

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, January 4, 2017, 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 Tom Beckius, Tracy Corr, Tracy Edgerton, Deane Finnegan, Maja V. Harris, Chris Hove, Dennis Scheer, S ndra Washington, and Ken Weber. David Cary, Steve Henrichsen, Stacey Groshong-Hageman, George Wesselhoft, Ed Zimmer, 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 at the back of the room.

Hove requested a motion approving minutes for the regular meeting held December 14, 2016. Motion for approval made by Harris; seconded by Scheer and carried 9-0: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Scheer, Washington, Weber, and Hove voting 'yes'.

CONSENT AGENDA
PUBLIC HEARING & ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

January 4, 2016

Members present: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Hove, Scheer, Washington, and Weber present.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items: **CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 16043** and **USE PERMIT NO. 16011.**

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Corr moved approval of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Weber and carried, 9-0: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Scheer, Washington, Weber, and Hove voting 'yes'. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

**CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 16034
TO R-2 (RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT) WITH A LANDMARK DESIGNATION
OF THE JOHN G. CORDNER HOUSE, GENERALLY LOCATED AT 325 S. 56TH STREET.
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:** **January 4, 2017**

Members present: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Hove, Scheer, Washington, and Weber present.

Staff recommendation: Approval.

AND

**SPECIAL PERMIT NO. 16055
FOR PRESERVATION OF THE JOHN G. CORDNER HOUSE AND TO ADD
8 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCES, WITH WAIVERS,
GENERALLY LOCATED AT 325 S. 56TH STREET.
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:** **January 4, 2017**

Members present: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Hove, Scheer, Washington, and Weber present.

Staff recommendation: Conditional Approval.

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Staff presentation: Stacey Groshong-Hageman of the Planning Department said this is a request to designate the John G. Cordner house a landmark with a special permit for historic preservation to permit a Community Unit Plan with a total of nine units on the site, including the Cordner house. The Cordner family moved to the location in the late 1890s. The house was built in approximately 1910. The family lived there until 1937. In the 1960s, the original 10 acres was subdivided and ranch houses were built. The site is now 1 1/4 acres.

The house is architecturally significant. It is a rare example, with its mix of a cross Gambrel roof and the Dutch Colonial Revival style. It is 2 ½ - stories with brick on the first level and clapboard on the upper. The unusual principle facade faces east to 56th Street and has unique recessed entry, meticulously trimmed and with a shallow coffer. The east, north and south have asymmetrical windows on the 1st level, with symmetrical above. There are two bay windows and leaded glass windows. The west facade includes a chimney that is almost centered. The most highly finished room of the interior includes a built-in cupboard, wainscoting and a beamed ceiling. The walls use a product called Compo-board, made of thin wooden slats between two sheets of cardboard instead of plasterboard. The floor plan will be retained but wall and ceiling surfaces will be replaced due to mold damage. The house was vacant for several years.

The aspect of historical significance is the association with local carpenter and architect, John G. Cordner. His most notable partner was A.W. Woods, with whom he worked between 1906-1912. Together, they designed the storage building in the Haymarket and several historically significant churches and a synagogue. After his partnership with Woods ended, he designed the Mark Woods house, the College View Library, and other notable buildings. On December 15, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission voted to recommend approval of the Change of Zone.

The special permit for preservation is for the community unit plan, including the existing historic house and the addition of eight single-family, owner-occupied homes. There are requests to waive the density requirement and for reductions in the required yard area. By right, this property would be allowed to have four duplexes or a total of eight units. With this request, we add the eight but also retain the historical house, encouraging maintenance and improvements to the house and the site.

Schematics of the site show three new houses in the northeast corner and five along the west, all laid out around a central gazebo and accessed off a private drive. Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the design concept for the new homes and found them to be more in character with the historical home than the ranch houses. They recommended approval of both the landmark designation and the design.

The applicant attended a neighborhood meeting on December 1st. Also in attendance were Ed Zimmer and George Wesselhoft of the Planning Department. One letter in support has been received, and none in opposition. Zimmer confirmed no last minute letters were received.

Washington asked why there is a request to waive sidewalks, as it diminishes the perception of walkability. Hageman said there is not a sidewalk requirement because it is a private drive. Washington asked why the recommendation for sidewalks is usually present. Hageman responded that it has to do with block length. An easement may be provided through long blocks. This property is not situated in a location where one could get through to a street, so that is being waived. Washington asked if anyone who purchases a lot would have to exit on the south and travel all the way around to head north. Hageman agreed that was the case.

Proponents:

1. Kelly Langer, 8101 Cooper Court, said when he purchased this house, it was derelict since it has sat empty. Interior surfaces were moldy. Other than replacement of those surfaces, only minor modifications will be made to the floor plan. He has built a similar concept neighborhood of 24 houses in Village Gardens for the past 5 years. Those started out as standard lots but were replatted to have the exact width these proposed lots will

have. Resale has been excellent as these homes appeal to everyone and not a single demographic. Infill such as this is supported in the Comprehensive Plan and there is much enthusiasm for it, though it is not the easy road to take when there is available, undeveloped land at the edges of the city. He likes to approach things differently.

Harris asked Langer to elaborate on the concept of the “pocket neighborhood”. Langer said pocket neighborhoods started as bungalow courts on the west coast. They take derelict, underutilized spaces and repurpose them in a way that allows neighbors to relate to one another again. These are neighborhoods where you work together. Our concept will have a community garden. At Village Gardens, the neighbors who garden together get to know each other and develop care and concern for each other.

Corr asked about the location of the garden. Langer said it is located behind the three smaller homes in the northeast corner. He will construct garden beds. That is the lowest part of the property and there will be net less water draining from the property.

Corr asked how this project will be phased and if buyers are in mind first. Langer said he will start one house. If it sells, he will start another. It is possible there could be pre-sale, but not necessarily.

Corr asked if he is doing the work himself. He said he is not. Corr asked how long before he will move into the Cordner house. Langer replied they have been working on the house for two months now. It is a significant project so it will probably be a year to 18 months before they move in. It was not designed for today's living. Corr said her concern is that another project taken on by Mr. Langer took a long time and was left in a derelict state, even on a major street. She wants to make sure the property is not being left derelict. Langer said the church she is referring to was in much worse condition. Most of the foundation had to be redone and that was a project he worked on mostly by himself in the evenings. Corr asked if Langer feels he has a system down, given his experience at Village Gardens. Langer said yes. These homes should take approximately six to seven months from permitting to move-in.

Corr asked how he came up with nine units. Langer said that based on the success of his other lots of this size, it makes sense to maximize the density. The Cordner house will probably take around \$250,000 to bring back to livability. Corr asked if the lots are the same size as those in Village Gardens. Langer said they are the same width, but not as deep. These will have more width between them since Building and Safety preferred that.

Opponents:

1. William Wenz, 345 S. 55th Street, stated he has lived in the ranch home just south and west of the Cordner house for 30 years. It is good something is being done with the house, but he is concerned that with that many units, traffic could become a problem. There are already many people who park along the street, so there is also concern about where any

visitors will park. His opinion is that it will be difficult to match the character of the big house when it is surrounded by ranch houses. The number of dwelling units is the biggest problem.

Corr asked if most of the homes along there have single stall garages. Wenz said yes, single garages with a drive. He reiterated his concern about on-street parking. There is also a fire hydrant that limits parking. The sidewalk on the east side only goes partially around the circle.

Harris asked what number of dwelling units would feel more comfortable. Wenz suggested four ranch-style homes. He is not the only one concerned about traffic.

Staff Questions:

Washington noted that the site plan shows that each unit has a garage and enough of a driveway to accommodate two cars. There are also two visitor parking stalls. She asked if all the units are intended to be sold to individuals. Hageman said yes. Neighbors will belong to an association that will take care of the common spaces. Washington asked if there were any other ideas for additional areas for visitor parking. It appears confusing and she wonders where extra visitors will park. Hageman said she cannot answer that. Each unit has two stalls. She pointed out that there will not be more traffic generated than what would be allowed by right to be built on this property.

Corr asked how many parking stalls there would be if this was not part of a CUP and duplexes went in. Hageman said they would be required to have two per dwelling.

Corr said she has similar concerns in her own neighborhood where most of her neighbors park in the street. She hesitates if these are all single car garages with the number of units going in.

Harris indicated that the staff report mentioned that this is not an unusual amount of dwellings on a cul-de-sac. Steve Henrichsen of the Planning Department said typically, there are five or six, but there are others where there could be a dozen or more. Planning had three or four people contact the department when this property was for sale. Other proposed plans included demolition of the Cordner house and four duplexes, or eight units, all of which could have three beds. So essentially that means that by right, this could have 24 individuals with cars. The preference is for a project more sympathetic to the house. This is an informal drive. Though there are nine dwellings, they are small and will not have a lot of people in each one. The special permit protects the house and also allows for a review of the design. These homes will have nicer facades than would duplexes with double garages facing the street, which is what is allowed by right.

Applicant Rebuttal:

1. Nathaniel Burnett, REGA Engineering, 601 Old Cheney, came forward to point out that the five units on the west will have 2-car garages, so that should provide some relief. Beckius noted that is in addition to the visitor parking. Burnett agreed. Corr said that makes a huge difference.

Scheer said that does not sync up with the elevations that were submitted. They appear to show only single car garages. It may not be a big deal, but it changes the impact of Henrichsen's statement about design review. Langer came forward to say that those houses will have upscale, carriage garage doors, since the garages are a prominent exterior feature. Especially with the 2-stall garages, it is important not to buy the cheapest option. Scheer agreed.

Burnett added this is a great infill project, especially since it includes preservation of the main house. As was mentioned, eight units are allowed by right. Langer will keep the historic house and this will contribute to income so he can build and maintain the property. This will be a destination point and is a great project for Lincoln.

CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 16034

ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

January 4, 2016

Corr moved approval, seconded by Beckius.

Corr stated she likes that the house is being preserved but is still hesitant because of the number of units. It alleviates some of her concerns knowing that this has been done elsewhere. She owns a property of similar age that needs many repairs, but there was no intention to sell the extra land to finance the upgrades; they were just taken on. She would be happier to support this if there were a total of eight instead of nine, but she will still support both applications.

Scheer said he likes this project a lot. It fulfills many goals of the Comprehensive Plan. He also appreciates the discussion and input of Historic Preservation Commission.

Hove stated he will support both applications. Infill makes sense at this location. He appreciates the concerns about traffic and hopes neighbors will work together to solve any problems.

Motion carried, 9-0: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Scheer, Washington, Weber, and Hove voting 'yes'. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

SPECIAL PERMIT NO. 16055

ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

January 4, 2016

Scheer moved conditional approval, seconded by Washington and carried, 9-0: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Scheer, Washington, Weber, and Hove voting 'yes'. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 16039

TO DESIGNATE FORMER FIRST GERMAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AS A LANDMARK, GENERALLY LOCATED AT 100 W. F STREET AND 103 W. G STREET. PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

January 4, 2017

Members present: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Hove, Scheer, Washington, and Weber present.

Staff recommendation: Approval.

AND

SPECIAL PERMIT NO. 16058

FOR PRESERVATION OF LANDMARK WITH WAIVERS TO REAR YARD SETBACK AND PARKING, GENERALLY LOCATED AT 100 W. F STREET AND 103 W. G STREET. PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION:

January 4, 2017

Members present: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Hove, Scheer, Washington, and Weber present.

Staff recommendation: Conditional Approval.

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Staff presentation: Ed Zimmer of the Planning Department said these applications are for the small, wood frame, Gothic Revival church built in 1920 to serve Germans from Russia. It was designed by A. W. Woods and is a contributing property in the National Register South Bottoms Neighborhood District. The reason for requesting the special designation is to get the special permit to allow for waivers. Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval.

The building is significant in terms of architecture, its association with Germans from Russia, and the significance of the church in the community. The front faces F Street and dominates the corner property. They also own the parking lot to the north. The requested addition is behind the church on that north side. The historical status offers some relief

from meeting full floodplain standards. They now request to make the building closer to the alley than would otherwise be allowed. In effect, the parking lot is their property so the addition does not impact a different property. Normally, staff would require the replacement of the four parking stalls that will be lost with the addition. With the full parking lot and ample on-street parking along the 400 feet of street frontage, this is less of a concern. It does not seem prudent to tear down another historic building just for four stalls. HPC felt the addition is compatible. The landmark designation provides additional protection to the property by guaranteeing that any design changes would go through HPC.

Washington expressed her appreciation for the review done by Historic Preservation Commission. She approves of the compatibility of the new addition to the existing building and has no other concerns about the parking. She commended the processes by which Secretary standards were melded with local zoning provision to allow for this flexibility within the zoning codes, when appropriate. She complimented the architect on work done on this project.

Proponents:

1. Dennis Lyon, 5910 S. 58th Street, came forward as the architect. It has been a joy to work with this congregation. Both the building and the congregation of the old German church were aging. They merged with another congregation and over time have gone from 6 people to 200, including many kids. The addition was going to be a good solution to issues of space and was on-track until we saw this opportunity for an additional five feet of space. The church is attempting to be a lighthouse for the community and is an active Food Network site, with church functions throughout the week. It is now ADA accessible. The women's restroom was improved to be ADA accessible and more spacious. Among the many things this addition allows for is the opportunity to improve the men's restroom. The addition is being done tastefully. It has been a pleasure to work with Staff on this project, especially Ed Zimmer and with Ben Higgins, who helped with floodplain calculations.

There was no public testimony on this item.

CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 16039

ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

January 4, 2016

Finnegan moved approval, seconded by Edgerton.

Corr stated this is a great project and is straightforward. She appreciates all the good work that went into this. She added that she is fine with the reduction in parking since this is a neighborhood church and many people might be walking.

Hove said he will support both applications and congratulated the applicant on the expansion.

Motion carried, 9-0: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Scheer, Washington, Weber, and Hove voting 'yes'. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

SPECIAL PERMIT NO. 16058

ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION:

January 4, 2016

Corr moved conditional approval, seconded by Finnegan and carried, 9-0: Beckius, Corr, Edgerton, Finnegan, Harris, Scheer, Washington, Weber, and Hove voting 'yes'. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 1:58 p.m.

Note: These minutes will not be formally approved by the Planning Commission until their next regular meeting on Wednesday, January 18, 2017.

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