

PLANNING COMMISSION RECORD

Briefing Session

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, March 17, 2004, 12:00 Noon, Room 113, First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Carlson, Gene Carroll, Roger Larson, Dan Marvin, Melinda Pearson, Mary Bills-Strand, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor; (Gerry Krieser absent). Marvin Krout, Mike DeKalb and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Ben Higgins, Devin Biesecker and Rock Kryzcki of Public Works and Utilities, Watershed Management; Glenn Johnson of the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District; John Callen from Building and Safety and other interested parties.

STATED PURPOSE Staff briefing on the **Proposed Flood Standards for New Growth Areas**

Glenn Johnson explained that staff will be talking about new floodplain standards. In the 1990's, there was a discussion about the extensive number of permits to fill in the floodplain. This brought forward a discussion of what Lincoln standards are and if they should be modified. There was talk of interim standards while some technical and economic studies were going on. A "no net rise" approach was being proposed. The business community related that they would like to approach "no net rise" on a voluntary basis. In August of 2001, Mayor Wesely appointed a Floodplain Task Force of 16 members. The Committee was originally looking at late 2002 for coming forward with their recommendation. 22 meetings later in March 2003, they completed their recommendations. During the process of their deliberations, several studies were done along with speaker presentations of other related floodplain issues, watershed master planning, flood insurance program, etc. One technical study was done by the Corp. of Engineers and another was done by CDM. The major adverse impact of development, fill and buildings being placed in the floodplain is that it displaces a certain amount of flood storage and the water has to go somewhere else. Most floodplains have a flood flow so putting buildings in the floodplain forces the water to go somewhere else. In Lincoln, there are existing buildings in the floodplain. As development takes place and the floodplain raises, it increases the risk to those structures. It may bring additional structures that are currently out of the floodplain, into the floodplain. He showed some examples of flooding that has taken place in and out of the community. The Corp. of Engineers looked at 3 different scenarios to determine the impact. In Dead Man's Run, the 100 year flood height

increase was .24 feet for 50% loss to over one foot with the maximum rise projected. Projected increased damages range from 2.6 to 10.8 million dollars. For Beal Slough, the same scenarios were looked at. The projected average increase in flood height was .45 feet to 2.09 feet. The CDM study took a different approach. They evaluated the reduction in flood damage to public infrastructure and private development if higher standards were adopted. They took the same section on Dead Man's Run. Today there are 8 public buildings in the area. With a one foot rise, there would be approximately 1 million dollars in damage. With a "no net rise", the existing flooding would be reduced by 27%. If the amount of fill was limited, it would reduce the damages by 14%. The scenario on private development assumed an undeveloped 58 acre parcel of land where 75% of the parcel is in the 100 year floodplain. The results were that residential would create a 14% increased cost, with a policy of "no net rise" with compensatory storage.

Pearson requested the 14% increase in development cost be clarified. Mr. Johnson replied that the 14% increase would be in land development only, not the buildings. Mr. Johnson replied that CDM also looked at engineering costs. There would be additional surveying and engineering costs, residential would cost 14% more.

Pearson noted that this is site development only. She suggested that this be made a little more clear.

Nicole Fleck-Tooze noted that the new floodplain standards will be for new growth areas only. The existing urban areas would be the 2nd phase. Five documents are being amended, the Comprehensive Plan, Title 27 Zoning Ordinance, Title 26 Subdivision Ordinance, Design Standards and Drainage Criteria Manual. The Comprehensive Plan amendment adopts a "no adverse impact" policy. This is a policy that was adopted by the Association of Floodplain Managers. This insures that the action of one property owner does not adversely impact the flood risk of another.

Bills-Strand foresees one day that a landscape plan will have to be approved for flood risk. Ms. Tooze agreed, if a plan would create that much change, it is possible.

Ms. Fleck-Tooze stated that the proposed floodplain standards use best available flood information, adopt a "no net rise" standard, require compensatory storage and extend the buffer requirement to the floodplains. FEMA maps don't currently identify all of the floodplains. Improved flood information through detailed study can better protect future homes. "No net rise" and compensatory storage go hand in hand. This broadens the concept to include the flood fringe. A hydraulic study would be required to show no rise in flood heights greater than .05.

Larson wondered who would pay the cost of the study. Ms. Fleck-Tooze replied that the developer would pay.

Ms. Fleck-Tooze explained that the minimum flood corridor is something we have today.

This extends the buffer requirement to stream channels with mapped floodplains. Other revisions to the standards are that it would provide protection for lateral additions to non-residential structures, clarifies provisions for administrative purposes and for state and federal minimum standards, adds flood development permit expiration, and incentives for voluntary best management practices. The proposed standards are available for review at various locations; city libraries, city departments and on the city website. The first public hearing will be before Planning Commission on March 31, 2004.

Bills-Strand noted that as the city has grown, the older neighborhoods worry about the impact of the changing floodplain. Mr. Johnson replied that the stormwater regulations will not increase the stormflows downstream.

Bills-Strand wondered about density. A smaller piece of land will have the same density if the floodplain is left out. Runoff is a concern. Ms. Fleck-Tooze replied that if the floodplain is preserved, there may actually be less runoff with development out of the floodplain area. Bills-Strand thinks perhaps we need to look at density issues.

Ms. Fleck-Tooze explained that you are not allowed to have residential development in the floodplain today. She doesn't want the Commissioners to perceive this as a bigger change than it is.

Marvin Krout doesn't believe there are a lot of wide tributaries in the 3 mile area. Higher density would be an option, not a requirement.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa McKinstry
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Planning Department