

## MEETING RECORD

*Advanced public notice of the Urban Design Committee meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website.*

**NAME OF GROUP:** URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Tuesday, January 3, 2023, 3:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE.

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Mark Canney, Jill Grasso, Peter Hind, Tom Huston and Michelle Penn; (Emily Deeker and Gill Peace absent).

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Paul Barnes, Collin Christopher and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Derek Zimmerman and Justin Hernandez with REV Development; Kurt Suhr with Architecture One; Kevin Riley with Riley Designs; Aaron Burd; and other interested parties.

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

Penn called for a motion approving the minutes of the regular meeting held December 6, 2022. Motion for approval made by Hind, seconded by Huston and carried 5-0: Canney, Grasso, Hind, Huston and Penn voting 'yes'; Deeker and Peace absent.

### **WOODSIDE VILLAGE, NW 48<sup>TH</sup> AND W. HOLDREGE MULTIFAMILY PROJECT:     **January 3, 2023****

Members present: Canney, Grasso, Hind, Huston and Penn; Deeker and Peace absent.

Collin Christopher stated this is a multi-family project of almost 300 units. The property is zoned B-2. The applicant has a zoning agreement to allow them to build up to 48 feet in height. The project would consist of four buildings. Three are four stories with a flat roof, while the fourth is a three story with a pitched roof. There will also be an affordable housing component. The applicant is showing about 360 parking stalls. The design standard issues related to landscaping are noted in the staff report. This project falls outside of the Neighborhood Design Standards. The applicant is asking for a review and recommendations regarding the site and building architecture.

Derek Zimmerman appeared on behalf of REV development. He stated that this is located on the northeast corner of NW 48<sup>th</sup> Street and W Holdrege Street. This is a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) project. They clarified the number of affordable housing units being provided. The 50% identified in the staff report is from an old proposal before the City updated their TIF policy for affordable housing. The current plan is to have 20% of the units be affordable based on 60 percent AMI (area median income). They are still evaluating all the numbers. The project area was part of a PUD (Planned Unit Development) amendment. Some of the design elements that were incorporated were through discussions with the neighborhood. There are also some limitations on what can be done because of the proposed height since this is near the airport. Other neighborhood considerations were to push the buildings back as far as possible, specifically the mL shaped building. They have agreed to opaque fencing abutting the residential neighborhood, in addition to what the standards require. With respect to TIF, this is a little different since there is the affordable housing component. The standards in place in the area are also a factor. Their focus on the affordable units was to find a market rate experience with amenities and design finishes. They will be market rate size on the square footage. Other amenities being provided are a pool, elevators, balconies, a fitness area and a community room. They have worked on breaking up the exterior with other color palettes. Some issues discussed with the City were in regard to landscaping and signage along the primary frontage. They don't have a final landscape plan yet. They are still working with the City. They are trying to focus on evergreens in the rear by the neighborhood.

Huston asked if the affordable housing component is part of the TIF. The policy can be vague. He questioned if the intention is to apply for low income tax credits. Zimmerman stated this is not a tax credit project. That is why they are looking to the City policy. Huston wondered how the City will monitor compliance. In the tax credit world there is a huge compliance issue. Zimmerman has spoken to others who have done this. The area median income can change.

Canney noted this is a recommendation. Staff provided recommendations for parking lot screening. He would recommend consulting the electrician doing the parking lot lighting so it can coordinate with the landscaping of the islands. He pointed out that lighting can create conflicts with the landscaping.

Grasso wanted the applicant to speak to the exterior materials. Zimmerman stated it would be primarily vinyl with brick on the lower level. They have tried to focus on breaking it up with different color palettes. They are looking at the cost very closely. Hind asked where the brick will be located. Zimmerman noted it would be roughly on the lower four feet. Grasso sees brick and three different colors of vinyl siding.

Penn asked if all the buildings would have low income housing. Zimmerman answered yes, all the buildings will have low income units. He noted that this falls in an extreme blight area.

Canney wondered about overflow. He sees a series of detention areas. He was curious if there was some overflow protection on the property line on the abutting residential side. Zimmerman stated there is a decent grade change. The detention will be underground on-site detention. Behind the buildings will be a dog run. Canney noted that it looks like there is some significant grading. He encouraged the applicant to make sure there are other City review mechanisms in place to give feedback. Zimmerman noted they will have to do a short wall. There will be underground detention with an opportunity for green space for the residents. Huston asked if by stating underground the applicant meant a basin. Zimmerman replied yes.

Canney asked if the applicant anticipated turf or features that are more rain garden or meadow in nature. Zimmerman answered that as far as he knows, just grass is being proposed. Canney pointed out that is a good conversation to have so you know what the landscaping will be and the management of it. He knows these things aren't figured out until the end.

Hind asked if they are looking at exterior façade upgrade dollars in the TIF funds. Zimmerman noted it is fairly limited. Justin Hernandez stated they have evaluated that option. They are not looking at anything other than masonry at the base at this time. Hind wondered what is driving that. Hernandez stated they are investing in energy efficiency to keep costs lower for the residents. Hind asked what kind of upgrades for energy efficiency. Hernandez replied that Asset Management in Omaha has been working with them. They are looking towards energy efficiency in water, shower heads, toilets, many things. Hind believes that the pitched roof allows for extra floor area. Hernandez noted he was correct.

Hind stated that his personal feeling on TIF projects is that vinyl siding is not a long term material. He would recommend not to use vinyl siding. There are long term issues and costs associated with water intrusion, and the vinyl siding is prone to flying off in high winds. He would recommend not to approve this with vinyl siding. Everything else he thinks is great.

Penn is having a hard time with this one. She asked about the affordable housing element because when she looks at this, it doesn't feel as substantial as perhaps it should. The applicant is saying 80 percent non-affordable and rent is very high right now. She is surprised the applicant can't do a little more with the push and pull. She asked who the architect is. Hernandez stated it is Studio 951. Penn is a little surprised that there isn't any push and pull. In her mind, there is so much more that could be done with this. Obviously we need more housing, but this project could be so much more. There is more potential here. Since TIF money is involved, she would like more consideration for aesthetics.

Grasso would like to see more push and pull as well, especially on the corner of NW. 48<sup>th</sup> Street. The building looks very flat. There are no awnings and the windows are set flat. She believes it is being good stewards of what we are building. She works on a lot of multi-family. She knows what rent is being pulled from these buildings. This is a very flat building. You put on vinyl siding and

the color choices are limited. She thinks it needs to be done more thoughtfully. It isn't just this project, there are others.

Huston has a different perspective. He views this as work force and affordable housing. There is a lot of industrial development occurring along NW 48<sup>th</sup> Street. The Affordable Housing Action Plan specifically says we need more. He doesn't believe this body should dictate what TIF funds should be used for. That being said, he does think the building could be improved.

Grasso believes that part of the role of this committee is to voice our opinion on the building aesthetic.

Paul Barnes stated that he agrees with Huston regarding the Affordable Action Housing Plan. He believes this body is specifically charged with reviewing the design as a whole when TIF dollars are being used. He noted that the committee's comments will be placed on record.

Huston believes all the comments are fair. They can be part of a qualification of any motion.

Hind believes it comes back to what the applicant needs done. He understands that redevelopment agreements have deadlines. He would vote no today given what he has seen so far. This could come back with a different design aesthetic for the exterior. For the record, his feeling on vinyl isn't the flatness or color, it is more the performance of the materials.

Zimmerman believes the committee wants to see a more defined landscaping plan as well. They wanted to appear before this board as soon as possible. They can go back to the drawing board and look at the design. He isn't making any commitments. He believes this is a great project for the City. They can come back in February for further discussion.

Hind commented if the applicant is going to do vinyl to save money, he thinks they need to be very specific on what other areas they are spending funds on such as energy efficiency. If the applicant is going to do vinyl, he would like to see the underlayment addressed, water membrane versus Tyvek wrap. He would like to hear about the energy efficiencies being addressed in the units. He would like to see the evidence. Huston doesn't disagree but knows that the Urban Development Department requires very specific details. Hind believes it needs to be defended by better water proofing.

Hernandez believes vinyl siding is energy efficient. Elevators are another part. That makes these units accessible. They were able to get more units on the site to make this work. That is a big investment. They are still delivering stainless steel appliances, stone tile and water efficiencies, amongst other items. They have tried to put the dollars where they can, with the rents that they have. Hind noted his point on the elevator was well taken. You are not required to have elevators.

Huston noted elevators aren't TIF eligible. Hernandez continued that they would like to have this amenity along with garages.

Hind currently knows the site has some slope to it. He wondered about the retaining wall. He would think there is a creative way to get rid of the wall and place those dollars into the buildings. He further wondered if there is a way to take some dollars from site development and place it into the building.

Hernandez agreed. The retaining wall along with detention came more as a last minute add to the design. He pointed out that the retaining wall is there due to a Windstream fiber optic line. There is a significant grade change there. They raised the entire site up about a foot and a half.

Penn asked how long one building is. Hernandez believes around 200 feet. Penn sees 200 feet with no façade change. She believes there's room for improvement.

Grasso just wants to see the applicant be thoughtful with the exterior. Hernandez noted it was not for lack of trying. Balconies are viewed as an amenity also. Grasso pointed out there is a lot of nice green space. You look at a lot of student housing, they become storage units. Hernandez stated that consideration would be given if the building on the west is looked at. Grasso would agree. She noted this is on a prominent corridor. Penn agreed.

There was a discussion of building elements with the applicant.

This application will be deferred until the regular meeting next month.

**N. 27<sup>TH</sup> AND STARR MULTIFAMILY PROJECT:**

**January 3, 2023**

Members present: Canney, Grasso, Hind, Huston and Penn; Deeker and Peace absent.

Christopher stated that the project in front of the Committee is a 15-unit infill project on the northeast corner of 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Starr Street in the Clinton neighborhood. There would be a 12-plex building and a tri-plex with each unit on its own individual lot. The questions to consider today is if the tri-plex units serve as a proper transition to the neighborhood, and whether the 12-plex fits within the larger context of both the neighborhood and the N 27<sup>th</sup> Street business district. The City is requiring street trees along N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Starr Street. The Starr Street side was agreed on previously. The N 27<sup>th</sup> Street side is unique. There is a sliver of City-owned property between the right-of-way and the applicant's property that is anticipated to be used for a future turn lane. The applicant has agreed to plant trees in this space in the interim.

Kurt Suhr stated that Starr Street is one block south of Holdrege Street. They are proposing 12 three bedroom apartments in a three-story building. The adjacent two-story building will be

made up of three (3) four bedroom townhouses. The effort there is to step this down as it goes into the neighborhood. It would have a hip roof. The houses in the neighborhood are primarily single story bungalow houses. They are proposing Hardie siding with some stone at the entrance. The buildings would be a combination of lap siding, vertical board and batten, and cement siding. The roof would be asphalt shingle. Color wise, they did a project at 25<sup>th</sup> Street and 'Y' Street that was a monochromatic palette of grays. The representation in the agenda is fairly close. The site is pretty full. The building faces south for the main entrance. Parking is along the alley to the north. North of this is a grocery store. South across the street is a laundromat. He showed an image of Starr Street. They butt up against two small houses. He showed some images of houses in the area.

Canney inquired about the distance between the lot line and public right-of-way. Kevin Riley stated that from the sidewalk is a 17 foot piece of lane saved for the turn lane. From that sliver of land is an additional 10 foot side yard. From sidewalk is about 27 feet. The question is where do the trees get planted. Christopher believes that will be up to Parks and Recreation. Canney knows that Parks and Recreation will address the issue. It sounds like the applicant has this addressed in the next phase. Christopher asked if the Committee had a recommendation on particular tree. Canney would recommend something columnar. You could go smaller and not as controversial to be removed, or do columnar and plant it far enough back that you don't have to move it. He would recommend a tree that doesn't get more than 10 to 12 feet wide.

Hind understands that you can't drive between the buildings from the north. Riley noted that was correct. Over one year ago, the previous owners rezoned this. There are some increased sideyard setbacks. There is a 15 foot instead of the typical 10 foot sideyard. It is currently R-6 zoning. Regulations say you have to pave the alley. This was originally replatted for nine row houses. In discussions with Urban Development, Ernie Castillo and Dan Marvin liked the idea of transitioning from row houses to townhouses, to apartments. What you see here is allowed by code. Burd noted that from his research, vinyl siding is almost the same price as fiber cement Hardie board. Everything is pre-finished. The tri-plex and both buildings would be somewhat of the same color palette, to have it flow. They are looking at pre-finished lap siding. The belt line is proposed for real stone. The offset middle protrudes more. Each has its own porch.

Grasso asked if the windows will have trim. Riley answered there will be a picture frame trim.

Canney wondered what is happening on the east and west end of the apartment building. Riley stated the center is 72 inch wide by 42 inch tall bedroom windows. Suhr showed an image of a similar property to what is being proposed.

There was a discussion of different design elements for the building.

Grasso mentioned that she would like to see the door match a little more.

Huston believes the question is whether or not a tri-plex is sufficient buffer to the existing neighborhood. In his opinion, he thinks it is a nice blend and a good transition.

Penn thinks the design of the 12 plex is relatively flat, but efforts were made with the push and pull on the 12 plex. Riley noted the entry has an offset of 2 feet, a shed roof and stone columns.

Hind noted the windows facing 27<sup>th</sup> Street. Riley stated that building code says you can declare your front on one side or the other. The Planning Dept. told them that 27<sup>th</sup> Street is technically a side yard due to the upcoming turn lane dedication. Starr Street is the front. This is not a corner lot.

Canney thinks the goal is to keep the trees long term. Riley stated he had heard from the City that if ownership changes on the lot to the north, whoever obtains that property will have restrictions related to the turn lane. The sale of that property makes a turn lane more likely. Canney would recommend street trees and Parks and Recreation can show what they want and where they are placed.

Hind applauded the density and everything else. He thinks there is an opportunity with the interstitial space between the buildings. He would encourage a rethinking and use this as an opportunity. Perhaps a high window in the living space or something could be done. He thinks it needs a little more design than just grass. He thinks people will use this space. Suhr would have to look at the code to see what is allowed. Hind added that even a brick path with benches would be nice. Canney noted that the townhouses might not want a lot of traffic next to them.

Hind stated that in his experience, the end units are the same in design as the middle unit and you lose a lot of opportunity with daylight and landscaping.

#### **ACTION:**

Huston moved approval as presented with consideration for suggestions made for street trees and exterior treatment of the tri-plex, windows on the corners, and east and west facades, seconded by Canney and carried 5-0: Canney, Grasso, Hind, Huston and Penn voting 'yes'; Deeker and Peace absent.

#### **STAFF REPORT AND MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Barnes stated that in regards to the Planning Department staff vacancy, the position will be advertised later this month. In the meantime, Collin Christopher is helping out. Christopher might stay with this Committee, but things are still undecided. He noted that Christopher also staffs the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission. He doesn't want to

overwhelm any one staff person. Additions and revisions have been made to the staff reports to try to make them more useful to the Committee.

Huston stated that the materials in the staff report are very helpful with the vicinity map and other information.

Penn likes the recommendations and review comments. Huston agreed.

Barnes noted that application deadlines have been adjusted as well. This gives staff more time for discussion before an item comes before a board.

Hind asked if it is possible to direct people to bring in some materials samples. Huston noted it was easier sitting around a table in the past for this committee. Hind likes to see the actual materials. Huston agreed.

Canney asked if there is anything holding an applicant to a specific material preferred by the Committee. Barnes stated that is a big question. This is advisory only. Design consideration is not a rule. The only time this Committee has final action is on an appeal. These are all advisory reviews and guidance. The applicant can continue on and get TIF financing.

There was a general discussion of design guidelines.

Christopher noted that anything related to façade materials and elevations that makes it into a Redevelopment Agreement is considered a requirement when City staff reviews building permit sets.

Barnes noted that it is not a requirement to bring in samples of materials, but staff can suggest it.

Grasso believes it feels like we aren't always getting the full truth on what will be used. Sometimes the applicant says they don't know what material or color will be used. She believes they should know if they have made it this far in the process. Staff needs to encourage the applicant to speak to materials.

Penn thinks we need to up the level of design for low-income housing. She feels that aesthetically, a better design job can be done with low income housing.



**2022 ANNUAL REPORT:**

**January 3, 2023**

Members present: Canney, Grasso, Hind, Huston and Penn; Deeker and Peace absent.

Christopher noted a format change for this year's annual report. There were 23 unique projects that appeared before the Committee in 2022, including 14 TIF projects and a good variety of project types. A lot of great work came through this Committee in the last year, and Christopher thanked them for their work.

**ACTION:**

Hind moved approval, seconded by Canney and carried 5-0: Canney, Grasso, Hind, Huston and Penn voting 'yes'; Deeker and Peace absent.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.