

## **BRIEFING NOTES**

**NAME OF GROUP:** PLANNING COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Wednesday, July 29, 2009, 12:00 p.m.  
Room 113, County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Michael Cornelius, Dick Esseks, Wendy Francis, Roger Larson, Jim Partington, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor. Leirion Gaylor Baird absent.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Ben Higgins, Ed Kouma of Watershed Management; Marvin Krout, Mike DeKalb, and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department; other interested parties.

**STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:** Little Salt Creek Watershed Master Plan

Vice-Chair Michael Cornelius called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Cornelius introduced Nicole Fleck-Tooze. Fleck-Tooze introduced Ben Higgins and Ed Kouma who are working on the Little Salt Creek Watershed Master Plan. She noted that staff is proposing revisions to the County Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to add provisions for regulating locally-adopted floodprone areas and floodways. These items will be on the Planning Commission agenda on August 12.

Fleck-Tooze noted that several watershed master plans have been completed. The overall goals are a unified master plan for the City of Lincoln and the future growth area and to integrate public input.

Kouma stated that the objectives are to maintain a proactive stakeholder and public involvement process; update floodplain and floodway maps; identify flooding, erosion and or water quality problems; consider critical habitat and rare or sensitive environmental resources; develop guidelines and recommendations for future development; and identify potential funding sources for future studies and projects.

The Little Salt Creek watershed is north of the City and has approximately 46 square miles of watershed. Eighty-six miles of stream were identified and 81 bridge/culvert structures were surveyed.

The watershed characteristics are rural watershed, primarily agriculture; limited development projected over the next 30 years; incising streams; poor water quality; erosive soils; saline wetlands and seeps; and Salt Creek tiger beetle habitat.

Floodplain mapping was done throughout the basin to update the floodprone areas and delineate the floodplain. The basin was shown in the report as a series of 12 tiles.

In response to a question regarding homeowners in the floodplain, Kouma replied that newly identified homes in the floodplain have always been in the floodplain. For homes on the fringe of the area, the City offered to pay for a survey for those homes.

Kouma noted that there were 18 stream stability projects identified for possible construction. The recommendations include stormwater best management practices; soil testing; culvert design; and adoption of the floodprone map. Other recommendations include reviewing bridges and culverts, natural resources, riparian corridor and water quality. These are on hold until the study progresses and more information is received.

The public process included two open houses, mailings to floodplain properties as well as four newsletters and 1 postcard to everyone in the basin; a citizen advisory committee was formed with 16 members and met 3 times; a technical advisory committee was also formed and included 14 members and met 4 times; and a project website was created.

Fleck-Tooze noted that the items before the Commission include an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan which adds the Little Salt Creek Watershed Master Plan to the list of approved subarea plans and watershed studies. It also amends the future land use map to make agriculture stream corridor, the green space and environmental land uses consistent with provisions of other watersheds.

The second item before the Commission is County Change of Zone 09017. This is to add a provision for regulating locally-adopted floodprone areas and floodways. It also adds a definition for "Floodprone Area" as follows: Those lands subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year, as determined by hydrologic and hydraulic studies completed by the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County, or other governmental agency, or other acceptable source as approved by the County where this is the best available information. Finally, it adds provisions for regulating locally-adopted "floodprone areas" in the same way that FEMA floodplains are regulated.

Esseks asked if a subdivision could be built in the floodway. Fleck-Tooze replied that there is a provision in place in the County regulations prohibiting building in the floodway today; however, building in the floodplain is allowed.

The third item before the Commission is County Miscellaneous 09006 which amends the County Land Subdivision regulations. This includes the same additions as the County Change of Zone identified above.

Fleck-Tooze stated that after these items go through the Commission process, it will be brought through the county process for updating the floodplain map.

DeKalb stated that when they presented this study to the County Board, their position was that this is a public safety issue and a public and private investment issue. They felt people should be aware of what they are getting into.

DeKalb noted that in rural areas, most of the area will remain agricultural. The needs for detention facilities are not as great.

DeKalb commented that landowners have expressed concern regarding the federal government and endangered species and what somebody might do. He clarified that this is a totally separate process. The intent of this study is to update the floodplain information.

Larson asked if there is enough information to prove that the cost/benefit ratio is beneficial. Fleck-Tooze responded that they are finding that the benefits of the standards outweigh the costs and actually some cities are implementing stricter standards.

Esseks asked if there are capital projects identified that are associated with the watershed master plans. Fleck-Tooze responded that there is some information available on the web page, but she will look into providing more information.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Abendroth  
Planning Department

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