

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2007, 11:30 a.m., Rm. 113,
First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street,
Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Gene Carroll, Michael Cornelius, Dick Esseks, Wendy Francis, Leirion Gaylor Baird, Roger Larson, Robert Moline, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Uland of the Downtown Lincoln Association; Mark Lutjeharms of Schemmer Associates; Carter Hubbard (Olsson Associates); Dallas McGee of Urban Development Department; Don Herz of Finance Department; Marvin Krout, Kent Morgan, Stephen Henrichsen, Mike DeKalb, Sara Hartzell, Brandon Garrett and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department; other interested parties.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: **West Haymarket Redevelopment Plan**

The meeting was called to order at 11:33 a.m.

McGee began by stating he will brief the Commission on the Lincoln Center Redevelopment Plan amendment. The West Haymarket Area was declared blighted and substandard and was approved as such by the City Council.

Uland stated that he is chairing the Community Engagement subcommittee of the West Haymarket Action Team (WHAT). They are making presentations to many organized groups. The mission of WHAT is "to do" and their aim is to preserve the Haymarket as a vibrant entertainment district. The components of the project are the arena, convention center and hotel. He noted that there have been three main questions from the general public including where are they in the process; how much is it going to cost and how is it going to be paid for; and where do the City Council and other public bodies weigh in on the issue.

Uland noted that there is a 7 step redevelopment process. The first step is community validation which has been completed. It has been a four year process with several studies that have built on each other.

Pershing Center is 50 years old, seats 4500 patrons, and is functionally outdated and needs major renovation. We are losing many events and the dollars they bring to Lincoln because we do not have the facilities.

There have been several major studies which looked at the arena and convention center.

These include the Convention Sports and Leisure International (CSL) study, the Downtown Master Plan, and the Mayor's Event Facilities Task Force. All of these studies have validated that a new facility is needed and recommended West Haymarket as the best location. Cost projections are not refined, but preliminary estimates have been done. There are many public and private revenue sources.

The second step in the process is the adoption of the redevelopment plan. The redevelopment plan will go to the City Council in late October. Once the redevelopment plan is adopted, the City will issue an invitation to the private sector to submit a development proposal, which is the third step in the process. The fourth step is the redevelopment agreement negotiations. The redevelopment agreement will spell out the roles and responsibilities, specify funding commitments and outline project phasing. Step five is the financing package approval with the sixth step being the redevelopment agreement adoption. The final step is project construction.

The public can stay involved by attending the public hearings, participating in community events, watching the news media, and by visiting the web page. The main public event is at Pershing Center on October 18.

Morgan then began his portion of the presentation by reminding Commissioners that their role is to determine if the redevelopment plan is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. The original voter approval for Pershing was in 1939 with the dedication ceremony in 1957. Change is part of what planning is about. The 1977 Downtown Master Plan stated that the Old Town district represented a significant opportunity for long-range development. That tradition is something we are carrying on today.

CSL was hired in 2004 to perform a study looking at all of Lincoln's venues, and they concluded that we have limited arena capacity, inadequate production space, an aging infrastructure and insufficient parking. They looked at alternative sites in downtown for the arena. The Downtown Master Plan in 2005 stated that there should be a mixed use district in downtown. The Mayor's Event Facility Task Force looked at the site and location for the arena and the West Haymarket was deemed the best location. The West Haymarket Action Team was created to move forward with implementing these recommendations. The near-term goal is the redevelopment plan and blight study.

Several studies have been undertaken in this process. Property ownership and land acquisition have been reviewed. The zoning is mostly industrial. They worked with the Airport on height limitations. They also have reviewed the Capitol View Corridor. There is a local landmark district in the Haymarket and they will not do anything that would be injurious to the landmark district. There is an archeological site which is the Emigrant House. They are working with the State Historical Society to conduct a dig and see if there is anything to recover and make a part of the historical character. They are reviewing the floodplain. Recreational opportunities are also being explored. There are saline wetlands on the site, which are undergoing review. Hubbard stated that a lot of research has been done to ensure that the recreation facilities that are planned do not overlap with sensitive wetland areas. They would be part of the "rain to recreation" concept.

Morgan continued by stating that ongoing field research is being conducted for hazardous materials. Carroll questioned locating the arena next to the railroad tracks which carry hazardous materials. Morgan stated that the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Environmental Quality continually monitor these things, and there have been no significant issues. They feel it is best to take care of any issues now rather than let it fester and become more of a problem in the future. Federal funding is being pursued in this matter.

Morgan stated that no significant issues have been found with regard to utilities. They are also pursuing LEED certification. A number of alternatives have been considered for transportation. They want to intercept traffic as best as possible by utilizing existing infrastructure so traffic is not just funneling in from the Haymarket. Parking issues are also being studied.

The West Haymarket charrette held in March 2006 identified three sites for the arena. One has the arena on the post office side; another has the arena behind Lincoln Station; and the final option pushes the arena south of the Harris Overpass. WHAT further identified four options. It was decided at this time not to pursue moving the post office. Option A has the arena up to the north by the railroad tracks; option B moves the arena to the west side of the tracks; option C brings the arena back down but doesn't move the tracks as much; and option D has the arena behind Lincoln Station.

Morgan presented photos of three arena sites which were visited by several WHAT members. These sites included John Paul Jones in Charlottesville, Virginia, Nationwide Arena in Columbus, OH, and Value City Arena in Columbus, OH.

Carroll stated that they are being asked to vote on whether this plan conforms with the Comp Plan, but he believes they do not have enough information to make a decision. Morgan stated that he disagrees in that the Planning Commission will have several components come before them.

Herz presented financial information regarding the arena uses and sources. He chaired the finance subcommittee of the Mayor's Event Facility Task Force and they primarily focused on ways to finance a project of this magnitude. Preliminary estimates for the public investment for the arena is \$244,000,000 and private investment is \$95,000,000. Seventeen items were identified for possible revenue sources. The certainty of the estimate and the level of difficulty were rated. Annual revenue was estimated at \$23,000,000. The certainty of the estimate and the level of difficulty were rated on these estimates as well. They then looked at how much these annual revenues would generate if they issued a general bond. They also looked at one-time revenue sources.

Carroll thanked staff for their time.

The meeting concluded at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Abendroth
Planning Department

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