

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, February 3, 2016, 1:00 p.m., Hearing Room 112 on the first floor of the County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Cathy Beecham, Michael Cornelius, Tracy Corr, Maja V. Harris, Chris Hove, Jeanelle Lust, Dennis Scheer and Lynn Sunderman. (Ken Weber absent); David Cary, Steve Henrichsen, Paul Barnes, Rachel Jones, Geri Rorabaugh and Amy Huffman of the Planning Department; media and other interested citizens.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Planning Commission meeting

Chair Chris Hove called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the back of the room.

Hove requested a motion approving the minutes, as revised, for the regular meeting held January 20, 2016. Motion for approval made by Harris, seconded by Corr and carried 8-0: Beecham, Cornelius, Corr, Harris, Lust, Scheer, Sunderman, and Hove voting 'yes'; Weber absent.

CONSENT AGENDA
PUBLIC HEARING & ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

February 3, 2016

There were no items on the Consent Agenda for February 3, 2016.

SPECIAL PERMIT NO. 1219M
TO EXPAND BRYAN MEDICAL CENTER EAST CAMPUS
ON PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED AT
SOUTH 50TH STREET AND A STREET.
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

February 3, 2016

Members present: Beecham, Cornelius, Corr, Harris, Hove, Lust, Scheer and Sunderman present; Weber absent.

Staff recommendation: Conditional Approval.

AND

STREET AND ALLEY VACATION NO. 15006
TO VACATE SOUTH 50TH STREET BETWEEN A AND EVERETT STREETS
AND EVERETT AND WASHINGTON STREETS BETWEEN 50TH AND 52ND STREETS
ON PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED AT
SOUTH 50TH STREET AND A STREET.
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION: **February 3, 2016**

Members present: Beecham, Cornelius, Corr, Harris, Hove, Lust, Scheer and Sunderman present; Weber absent.

Staff recommendation: Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Staff Presentation: Paul Barnes of the Planning Department stated both of these items are related to an expansion of the Bryan East Hospital campus. The driving project is a new 93,286 square foot medical office building. The expansion area includes approximately eight acres just northeast of the existing campus. This area has been shown as Public & Semi-Public on the Future Land Use map. In anticipation of an expansion, staff has been working with Bryan for some time, knowing that they have been acquiring these properties. The single-family homes that were located in the site area are now demolished.

There is a request to waive the height of the district up to 74 feet for the new building. Given its distance of over 300 feet from remaining residential areas and the taller buildings already within the campus, staff does not see this proposed height as having a major impact; it will fit in with the surrounding campus.

The vacation request includes a portion of 50th Street that currently connects to the intersection of Cotner and A Streets, a 6-leg intersection with traffic signals. The City has been looking at this intersection for some time. Given the different turning movements that occur there, staff is supportive of closing 50th Street with this request; it will be an improvement and enhancement of the intersection. On a related note, the City is looking at a connection of 50th to the north of this intersection, but that vacation and closure will not happen with this action. The other requests for vacation include Everett and Washington Streets between 50th Street and 52nd Street. These were local streets serving the single family homes that were previously there, so staff is also supportive of vacating these segments. There are some utilities within the rights-of-way and easements that will be retained. A new easement will be dedicated to accommodate a connection of sewer that comes along Washington Street.

Planning and Public Works have been discussing additional road improvements with Bryan, including the areas of Cotner and A, 48th and A, and 48th and Sumner. These are areas for potential future dedication of right-of-way and roundabouts to help with traffic flow, though these discussions are preliminary at this point, and much work needs to be done.

Barnes went on to discuss the conditions for approval. The eight acres of expansion is somewhat self-contained from the rest of the campus. Staff considers connectivity for pedestrian and vehicle traffic an important feature and has therefore recommended areas of connection not currently shown on the site plan, including vehicle access connecting up and through the existing parking lot, and a pedestrian connection that connects to an existing sidewalk, so that people could get to the new office building from existing areas. These are not huge areas of connection, but will make a big impact in terms of connectivity.

Beecham asked if there is a stoplight at 52nd and Sumner. Barnes said there is not a light at the intersection, but near there, there is a signal for pedestrian traffic. Beecham asked if that signal stops traffic for pedestrians. Barnes said yes.

Beecham wondered if Holmes Elementary was approached regarding their drop-off and pick-up times. She has concerns about closing down 50th Street and creating traffic problems by funneling drivers past the elementary school. Barnes said that the Planning Department has not met directly with the school, but they would have received a notice. There could be two ways traffic exiting the medical office can go. One is north to A Street where a left or right turn could be taken. With the closure of 50th, there is a new access that was proposed on A Street. That required a deviation request which was approved by Public Works due the overall constraints of the site and the benefits of that added access. There is also an access proposed on 52nd Street. Cars could go south and pass the school, but they could also go north to A Street. Beecham reiterated her concern that it is such a busy area and she doesn't want to set up a situation where people are always going to go to Sumner. Even a sign that indicates "local traffic only", for example, to discourage that flow of traffic from running directly past the school would be helpful. She stated she would feel better if she knew that the principal of the school had been involved.

Harris asked if the height waiver was to raise the height of the building to 74 feet. Barnes said yes. She asked for clarification regarding a discrepancy between that height and the 75- foot height given in the Staff Report. Barnes said it is an error in the report. He confirmed that the correct height requested is 74 feet.

Proponents:

1. Danay Kalkowski, 1111 Lincoln Mall, Suite 350, came forward on behalf of Bryan Hospital. She introduced the team that has assisted with this expansion. David Reese and Don Sheets of Bryan Hospital, Wade Stange of Davis Design, and Mark Palmer of Olsson Associates were all on hand to answer questions.

2. David Reese, Vice President of Clinical and Support Services, Bryan Healthcare, stated he has worked with Bryan Medical Center for nineteen years and in that period, he has worked with Planning staff to discuss where the future growth of Bryan would go. This northeast area was always under consideration. During that time frame, Bryan began purchasing houses as they came up for sale. Within the past year, Bryan has been more proactive in acquiring the remaining seven houses. Once all were obtained, the process of seriously looking at this area for campus growth began. There has been a need to move forward as the campus, the hospital services, and the City as a whole have grown.

Reese went on to say that the proposed building will be a stand-alone facility where patients will go to receive same-day services and then leave; there will be no overnight stays. Neighborhood meetings were held August 27th and November 10th to provide updates about the purchases, why this project is necessary, and to talk through any issues. Holmes School was consulted a few years back relating to the changes to the emergency area. The principal of the school did not attend these recent meetings, but he has been kept apprised of this growth. We also did personal visits with immediate neighbors to make sure there were no questions. Bryan strives to be a great neighbor.

Kalkowski stated there have been extensive meetings with the neighbors and City staff, the first of which occurred over a year ago. They picked-up in earnest last summer and the team and staff has continued to meet to go over the site conditions and to address issues. The schedule was delayed to work through issues. For the most part, they have been resolved. Bryan has worked hard to compromise.

The remaining issue that continues to be problematic is the recommended pedestrian and vehicle connections from the existing parking to the west, across 50th Street, as suggested by Staff. A Motion to Amend has been distributed requesting the deletion of 2.3, which is the pedestrian connection. Also requested is the deletion of 2.5, which Planning agrees with. That condition was to allow Public Works time to review the revised plans, which they have done, so we do not want to leave it open ended beyond Planning Commission. Our final request is an amendment to 2.7. Instead of making a connection to the west, Bryan is proposing to make a connection to the south, which would address some of the concerns brought up by Commissioner Beecham.

The two main issues with creating the connection to the west are both physical and functional. First, there are significant grade issues from the west edge of the new parking lot to the east edge of the existing. Second, the connection is not desired by Bryan from both functional and operational standpoints. The parking lot to the west is for employees and was not laid out in a manner conducive to through-traffic and does not connect to 50th Street. From a use standpoint, Bryan wants the visitors of the new building to use the parking adjacent to that building. There is a proposed skywalk from the existing parking garage to the new building, so adding more connection is not as critical. The addition of the connection to the south provides vehicular connectivity.

3. Wade Stange, David Design, stated the new building will house offices that provide stand-alone services where people come and leave during the same day. Most traffic comes from Cotner and 48th to the hospital and medical plaza. In recent years, Bryan has done a good job of organizing the campus graphically so that people know where they are going to go. The hospital is designated “Zone A” and the parking on 48th Street is also designated “Zone A”. Likewise, the medical plaza and Edwards Medical office buildings are designated “Zone B”, with a “Zone B” parking structure on Cotner. It is very clear. The area to the north where Staff has suggested a new connection is really an egress area from that parking deck. Patients do park in the upper levels to reach the Plaza area, but the lower level is tenant only. As mentioned, there are significant grade issues.

4. Mark Palmer, Olsson Associates, said there is approximately 35 feet of elevation difference from vacated Everett back down to the potential access on 50th Street. This building will have two access points on two different levels. It is a walkout-style building that makes use of and accounts for 15 feet of the grade. The elevation is seven feet higher than the road and the existing garage is recessed below 50th Street, so the grades for making a connection are difficult to attain. Stairs are not of interest to Bryan due to the nature of services they provide. There is a network of sidewalks and interior connectivity. With the addition of a skywalk, there are multiple ways to get places.

Stange said there is a 40-foot drop on the site from southeast to northwest, along Everett to the west and then north to A Street. To make the site functional for a healthcare facility, earth was moved to level it out. The parking could not be too steep. The best use of the site has been made in terms of where entrances are established. The first level walkout area to the north will be outpatient services. The second level entrance will be for clinical services. Parking is designed to be close to the entrances for each of those uses. Bryan is very sensitive to the need for having close entrances with good access. The other challenge in this situation is the mix of two different uses. If we tie them together too much, we are mixing public access with service access, which is the reason part of 50th Street was kept as service only for trash pick-up, supplies, oxygen tanks, and other hospital needs. Farther north, along the east side of the “Zone B” parking garage, is where snow removal is located, so that needs to remain accessible for those vehicles and to dump snow.

Beecham asked if there is a parking lot egress from parking onto Everett. Stange said yes, it was not part of the original Special Use Permit request and it was added to create better access.

Lust asked what street leads out from the Everett access to the south. She asked if it was 51st Street. Stange said it was 51st, but is internal now. Lust asked if it would connect all the way down to Sumner. Stange said yes.

Scheer asked for clarification about south or westerly movement from the parking lot out to Everett. He wondered where it leads west from south of Everett Street. He asked what happens if drivers get into parking lots and want to head west. Palmer said it would take you back to Sumner; there is no connection back.

Harris asked for confirmation of the 74-foot height. Stange said he could not confirm off the top of his head, but he will provide that confirmation.

Opponents:

There was not testimony in opposition.

Staff Questions:

Corr asked how Staff feels about the Motion to Amend submitted by the applicant. Barnes said the Everett connection helps. Corr asked if staff is okay with getting rid of the connection across 50th Street. Barnes said the Planning Department would still like to see the connection to the west. Even though it is not intended to be a primary connection for everyday use, it is still an important factor, maybe even used by some of the staff. We would still like to see it in addition to the Everett connection.

Scheer wondered if there is a design standard or criteria that the City requires parking lots on a contiguous site to have internal connections in order to avoid vehicles exiting onto a public street to enter a separate lot on the property. Barnes said there is a design standard for pedestrian circulation in industrial and commercial developments. Scheer wondered about vehicular. Barnes said staff considers the circulation principles found in the Comprehensive Plan and what makes the most sense from a planning perspective. This is not necessarily a design standard or a request to waive a standard, but in terms of thinking about circulation throughout the entire campus, this is how we came to the recommendations.

Lust asked for confirmation that staff accepts the deletion of 2.5. Barnes said yes. Planning talked with Public Works, who reviewed the plan since the Staff Report was drafted, and they are also fine with the removal.

Beecham asked to be shown where the additional connection across 50th Street is suggested. Barnes said vacated 50th Street is shown as a service drive. There is a return shown approximately halfway along that. There is a paved area along the east of the employee parking, so by estimation, the connection that seems likely would be at that return and through the center area. Beecham asked if that was for vehicular. Barnes confirmed. He stated that staff is not saying how the connection should be done, but in looking at the entire 8 acre site that is being regraded and redeveloped, there should be some opportunity to accommodate these.

Lust asked if the roof shown in an image belonged to the parking garage. Barnes said yes. Lust wondered if people needed to drive through the employee parking area to get out of the garage. Barnes said he thinks there are points to the north where they can exit. The employee area has access to the garage.

Lust wondered if the existing exit points are designed to lead people exiting the garage to turn left and head back to Cotner to exit the facility. She speculated that if a connection were built to the east, it will lead people to drive back through campus instead exiting. Barnes said he does not believe it would lead them in that direction, it would just provide the option. The connection would not lead to a large driving aisle like the existing 50th Street right-of-way; it connects to a service drive and is not a main thoroughfare through the campus.

Hove asked if they are or are not in favor of eliminating Condition 2.3, eliminating the sidewalk. Barnes said staff would still like to see the sidewalk connecting to the north side of the building from the west. Hove wondered, given the grade issues, if there will be ADA issues to think about. Barnes said yes. ADA standards would have to be reviewed and met with. We ask what the options are for providing connection in some fashion.

Beecham asked where staff would like the pedestrian access to attach. Barnes said the point is to get a connection. There is an existing sidewalk along 50th Street. All we are saying is that movement should continue farther to the east so someone could get to the entrance of the new building. It is not a long connection.

Lust wondered where people would be coming from when trying to get to that entrance. Barnes said they could be coming from a number of places like the public sidewalk, or from other areas on campus.

Beecham asked if people can walk on the sidewalk on the west side of the street. Barnes said yes, there is a sidewalk along 50th Street that they could take farther east, but he was unsure of how it would line up with Everett. Beecham asked to be shown where the entrances are. Barnes said the building entrances are on the east and the north. Lust said so there is no entrance along what used to be 50th Street. Barnes said right, there is no entrance along the western facade or the southern portion, other than maybe some service entrances. There are some sidewalks shown, but they do not appear to be intended for patient use.

Corr said she could not envision from the Staff Report how the dedication of land for a right-hand-turn lane from north to eastbound on 48th and Sumner Streets would look. She asked for clarification of that location. Barnes said it is at the intersection of 48th Street and Sumner. This expansion area amends the entire Special Permit area, so we look at all of the intersections potentially impacted by this expansion. The north-to-east movement is coming up north on 48th and then making an east movement onto Sumner, so that would impact the corner property that is owned by Bryan. Corr asked for confirmation that Bryan owns the impacted corner lot. Barnes said that is correct.

Applicant Rebuttal:

Reese stated that the Zone B parking garage structure exits out of the west side and then goes to the north to exit on Cotner. The lowest level is tenant parking and that is the flat lot that is lower. From Bryan's perspective, visitor and patient safety is the main concern with having a sidewalk there. Snow maintenance is another consideration. That is why there are enclosed walkways which allow for safe passage in an enclosed area with no grade issues.

Reese went on to say that if patients heading to the new building are parking in the existing lots, then we did not do a good job in our signage. The goal is to get them to the correct spot, right up to the door. If they are dealing with oxygen or compromised health, they need to be in the right place on the first try. The area was deliberately set up this way to avoid confusion

Beecham said it is easy to get lost in the garages, especially with all of the changes. She wondered, in situations where someone does park in the wrong area, if it makes sense to have a way to get over, rather than having to get back in their car and go around. There could be benefit to having that small connection. Reese said that is a great point, and it is the reason the skywalk is included in this plan. It is more desirable for people to go through the climate-controlled skywalk where, if someone should fall, there are people around to respond versus being outside, traversing a sidewalk. Beecham asked if there will be clear signage to lead people to the skywalk if they park in the wrong area. Reese said absolutely. Most who park there would be staff, but if patients parked there, they could utilize that skywalk easily.

Kalkowski added that in theory, it seems simple enough to just make a connection, but that is not the case. There are utilities that will remain in 50th Street which also create some constraints. Additionally, the walk would have to be some type of switchback in order to accommodate the grade; it wouldn't be a straight, easy crossing. It doesn't make sense for Bryan in terms of how they would like to get their patients into their buildings. In closing, we have worked a lot on the site. Bryan has made many compromises. The suggested connections simply create a situation that does not fit in with Bryan's vision of how this site needs to function in terms of getting patients as close to the front door as possible. Adding the connection potentially adds additional confusion.

Corr asked if the first-floor entrance with the canopy has a barrier at the end so people do not continue on and turn onto the service drive. Kalkowski said the grade prevents that. There will be no road connection. They have to swing back through the lot. There are a couple of handicapped parking stalls along that side.

SPECIAL PERMIT NO. 1219M

ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

February 3, 2016

Lust moved approval, as amended by the Applicant; seconded by Beecham.

Beecham said she likes the connection using what would be 51st Street. If you have been near that elementary school during drop-off and pick-up, it is bedlam, so encouraging traffic to avoid 52nd Street is positive. She requests that the applicant reaches out to the principal because it is possible they may want to change their strategy in light of these changes. She is comfortable with not requiring the vehicular connection because, as Commissioner Lust stated, the existing lots and garages are designed to lead people to the correct exits. Adding an additional connection may cause people to get more lost. She is more on the fence about the pedestrian connection because it seems possible that someone would try to access the new area on foot.

Lust said she does not think a new sidewalk in the proposed location makes much sense. Normally, she would support something like that. But in this case, that connection would not lead to any entrance of the building. At most, it would lead them to another parking lot which is more confusing. Not having the option is a better approach, especially when the garage will direct people to the right place. Bryan does a good job with the garages. If you are somewhat lost, the minute you enter a building there is someone available to help you find your way. An indoor connection is a better option.

Scheer said that he is not thrilled with the connectivity for vehicles or pedestrians. Having said that, and in looking at the property and the way in which it was necessary to piecemeal areas of growth together, it is a challenging site. He feels sure that if there was a better way, the design team would have thought of it. He agrees that confusion could potentially occur if extra modes of connectivity were added in this situation. It is unfortunate, but it is what we have to work with.

Corr stated she has a problem with the connectivity. She understands the difficulty of piecing the areas together, however, now is the time to attempt that while the grading is being done. We have seen the many changes that have occurred here, such as with the emergency area renovation, and there may come a time in the future where we wish that connection was there. It is easier to do it now than later down the road.

Hove stated he plans to support this application as amended. This is a large project, and Bryan has implemented great things for the community. He hates to get wrapped up in the sidewalk and road. If there is a demand for those things, he feels sure Bryan will recognize that and react accordingly.

Motion carried, 8-0: Beecham, Cornelius, Corr, Harris, Lust, Scheer, Sunderman, and Hove voting 'yes'; Weber absent.

STREET AND ALLEY VACATION NO. 15006
ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

February 3, 2016

Lust moved approval, seconded by Harris and carried 8-0: Beecham, Cornelius, Corr, Harris, Lust, Scheer, Sunderman, and Hove voting 'yes'; Weber absent.

USE PERMIT NO. 64B
TO ALLOW A NON-RESIDENTIAL HEALTHCARE FACILITY
ON PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED AT
SOUTH 16TH STREET AND OLD CHENEY ROAD.
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

February 3, 2016

Members present: Beecham, Cornelius, Corr, Harris, Hove, Lust, Scheer and Sunderman present; Weber absent.

Staff recommendation: Conditional Approval.

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Staff Presentation: Rachel Jones of the Planning Department stated that when this application was brought forward at the January 20, 2016, meeting, there was a lot of discussion about the policy recommending at least a 300-foot separation between residential and I-2 zones. The original plan had shown rooms that were only 195 feet away from the I-2 zone to the east. Planning was supportive of the application, but Health recommended denial. Based on that Public Hearing and additional feedback, the applicant has submitted a motion to amend their application that includes a revised site plan. The building was rotated 45 degrees and shifted to the west. It now shows the nearest patient rooms 275 feet from the I-2 zone. The applicant stated they were limited in shifting the building the last remaining feet due to the topography and drop-off in grade from east to west. The facility is planned to be a single story, so that created issues with the west side entrance. A retaining wall has already been installed to deal with the grade changes. It should also be noted that there was commercial space to the west that was lost due to this shift. Health Department is in support of this revised plan with the understanding that the original conditions for showing an evacuation plan, the requirement for notification of knowledge of hazardous materials in the area, and the HVAC emergency shutoff system are all shown to their satisfaction. The applicant will also voluntarily install fire and smoke buffers, which would further isolate the three patient wings in case of an emergency. More substantial images of the appearance of the proposed building have been provided. They show a stone and wood facade with nice interior common areas.

Proponents:

1. Derek Zimmerman, Baylor Evnen Law Firm, stated that Staff has done a good job explaining why, for practical reasons, the building cannot be shifted any farther to the west. In addition to the topography, if it would be shifted more, it would eliminate the ability to evacuate out of the west side, so it would be counterproductive to the goal of safety. The 300-foot buffer is advisory and not mandated. The applicant has now received the approval of the Health Department and has taken substantial steps to alleviate concerns. The existing I-2 zone is completely outside of the 300-foot buffer as it stands today. The 275 feet is to the setback line. It would be unusual to have a scenario in which Time Warner

would sell their property and a new more industrial use would come in and build right up to that setback. Due to that significant setback and the willingness to meet all other conditions, we ask for the approval of Planning Commission.

Corr asked how many rooms will remain within the 25 feet still within the buffer zone in the new layout. Zimmerman said he does not have the exact number, but it would be the few rooms that remain along the front. The applicant is concerned about patient safety and were willing to meet all of the conditions. All rooms are currently outside of the buffer zone when looking at the existing building. If a new one came in, we are talking about only 25 feet within the buffer.

Opponents:

There was not testimony in opposition.

USE PERMIT NO. 64B

ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

February 3, 2016

Lust moved approval as amended; seconded by Beecham.

Lust stated she sees many great compromises were made. They are still a bit short of staying outside the advised buffer zone, but have met with the approval of the Health Department.

Hove complimented the applicant for their revisions. He felt the design was good before, but these revisions have made it even better.

Motion carried, 8-0: Beecham, Cornelius, Corr, Harris, Lust, Scheer, Sunderman and Hove voting 'yes'; Weber absent.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Note: These minutes will not be formally approved by the Planning Commission until their next regular meeting on Wednesday, February 17, 2016.