

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, June 1, 2021, 1:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Paul Barnes, Andrew Thierolf and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; David Wiebe with Architectural Design Associates; Ann Post with Baylor Evnen; Michael Penn with Sinclair Hille; Jamie Granquist; Stacey Hageman 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 noted that since a quorum was not present, the approval of the minutes of the meeting held May 4, 2021, will be delayed until the next meeting.

MEADOWLANE REDEVELOPMENT

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

David Wiebe with Architectural Design Associates appeared on behalf of Hampton Development. He presented some images of the existing property. They are asking for TIF (Tax Increment Financing) funds for some upgrades including building facades and sidewalks. The existing buildings were built in the 1950's and 1960's. They have been basically the same since then. The awnings are the only new thing that has happened. They are simply aluminum frames. They were lit with fluorescent tubing from behind. The materials are brick. There is some cast stone, cementitious panels and cast across the top. They are looking to upgrade the building with paint, metal panels, stones, and adding lighting. The canopy frame will be taken off the building. They will be stripping off the existing canopies and adjusting the façade for more uniformity. They are proposing to highlight some elements, The raised portions will help support a more unified

signage. The back side will also be updated with new paint on the brick. They will be leaving the exposed concrete and change the colors on the cementitious panels. They will add some stone. On the north end of the facility, a marker has been added. A parapet will be added to the north end. There are opportunities for signage for the hardware store. They are trying to efficiently re-wrap the building using upgraded materials and colors to unify and present a more unified front. Regarding signage, they are planning on a horizontal track across the band of ephus allowing individual panels or signs, depending on what the tenant wants. It will be a more unified sign package once completed.

Hind noted that one column looks like brick. He inquired what drives brick versus stone. Wiebe replied that the stone marks the corners and gives a little weight. The center columns will be brick. Hind asked if the sign panels will be metal and pre-finished. Wiebe replied they are proposing a deep ribbed corrugated panel. Hind asked if the precast will be below that. Wiebe replied to it will be a blend. The north building was done in pre-cast. It will be covered with ephus.

Peace inquired if the applicant has picked out the stone. Wiebe is working on it. They are trying to obtain a sample. They are thinking about a light sandstone type of color, with a random pattern. It would be thin veneer, but real stone applied to the brick columns.

Huston thinks it looks great. He believes the center needs an update. It is always a challenge to deal with TIF and redevelopment.

Hind commented that there seems to be a lot going on with the building. He would encourage visiting this design again. He wondered if it would be a cost thing to save money. You could simplify some things. He is always concerned when stone is applied. Where it meets a difference of material, there is the consideration of the freeze/thaw cycle. He believes using public dollars would encourage making sure the prep work is done correctly. He applauds the developer because this is used a lot. He asked if the glazing would remain the same. Wiebe replied yes. They discussed long term, they will most likely reglaze most of the windows.

Peace wondered how you arrived at a TIF district. Ann Post is working on the TIF. The blight study just passed City Council. The redevelopment plan should be at the next City Council meeting. They are looking for a recommendation today. It is hard to generate TIF for this type of project. The façade improvements only increase your value so much. They want to get this through as soon as possible to take advantage of the value increase. Huston asked about the TIF funds. Hind stated that building codes require certain things. He would like to see people that own these buildings see past doing building upgrades. He sees Piedmont shops and it was touted as being a sustainable upgrade. He believes the glass should have been changed and the roof insulated. Huston believes that good things happened and building facades are clearly an energy enhancement. Windows just don't increase your taxable value that much.

Post stated that they are seeing some increases in the area which will help the valuation in terms of TIF.

ACTION:

Hind moved approval of the project as presented, seconded by Huston.

Peace would echo what Hind said about the columns. When using that kind of stone, he would look at trading that for some other options instead of thin stone. Hind noted that perhaps the columns go away, Peace added that might gain some budget dollars.

Motion carried 3-0: Hind, Huston and Peace voting 'yes'; Canney, Deeker and Penn absent.

ANTELOPE VALLEY MULTI-FAMILY REDEVELOPMENT

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

Michael Penn from Sinclair Hille appeared. He is representing Assurity Group and Brester Construction. This project is at a phase where we are at the end of the schematic in design development. It is time to have this reviewed and gain comments. This is located on the Antelope Valley Waterway. There are two structures currently on the property. There is one small apartment building that will remain. That is a separate owner. The structure on the far northeast corner has been purchased and will come down. This is 128 unit apartment building with underground parking, 134 spots on the site. There is a PUD (Planned Unit Development) that overlays this property. It is being renegotiated currently with Urban Development. Olsson Engineering is involved as well. There is one building that is connected at the ground floor. It started with three buildings. There will be a clubhouse area on the ground floor. There is a part on the southeast corner that abuts the neighboring park. The four story volume speaks to the open space across the way. To the northeast is a three story structure and two story townhouses. Regarding the materials they plan to use, this started as 100 percent fiber cement. They have now upgraded with some stone applied to the base and some at the corners. The windows will be fiberglass. There will be some fiber cement and some metal. He showed the scale of the property.

Hind inquired if these have their own ingress and egress. Penn responded yes.

Penn showed a Brester project at 56th Street and Vine Street. This is the same stone they plan to use. The windows will be black or charcoal. The metal panels will be ribbed and used for the lighter colors shown up top. The white color shown is a metal ribbed panel. The gray color is a fiber cement product. Hind asked if these will be pre-finished. Penn replied they are still deciding that. Hind asked if the product would go to the ground. Penn stated it does not. It sits on the concrete wall for the underground parking.

Penn continued that the parking sits directly underneath. There will be a down ramp for access. Half of the apartments are one bedroom and some are two bedroom types. Huston inquired how many will be two bedrooms. It appears to be around 40. Penn replied yes, The parking ratio is one to one.

Hind asked if this will retain the existing angle parking. Penn replied no. They are asking for that as part of the PUD. Hind inquired why only on one side. Penn stated that 'P' Street currently has parallel parking. There is one way parking. There is already parking on 23rd St. They are essentially parking on all sides of the block. The pool amenity is in ground and in the middle of the block. Hind asked if there will be surface parking in the courtyard. Penn replied yes. There are 120 underground spaces, 11 are shown on the surface and 2 in the garages. Their count doesn't count the diagonal parking.

Huston is curious, he assumes the north building is townhomes. He is surprised there wasn't more units. Penn believes the density is limited by the number of parking spaces available. They could have added six more apartment units but the parking was constraining. He believes there has been or will be meetings with the neighborhood association to speak to any concerns they may have. This is a single access from the west.

Peace asked if the applicant has thought about what could be done if they acquire the property on the corner. Penn doesn't know at this point.

Hind would like the applicant to bring back the material palette to this group at some point. Penn would be happy to.

Huston noted this is in the Antelope Valley Redevelopment Area. It is another \$18 million dollar investment. He thinks it looks great.

Peace noted the rendering is showing a wood looking product. He asked what the material will be. Penn replied it is a brown, wood looking material. There will also be fiber cement. The intent is to pre-finish it. They are planning on staining the fiber cement through a third party. Peace stated that it looks good and realistic when the metal is stained like the other building material.

Peace inquired if the water table is an issue for the parking below. Penn stated that the geotechnical engineering is being done now. They will have to see what turns up. There is no reason to anticipate any issues. Below grade, they were concerned about the Antelope Valley waterway. Some water was relieved. This is part of the reason for the park is the waterway is underneath and can't be built on.

Hind appreciates the stepping down of scale on the north building. He also appreciates the restraint of materials. There is a kind of a 'how many materials can you put on a building' syndrome. When he thinks of wonderful building from history, they have a limited number of materials used. This is something that is happening a lot of places. He cautioned against using too many materials. He wondered if it would be better with two or three materials. The design guidelines for downtown used to call for a material change at entryways.

Huston asked about the schedule moving forward. Penn stated they are starting the first portion of construction documents. This is the culmination of the design phase. Huston noted they are working on the development agreement. Penn thinks they can come back with more details.

ACTION:

Hind moved to approve the project as presented along with the height change and diagonal parking places, the change in setback on the west and south being reduce to five feet from ten feet and maintaining ten feet on the other sides, support of the waiver of the setback to accommodate the design of the front, with the applicant following up on materials with the Committee at next month's meeting, seconded by Huston.

Peace likes this project a lot. He thinks it is really nice. Regarding the two level townhouses, he didn't see any balconies. Maybe that's okay. He would love to see a portion that runs down the spine where there could be a little roof balcony. It would be really nice and would fit the approach to stepping down the scale. Another thing is that the front doors were not particularly obvious to him. Maybe there could be a stoop or something that lets you claim a front door as yours.

Hind wondered about security as cars are coming in. It is good to articulate how people are getting in and out of the courtyard. He also supports the diagonal parking. He believes it adds ownership and a positive.

Huston agrees that rooftops are a good idea.

Penn is trying to establish a pleasant street face and have a low sloping roof. All units will be mounted in the center of the roofs. They haven't determined exactly what the parapet will be. He believes they will have enough for visual coverage. Peace is never against having a little more parapet.

Penn stated that similar logic was employed to Antelope Creek Village. When done, there is still plenty of front yard available.

Huston believes this is not subject to the Downtown Design Standards. Paul Barnes stated those standards only apply in B-4 zoning. This is a separate PUD with underlying zoning.

Motion carried 3-0: Hind, Huston and Peace voting 'yes'; Canney, Deeker and Penn absent.

STREET ART AT 11TH & B STREET

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

Barnes stated this is an application to paint a smiley face and safety message at the intersection. Since this is located in the public right-of-way, it is here for comment.

Jamie Granquist appeared. She stated this is part of the traffic calming elements before you get to Everett School. The neighborhood has expressed some interest in the area in front of Everett as a concern. The thought is to provide the community with some fun art and take some attention back to the road. This gives a safety message and an iconic image. It stands out without being too loud and artsy. They are working with the South of Downtown Community Organization. They have some experience with paint regarding the wear on traffic and infrastructure. They wanted to minimize the number of colors for touch ups. They are also working with Lincoln Transportation and Utilities to see what else can be done in the 11th Street corridor.

ACTION:

Hind moved approval, seconded by Huston and carried 3-0: Hind, Huston and Peace voting 'yes'; Canney, Deeker and Penn absent.

Peace would like to see it bigger.

Granquist stated there is a business across from Everett and people don't always pay attention. They worked with Melissa Ramos Lammle to make sure they didn't interfere with the school crossing zones. They will work with them to make sure if it is done bigger, it wouldn't interfere with their standards. They hope to do it this weekend and will redo it when the street is resurfaced. The intent is to get it done as soon as possible so it has a pronounced effect in the summer and get people used to it.

Hind would suggest getting other parents to help clean it up on a yearly basis. Granquist doesn't foresee any issues with this intersection. The community was very driven to get this done.

Hind stated this is nice work. The other committee members agreed.

PLANFORWARD 2050 POLICY DISCUSSION

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

Andrew Thierolf appeared. There will be an opportunity for digital feedback. The idea is for this plan to go public in August. Staff has been working on this for almost two years now. We are into fairly detailed policies. We have been working with other City staff from Urban Development and other departments. We are looking at an increase on infill and redevelopment. The existing plan shows 22 percent. We are planning on 25 percent infill.

Hind has seen this statistic. He has also seen 12,000 downtown units. What does infill mean? Thierolf stated that infill is everything on an existing lot within Lincoln city limits. In talking about the downtown number, he believes 5,000 to 6,000 by 2050.

Huston would like to see the Downtown Design Standards go beyond B-4 zoning. Barnes had some conversations about that. Huston thinks it would be helpful for Urban Design Committee if there were some design standards for TIF.

Peace would like to see some quality level of design standards. Barnes noted that if a project is using TIF to remove blight, then we could get into descriptors after that. Huston noted a previous project with vinyl siding. He believes that doesn't have a place in Urban Design. Stacey Hageman thinks this was regarding a project on Vine St. She believes there was a change and doesn't think they will be using vinyl siding on the Vine Street side. Huston noted it would be helpful to have standards for infill projects. Hind would like to see no vinyl on all sides.

Thierolf continued with Infill and Redevelopment. We want to talk about policies. Each policy has an action step.

Huston commented about the desire for predictability. He believes it requires more definition. What is predicable for the neighbor is not predictable for the developer. He would suggest 'based upon ____' existing conditions will never increase density. Thierolf agreed that neighbors have their own idea of neighborhood character. Peace added that the Planning Dept seems willing to go above and beyond density, but not that far beyond what would be allowed by zoning. He would be curious to see how far you could go with the property at 9th St. and 'D' St. There was a proposal a few years ago that this group felt was very appropriate. The neighborhood complained

that they wanted a green lot. Thierolf thinks a couple of other items lead into that in terms of supporting increased density.

Thierolf continued that staff is looking at reducing the minimum size for PUD and CUP (Community Unit Plan). The current minimum size is three acres for a PUD and one acre for a CUP.

Huston believes the simple differentiation is the addition of commercial uses in a PUD. Thierolf responded there are some administrative elements, but he was correct. Peace added that the amount of engineering on a PUD is quite a bit higher.

Thierolf continued we probably won't have a specific number for minimum size in the Comprehensive Plan. Huston would suggest no minimum size. Thierolf believes there is concern for doing this on essentially any lot in the City.

Hind inquired if there was any concern about getting around accessory dwelling units standards. He believes that is still discretionary. Barnes believes it would be contentious. Hind can see it streamlined next to a park. There should be some kind of criteria to do something like this. He knows Minneapolis did this sort of thing. You still have to go through a process. There are a lot of lots in Lincoln that have an alley or open space next to it where it would make sense to have more density. Huston always thought we should be able to pin this down. A parcel on R-3 zoning but a busy street should have different density. Omaha has a form based code. On certain corridors, you have more rights to do more.

Barnes asked where is density appropriate and how would you encourage it in neighborhoods? Huston believes barriers are Access Management Corridors.

Barnes wondered about criteria. Huston asked if the difference is arterial streets. Barnes responded that is a big part. Thierolf agreed. He believes we have done well with higher density development.

Huston knows that in LPlan 2040, there was 3,000 dwelling units by 2040. He believes we are halfway there in ten years. There has been 1,600 new units since 2010.

Hind questioned how design standards will change and promote a variety of housing types. Thierolf stated when we talk about a variety of housing types, we are talking about the missing middle. We could look at minimum or maximum densities. Hind saw an example in Nashville, TN. They took single family housing and did duplexes. They were very vertical. Thierolf believes this is talking more about slip ins. We want to figure out how to do the same level of density but something that works with the neighborhood. He believes the idea is getting back to density. Huston finds it difficult to turn back the hands of the clock in existing neighborhoods. It is easier

to do in Nodes and Corridors. Hind believes it is easy to say we will do it better than that. Huston participated in the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee in the late 1980's. The trend then was for more green space. The pendulum swings.

Thierolf continued with development and new design standards. Huston wants to be careful where we don't say never on any materials. He doesn't want to get in the way of a project. Barnes noted this body is set up to look at waivers and appeals. This would be set up the same way.

There was a conversation about Downtown Design Standards and what the Committee members do not want to see for projects.

Huston believes it would make sense to have a list of what we want to see and what we don't. Hind noted you can say no concrete block, but there are hundreds of types of concrete blocks. It should be more about a performance type review.

Peace stated that the phrase that always bothered him is 'blend into the context of or enhance'. He thinks that is read to mean blend into the context. There are neighborhoods where there isn't a context. There are also some really good neighborhoods where the language scares them. A neighborhood has a certain style, but it scares away a new style. He would love to have it say, 'enhance the surrounding neighborhood'. Hind would suggest take out enhance. Huston would make it an A or B choice. Hind would say remove the 'blend into' reference. Huston believes as a policy, they would support creation of design standards for redevelopment projects. He believes the purpose of creating design standards is for public expectation.

Thierolf wanted to talk about Node and Corridors. Staff would like to examine the creation of a new zoning district or overlay district that would address items such as density, site layout, parking, building scale and design standards. It could bring in elements of mobility oriented development. An example is Omaha. They added elements to their Master Plan. This was a key element to their Omaha Rapid Bus Transit stations and routes. We are years, perhaps decades from creating a bus rapid transit system. Peace wondered about any ramifications. Thierolf believes it is too early to evaluate. Omaha's policy was just instituted in October 2020.

Thierolf continued that Omaha has a corridor and nodes. It reduces as you get farther away from the stations. They are focusing on a pedestrian oriented design with varying building heights and building type mixture. They have a very detailed report of the whole thing. They looked at a minimum height, reduced setbacks, bicycle parking and aesthetic building design standards. He believes this could be a great future work effort in upcoming years. Huston agreed. He thinks this makes a lot of sense. Hind believes there are some interesting tax credits. Peace noted some are regarding transparency and building materials. Hind had a project that they showed them what could be done with and without the overlay. With it, there were more units. Huston inquired if an overly can be part of a PUD. Thierolf responded it could be its own district or an overlay.

Thierolf continued there is a policy to evaluate expanding TIF eligibility to blighted areas beyond the 1960 City limits. Huston asked why TIF is limited to the 1960 City limits. Thierolf believes it may be re-examined at this point. Hind wondered why it wouldn't just say City limits. Barnes would speculate it had to do something with all the taxing jurisdictions. Huston noted the statute says no more than 30 percent can be blighted. It is probably a political standpoint. Hind agreed. He thinks of all the big box stores built 30 years ago and now they are empty. Huston would get rid of it and not tie the policy to City limits.

Thierolf stated that staff is looking at updating the Nodes and Corridors maps as well. We are looking at focusing on a few specific nodes and a few corridors. Barnes believes some of this gets into the discussion of scale and density. Huston believes we need more arterial streets that are designated as a potential recipient of an overlay. Holdrege St., Vine St., 'A' St. and South St. are some candidates. Peace stated there is a project on South St. that backs onto the Junior Golf Course. It seems to him it could have been a nice conversation for increased density with townhomes. Huston commented that is the kind of opportunity we need to be able to create. Hind agreed. There are two ways of access to that property with a park behind it. Developers are spending money with infrastructure. If they had more units, they would have more return on their investment. Huston wondered if there would be a lot of push back for identifying additional corridors. Barnes is unsure. This is different. It is a zoning overlay approach. Huston agreed. This is a new concept. Let's walk before we run.

Barnes stated that one term we are throwing around is a neighborhood edge. Hind brought up an example of 66th St. and 'O' St. There is the empty used car lot. What could a developer do to make it attractive to someone? This is a no brainer location. Barnes stated that property has been approved for two different developments. Thierolf noted it is a good example. Right now, it is a use permit compared to an overlay district. Huston believes we should incentivize density.

Barnes wanted to talk about parking. One proposed policy is for the City to evaluate elimination or reduction of minimum parking requirements in additional zoning districts. This would be a work item after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. We have looked at case studies from other communities. We could eliminate or reduce minimum parking requirements. There are no parking requirements in B-4. This creates challenges for redeveloping existing small commercial and residential sites. There is a cost to developing parking. Large empty lots are wasted. We process quite a few waivers for parking. The Planning Dept. has worked on several previous text amendments to reduce parking for specific uses and certain districts.

Hind asked if there is a way to quantify who we have to convince. Building and Safety wants you to prove you have enough parking stalls. Neighbors want more parking. Is there a way to say we have processed 'X' number of waivers and the reality we see in the built environment is 'X' percent lower? He thinks those kinds of measures are ways of talking about that. Shared parking

is an option. He has a development going on where there is a church across the street. How do you really make that shared parking? The developers want to build less parking but retailers want more. Barnes believes including this idea in the Comprehensive Plan is the first step. This sets the stage to do it in the future. Planning staff has talked about this.

Huston looked at a different zoning ordinance that had a cap on parking. It is a great idea from a watershed management point of view. Buffalo, NY and Fayetteville, AK are two examples. Barnes inquired if there is support for including this idea. Huston believes examination of the policy should be in the new plan. It is time to have something in the plan. There is better data available now. Hind noted that you hear about the missing middle. You can communicate it by showing an example. He thinks if we can show a project that everyone likes, it is a behavior change.

Barnes thinks that some areas present different challenges, We want those areas to be successful. How do you balance parking for a new restaurant with overflow into the neighborhood? That is a much bigger point. Huston believes it is always an issue for multi-family projects. Thierolf wondered what would happen if we got rid of any parking requirements for multi-family. Hind noted that the Argent project was next to a Sharp project. There was a City parking deck on the south side. The developer said no and they wanted to give parking to their own people. He believes if there was no parking requirement, they would want to use the City lot. Barnes noted we have done some local study. Huston added there is data available on affordable housing projects.

Barnes continued with Public Buildings. We already have language in the 2040 plan that we should be meeting or exceeding standards in terms of what we would like to see in design. The last item for discussion is related to the Climate Action Plan.

Huston likes that public buildings should meet or exceed requirements. Hind knows that the USGBC and LEED wouldn't exist except for government buildings. He would love to have every new City building achieve net zero now. There is a dermatology clinic at 70th St. and South St. We couldn't do geothermal. For solar, we couldn't connect to the grid if there was more solar. This was due to LES (Lincoln Electric System). There are capacity issues. Huston is very supportive of public buildings being held to the same standard.

Peace would add a note to engage the appropriate design review board early on in the design process. It seemed that the new fire stations only came as a last thought and everything was already planned. Barnes stated that is part of the process we can work on internally and perhaps put someone on notice. Huston thinks that all big ticket items should come to Urban Design Committee. Hind would also like to take a look at LPS (Lincoln Public Schools) and see what they are doing. It's all geothermal. There is a rule book. It would be great to see the City have minimum standards.

Barnes noted that Miki Esposito has been very engaged with the Climate Action Plan.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

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