th Street has been identified. Barnes added that the Lincoln Bike Plan is being worked on. That will have an impact on what is going on here. One idea talks about a phased transition to two-way traffic in downtown. 13th Street south of here will be adding bike lines.

Ripley believes that 14th Street is the single most chaotic transportation route on any street from the Capitol to the UNL campus. There is bus traffic, bicycles, cars, underground utility lines, it is chaos. He has often wondered why some other street wasn't utilized for the bike lane. Barnes stated that we looked at ways to improve it, but the curb along the 14th St. corridor moves in and out. It would have been very expensive.

Thierolf continued that there are still some things we haven't finished or still want to do from the 2005 Downtown Master Plan such as the P Street streetscape, the K Street building, two-way traffic on 13th Street and a Downtown shuttle. We submitted grants in August for the next phase of the driverless Downtown Shuttle. We are waiting to hear on that. The plan is to have five operating downtown by the end of 2019 and then five more by 2021. Searcy thought the autonomous shuttle was well done and received. Thierolf noted that over 2,000 people rode the shuttle and we had a lot of great response. There were almost 2,000 responses. It was about 95 percent positive. Thierolf added that StarTran is looking at a Multi-Modal Transportation Center. That is another project we have a grant submission in.

Thierolf continued that other projects are the LPD (Lincoln Police Department) Maintenance facility, SCC, two new parking garages, StarTran property on J Street, underused blocks, the Federal garage, JPA land, the library and YWCA building, Post Office site and one-way to two-way street conversion. Almost all streets would be looked at for two-way with the exception of 9th Street and 10th Street.

Campbell inquired if there is any positive news about 9th and O Street. Zimmer responded that the proposed project expired. Hopefully there will be a restart for new ideas. It is a cleared site now. Ripley questioned if the previous developers own the land that was cleared. Zimmer replied yes.

Johnson asked if the downtown area includes an opportunity zone. Thierolf replied yes. He believes a couple of tracts downtown qualify for opportunity zones.

Thierolf stated that there will be a presentation at the Cube on Tuesday evening, Oct. 30, 2018. The draft plan will be available online probably mid-November. They hope to have the plan before Planning Commission at the end of November and before City Council in mid-December if this stays on track. plandowntown.com is website that has a lot of information.

* Zimmer stated that the joint meeting with the Nebraska Capitol Commission will be on Tuesday, November 13, 2018. The joint meeting will be at 10:00 a.m. with a separate meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission immediately following the joint meeting.

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