

## 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, May 4, 2021, 1:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE.

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

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Stacey Hageman, Paul Barnes, Andrew Thierolf and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Kevin Riley; Tim Gergen of Clark & Enersen; Dave Johnson of Studio 951 Architects; Charlie Stewart of NGC Construction; Jason Griffiths of University Nebraska Lincoln, Rebecca Kalhorn and Ben Stirtz appeared via © Zoom Video Communications; and other interested citizens.

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

Peace then called for a motion approving the minutes of the regular meeting held April 6, 2021. Motion for approval made by Huston, seconded by Hind and carried 4-0: Deeker, Hind, Huston and Peace voting 'yes'; Canney and Penn absent.

### **25<sup>th</sup> & VINE REDEVELOPMENT**

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

Kevin Riley appeared. He took the advice and recommendations from the last Urban Design Committee meeting and revised some items. They increased the offset around the perimeter. They are now at four feet for everything facing Vine St. and 25<sup>th</sup> St. There are some offsets around back as well. They took some consideration of the color aspect. They've introduced some dark brown color on the ends of the building. He brought color samples. They tried to articulate and get more definition. There will be smooth James Hardie panels and a James Hardie lap siding. There will be a sage green vinyl siding as well.

Huston thinks this is a large improvement from what was presented in April. This breaks up the façade and the differentiation of color helps.

Riley presented the color palette of materials.

Hind wondered about changing the vinyl siding. Riley responded it is due to cost, maintenance and construction fees.

Hind inquired about Hardie board going to ground level. Riley responded that building code states it must be at least six inches off the ground. It will be landscaped in front. You will probably only notice it in back. Hind inquired if the applicant is proposing Hardie board for all prefinished surfaces. Riley responded yes.

Hind asked if the window size was increased. Riley stated they stepped back after the last meeting and have been working with City staff.

Peace agrees that the applicant did a lot of things that were asked. He believes this looks quite a bit better. He appreciates the effort to articulate things. He appreciates that staff from Urban Development work on getting the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) together, but he still has an issue with vinyl siding. He would rather not have vinyl on a TIF funded project. He believes that TIF projects should have some minimum levels of design. Riley stated that they are proposing a heavier gauge vinyl. Peace thinks that all sounds good.

Hind wondered about the cost savings of vinyl siding over Hardie board. Dave Johnson stated that Hardie siding is about three to four times the cost of vinyl siding.

**ACTION:**

Huston moved approval with a recommendation to minimize the use of vinyl siding where possible, seconded by Peace.

Hind would like to remove the vinyl siding from the design. Huston thinks that vinyl siding is not prohibited by the Neighborhood Design Standards

Hind wondered about the air conditioning units. Riley stated they will be in back of the building.

Motion for approval carried 4-0: Deeker, Hind, Huston and Peace voting 'yes'; Canney and Penn absent.

**TERMINAL BUILDING STREETScape**

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

Tim Gergen stated he was here a few months ago for the Terminal Building streetscape. This was approved with a metal panel. They are now proposing a new option for the surface parking lot. Due to the overhang of the Terminal Building, there will be planters along 10<sup>th</sup> St. to reduce pedestrian conflict with the alley. The streetscape component hasn't changed, just the treatment of the surface parking lot.

Dave Johnson stated that the client is also developing the other corner on 9<sup>th</sup> St. He would like the committee to weigh in on partially enclosing the parking lot on the corner so the owner can provide some secure parking for condo owners in the Terminal Building, as well as bank customers on the first floor. He

showed the location of the parking being proposed. There would be about ten spots or so and some type of a secured gate to continue to the tenant secured parking. They are proposing cast in place concrete structure. The screening is a punched metal panel. This will be an open air garage, not fully enclosed. It will be secure for the condominium users. He wanted to call on the base of the Terminal Building. This will be topped with a small cornice and parapet. The Downtown Design Standards state that this structure must be 20 foot tall. That is the height to the parapet. Getting pre-cast or steel right now has a very long lead time. That is the reason for cast in place. He pointed out the bank drive-thru lane and a walkway for pedestrians.

Hind asked if the whole garage will be open air with no glass. Johnson replied that is correct.

Huston would like clarified this will have a roof. Johnson replied yes. The sides will be open so blowing wind or snow would come in.

Gergen stated that previously, they were keeping the existing parking lot. They had previously proposed a metal panel. This is a much more embellished product. Johnson wanted to do something to hold this corner other than just a parking lot.

Huston can see how this would be an amenity to entice condo owners with secured parking.

Peace thinks this is a great move. He wondered about 'N' Street. Th rhythm that they continued, could it continue to the west? There is still more surface parking to the west of this. Gergen showed the view. There is still one more magazine of surface parking. Stacey Hageman stated this will still have the panel screen that was already approved.

Peace stated that the applicant could continue across the diagonal parking bank and hold the corner in a way that would be really nice. Something a little higher would be nice. Gergen commented that one concern is regarding the sight distance for people exiting from the alley. Peace noted that perhaps the cut panel at that location is more transparent. Johnson will take a look and investigate that.

Huston thinks this is a tremendous improvement. This will really add to the corridor.

Deeker wondered if there is a reason there isn't a clean panel with a step out. Johnson is mimicking what is being done on the Terminal Building. Deeker believes it feels a little awkward where the overhang hits, but she is not sure how to solve it. The drive-thru could be a little taller. Johnson stated that ideally, we would like to have it lower or not at all. The City has said we need to have 20 foot clear. For the drive-thru, we looked at somehow connecting the two but have to manage the pneumatic tubes from the bank building. This is a design element we struggled with as well.

Hind inquired if the lower panels are opaque, truly cut steel. Johnson stated that at the lower level, they are fully opaque. The next panels are the same.

Charlie Stewart stated that the inspiration behind the panels is what is being done at the Telegraph District. That wall all produced locally by TMCO. The intent is to engage TMCO to get their design input on

the panels. We can't speak to the individual panels today but on some level they will be similar to the Telegraph District. This is based on an old image of the Lincoln Railroad that they found.

Hind is more concerned with safety. He would encourage the applicant to think about the views and circulation. He thinks exiting from the alley makes sense. He shares the same concern about the roof line. A low parapet and a roofline under it seems awkward. It is curious that we are going to take pieces and mimic other buildings. What if this was a home jewel on the corner with its own stamp? It will never be the Terminal Building. He really appreciates this project. Many items are top notch. He thinks the attitude of making this a copy of the Terminal building, it might be more top notch if it was completely separate. Why are we borrowing parts from old buildings for a new building? He questioned how this can be done with the lightest possible materials and still deal with the function and appearance.

**ACTION:**

Huston moved approval and encouraged the applicant to look at options to extend the panels to comply with the Downtown Design Standards, seconded by Peace.

Huston thinks the context is that this was approved in January. This is a great improvement. We don't want to penalize someone for improving their design.

Hind stated that as he understands our job as committee members is to guide and provide advice and feedback to make downtown Lincoln really vibrant and great. He would ask to bring this back before construction starts. He inquired about the applicant's schedule. Johnson believes the timeline for this project is fairly quick. Gergen added that TIF (Tax Increment Financing) is being used in the streetscape of the Terminal Building.

Huston would like the applicant to come back and show us some thoughts regarding any potential changes.

Hind stated that the panel that is there, is doing so much visually. What if those went up and became the parapet with the roof line behind it? The thickness and weight of the parapet kind of kills the power of the panels.

Johnson wondered about eliminating the concrete parapet. The top of the panels are considered building height. The standards mandate that the first 20 feet has to be of certain materials. Hind wondered if the panels were more opaque the further up they went.

Stacey Hageman noted the zoning requirements of B-4. Building and Safety Dept. has a definition of building height. Peace wouldn't encourage going less than 20 feet. He would keep it as is, perhaps a few feet taller. It kind of looks like you are building a base for a building that isn't there.

Hageman will work with Building and Safety and bring this back for an update or if there are any significant changes.

Hind would like to get rid of the top. He would encourage the applicant to look at other options and open dialogue with the City. He would also recommend no overdoing the lighting.

Motion for approval carried 4-0: Deeker, Hind, Huston and Peace voting 'yes'; Canney and Penn absent.

### **UNL STUDENT PROJECT, MUSIC DISTRICT**

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

Jason Griffiths is an Associate Professor with the Architecture Dept. at University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL). He likes to incentivize design build architecture. Jeff Day, Peter Hind and himself felt very serious that students engage in real projects. Last semester they were approached by Richard Meginnis to incentivize people to move here. They are working in consultation with the Urban Development Dept. to come up with proposals in a TIF district. Students will show dual proposals.

Rebecca Kalhorn stated the concept was to bring life to this corner. She played a video presentation. Ben Stirtz played a video presentation of a gallery garden.

Griffiths sees these things as opportunities to get hands on experience. We want to do things in Lincoln that we think the current situation incentivizes.

Huston thanked everyone. He chaired the Downtown Master Plan Committee two years ago and a tenet was a music district. He thinks this would be a great amenity for Lincoln.

Griffiths believes that these things take time. We would like to be called on as part of a resource. Part of the concept is simply that this type of thing is happening in almost every city in the U.S. due to Covid. There are conversations about who owns the street and public access to the street. We can do these things in a prototype version. We need funds to do this.

Hind had the pleasure of organizing some venues in the Haymarket. One piece of advice he would give is that it is really important to understand the boundary. He appreciated the containers being reconstructed. What if the bollards became something that were designed as well? He also thinks there is a way to get creative with the ceiling plane. It would be interesting to think about the parts and how they are deployed. It would be interesting to see it on a rooftop or empty alley to see how they are existing.

Stirtz stated that it is nice to get local and knowledgeable feedback.

Deeker noted the comment on who owns the streetscape is an important idea. It is important to think of what area of town you are in as well, speak to the plants and perhaps teach people how to plant a garden. She would also encourage thinking about the accessibility. Stairs are cool, but you want to leave room for someone who is not able bodied.

Griffiths stated that in final review, there are deployable structures. This is something mobile that can be put in all sorts of configurations. We wanted something that would be minimally invasive.

Huston hopes we can take these efforts and get something going on in this district.

Griffiths thanked everyone for their time. He encouraged everyone to feel free to reach out to him or the University to get students involved in greater depth.

### **PLANFORWARD 2050 POLICY DISCUSSION**

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

Andrew Thierolf stated that staff wants to continue the discussion about Comprehensive Plan policies. They are looking at an August 2021 release of the 2050 Plan to the public. The document is still in the drafting stage. We want to talk broadly about density. In general, the 2050 plan supports an increase in development. The existing plan notes 22 percent infill. For the 2050 Plan, the infill target will be increased to 25 percent. 2015 to 2020, the density was about 12.5 units per acre. The highest density in recent years was at 225 N. Cotner Blvd. The next highest is 1100 'Y' Street at 55 units an acre. There were also a lot of lower density projects around two to three units per acre. As the draft plan supports an increase in infill and development, we are asking where an increase in density is appropriate. Also, we are asking when and where is increased density appropriate in existing neighborhoods.

Huston stated that experience has told us this is hard to do in an existing neighborhood. The node and corridor concept focuses on aged commercial developments. We need to incentivize more redevelopment on those nodes and corridors. There is an expectation from existing neighbors that something won't change in density to what is historical. He noted his thanks to elected officials who have done a good job to approved projects in light of neighborhood concerns. No one wants to create division. Focusing on older or aging commercial properties would help.

Peace believes perhaps there are good models in other cities. It seems like there could be some relaxing of the rules for infill projects. There is usually a reason something hadn't gone to a particular location. If there is some kind of an incentive for creative architects to come up with creative solutions, it could incentivize people to do those types of projects. Thierolf noted that staff is proposing a possible smaller CUP (Community Unit Plan).

Huston believes there is always a problem with neighborhood concerns when asking for waivers. He would like to rely less on waivers and more allowances.

Peace thinks more infill could be encouraged. It isn't fun to go argue with neighbors.

Huston finds it frustrating to look at design standards for density bonuses. He has never seen it used. This could be environmental factors or neighborhood factors that limit you on density. He would like to review this and provide more input.

Huston noted that two committee members need to leave in a few minutes. Paul Barnes stated that staff can return for another presentation on this topic. There is more that they would like to present.

Hind is happy to see more density and creative zoning. One argument is efficient buildings is the most sustainable future. Empty and unused lots can be reimagined.

Barnes will share the Power Point presentation with committee members. Staff will return in June with more information.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.