

# **DIRECTORS'/ORGANIZATIONAL AGENDA ADDENDUM**

**Monday, July 12, 2021**

## **I. CONSTITUENT CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Nine-Mile Prairie and Climate Action Plan – Marj Willeke
2. Changes to building code with proposed amendment TX21004 – Ted Czerniak
3. Protect Nine-Mile Prairie – Moni Usasz
4. Nine-Mile Prairie – Barbara DiBernard
5. Concern about Nine-Mile Prairie Proposal – Glenda Dietrich Moore
6. Nine-Mile Prairie – Mary Roseberry-Brown
7. NW 48<sup>th</sup> Street Redevelopment Ares TIF Designation – Gene Hanlon

## Angela M. Birkett

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**From:** Marj Willeke <marj.willeke@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 08, 2021 3:39 PM  
**To:** Council Packet  
**Subject:** Nine-Mile Prairie and Climate Action Plan

To Members of the Lincoln City Council:

I am writing to you with grave concerns about maintaining the integrity of Nine-Mile Prairie, a Lincoln treasure. The city needs to maintain environmental protection for areas surrounding the Nine-Mile Prairie. Expanding residential and/or commercial development to encroach on the prairie's environs would lead to degradation of its biodiversity and destruction of a rare ecosystem. It is important to protect public habitat areas that contribute to ongoing carbon storage.

The City Council received a proposal for Tax Increment Financing (TIF), designating a section of Arnold Heights as blighted. If approved, the area in question would include currently uninhabited grasslands. At a recent public hearing (6/28/21), one developer stated he would like to build 100 affordable housing units, but would need TIF to help finance this project. The 17-acre parcel in question is just over 0.5 mile from the prairie. I understand the importance of affordable housing in Lincoln and support efforts the city is making to meet this need. Also, I have no objection to designating areas blighted to qualify for TIF. Other vacant land could be used to construct affordable housing, instead of building on environmentally sensitive land.

As I understand it, the original proposal, endorsed by the Urban Development and Planning Departments and the Planning Commission did not consider environmental concerns. It is time to consider them now! Please review recommendations from the Nine-Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan (University of Nebraska Center for Grasslands Studies, April 2020) before determining the specific area (boundaries) to be declared blighted.

**THANK YOU** for approving the City's 2021-2027 Climate Action Plan last March. This action has been a critical step in increasing Lincoln's resilience to the impacts of climate change. Allowing development close to Nine-Mile Prairie is inconsistent with this plan; one of the 118 initiatives states, "Continue to support prairie restoration and protection of natural resources" [Lincoln's Climate Action Plan]. I call your attention to one of three directions that form the strategic vision for the action plan. "Strategic climate directions and climate resilience will be integrated throughout City actions and ordinances." Your action this month concerning undeveloped land near Nine-Mile Prairie will go beyond TIF eligibility for one area of the city. **The City Council should demonstrate that environmental impacts will be considered in future decisions regarding the protection of public habitat areas.**

Respectfully,

*Marj Willeke*

Lincoln Resident

**Angela M. Birkett**

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**From:** Ted Czerniak <theodoreczerniak@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 09, 2021 12:28 PM  
**To:** Council Packet  
**Cc:** ted czerniak  
**Subject:** changes to building code with proposed amendment TX21004  
**Attachments:** Lincoln City Council Member1.docx

Thank you for your time.  
Ted Czerniak  
402-904-9997

Lincoln City Council Members,

My name is Ted Czerniak and I live at 515 Pier 1(Capital Breach) Lincoln, NE. My reason for writing this letter is because I tried to replace an old pergola with a new deck and staircase. The present code will not allow me to do this. The proposed changes in TX21004 will allow me to do this. My house is a 2 story building with only 1 staircase from the second story. It is located in the front of the house. We have a sliding door at the back of the second story but no way to get down. In order to get into the house from the back. I would need a ladder and the pergola even makes it harder to get to onto the small back deck. I have 5 grandkids 6 years old to 6 months who play and sleep in the second story. This is why I called Decks Unlimited to replace the pergola and add a back staircase. This would provide an additional safety measure just in case the front staircase gets blocked for some reason. The present code will not allow me to build anything attached to the house because the 20' foot rule. The changes that TX21004 will provide me and others with lake lots would make safety and other needed improvements possible.

In would like to thank the Planning Commission for their work on helping make the needed changes to the building code. Your approval will help make my grandkids safer and give me peace of mind.

Thanks for your time.

Ted Czerniak

**Angela M. Birkett**

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**From:** Moni Usasz <musasz@neb.rr.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 09, 2021 4:27 PM  
**To:** Council Packet  
**Subject:** protect Nine-Mile Prairie

Dear City Council,

Protect Nine Mile Prairie from encroaching development. Please support a TIF designation which includes a buffer around Nine Mile. The UNL study, [Nine Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan](#), is a great reference document.

This buffer between Nine Mile and development is extremely important. Otherwise house cats and dogs will be very hard on ground nesting birds and invasive plants will be an even bigger problem. The LES line just south of Nine-Mile caused enough disruption when it was built.

The recently passed Climate Plan includes protecting native prairies. Protection is what Nine Mile needs. This is important for the prairie plants, pollinators, birds and other animals who live there. Wild things deserve a place of safety in our city.

Thank you for your hard work in support of the city. I appreciate all you do.

Moni Usasz  
402-202-3100

## Angela M. Birkett

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**From:** Barbara DiBernard <bdibernard@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 10, 2021 3:47 PM  
**To:** Council Packet  
**Subject:** 9-Mile Prairie

Dear City Council Members:

I urge you in the strongest terms to maintain an uninhabited buffer to 9-Mile Prairie. While a TIF designation that leads to development may be appropriate for some of the area being considered, the area directly adjacent to the Prairie should be left undeveloped.

When I moved to Lincoln in 1978 after a life lived in NJ, PA, and upper NY state, I was unsure of how I felt about the prairie. I was used to forested areas. However, I have come to love and appreciate the prairie for its beauty, the solace it brings to the soul, and its importance as an ecosystem. As you know, 9-Mile Prairie is one of the largest areas of virgin tallgrass prairie in NE, with a 228 acre section listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1986.

9-Mile Prairie is habitat to at least 392 species of plants, 80 species of birds, and hundreds of kinds of insects, including the federally threatened prairie white fringed orchid and the diminishing regal fritillary. It serves as a research site for students and scholars of prairie ecology. Ecology depends on wholeness; development directly adjacent to 9-Mile Prairie will greatly diminish its wholeness, allowing easier encroachment by invasive plants and animals.

The Council has already recognized the need to protect native prairies in the Lincoln Climate Action Plan approved in March 2021. Retaining a buffer for 9-Mile Prairie is in line with this goal.

I hope that you have been out to 9-Mile Prairie. It is a jewel that needs to be given every chance to survive and thrive as an intact virgin tallgrass prairie. Once encroached upon, it can never be made whole again.

Sincerely,

Barbara DiBernard

1045 N. 41<sup>st</sup> Street

Lincoln, NE 68503

402-466-0117

[bdibernard@gmail.com](mailto:bdibernard@gmail.com)

## Angela M. Birkett

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**From:** Glenda Dietrich Moore <creationenergy@windstream.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 10, 2021 7:52 PM  
**To:** Council Packet  
**Subject:** Concern about 9-mile Prairie proposal

Dear City Council members,

I understand a proposal for affordable housing to be built near Nine-Mile Prairie will soon be on your agenda for approval. I urge you to give this proposal diligent consideration as the proposed construction areas contain tallgrass prairies, which provide important habitat, carbon sequestration, and habitat bridges between Nine Mile Prairie and other areas. I am deeply concerned about this loss of habitat.

I would also not be in favor of declaring such an area as 'blighted' so that TIF monies could be used.

Surely there are other areas where affordable housing can be built. If TIF monies are to be used, could some of the vacant areas around Gateway Mall be used for building housing? The former car dealership area has been vacant for several years, and the Sears building sits unused. Lincoln does indeed need more affordable housing.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Glenda Dietrich Moore  
5401 Franklin St.  
Lincoln NE 68506



**Angela M. Birkett**

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**From:** Mary Roseberry-Brown <mroseberrybrown@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 11, 2021 5:29 PM  
**To:** Council Packet  
**Subject:** 9 Mile Prairie

FROM:  
1423 F Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
July 11, 2021

TO;  
Lincoln City Council Members

Dear Council Member,

I urge each of you to 1.) Follow the *Climate Action Plan* in the *Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan* that protects native prairies and 2.) Follow the *Nine Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan*. Do not approve any additional development around the Nine Mile Prairie.  
Thank you.

Mary Roseberry-Brown

## Angela M. Birkett

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**From:** Gene Hanlon <gene.hanlon@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 12, 2021 8:27 AM  
**To:** Council Packet; James M. Bowers; Richard W. Meginnis; Jane Raybould; Tammy J. Ward; Sandra J. Washington; Bennie R. Shobe; Tom J. Beckius  
**Subject:** NW48th Street Redevelopment Area TIF Designation

City Council Members

I am writing in opposition to the NW 48<sup>th</sup> Street Redevelopment Plan and TIF designation of the area as blighted and substandard, items 5a and 5b on the July 12<sup>th</sup> City Council Agenda. I am opposed for the following reasons:

- The inclusion of undeveloped land in the TIF blighted area which would be developed for affordable housing is in conflict with the 2020 Nine-Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan by the UNL Center for Grassland Studies and the Nine-Mile Advisory Committee.
- It is also in conflict with the recently approved Climate Action Plan recommendations related to preservation of native prairie areas, natural resources and sequestering of carbon (recommendations 99, 105, 108).
- Designating undeveloped prairie and grasslands as blighted appears to be a stretch in complying with blighted and substandard definitions in state statutes for tax increment financing.
- A housing development on undeveloped prairies and riparian areas will not only reduce the City's carbon sequestration inventory but also increase the flooding risk in the creek directly north of Arnold Elementary School; eliminate habitat corridors to Nine Mile Prairie; increase lighting pollution and adversely impact the bird and pollinator habitat for the Nine-Mile Prairie and surrounding green space.

If the City is committed to the recently approved Climate Action Plan the principles in the plan must be adopted throughout every aspect of municipal government to be truly successful. The Hanna:Keelan Associates NW48th Street Redevelopment Area Blight and Substandard Determination Study makes no mention of the UNL Nine-Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan or the environmental impact of development to the prairie that has been designated on the National Historical Registry and other native prairies in the area. The Planning Department's staff report to the Planning Commission and City Council also neglects to mention these issues. In addition, the Urban Development Department has ignored environmental considerations in advocating for the TIF blight designation.

As City Council members you must correct this failure to consider environmental issues in designating redevelopment areas. City staff and departments must fully analyze the impact of development on prairies and grasslands that serve as habitat and habitat corridors for Nine-Mile Prairie and incorporate the recommendations of the UNL Center for Grassland Studies Nine-Mile Prairie Environs Master Plan into the Comprehensive Plan Update. It is also important that policies and development plans of the City be reviewed with a lens on the impact on Lincoln's Vision for a Climate Smart Future.

I fully support the development of affordable housing in Lincoln, and I also recognize that the City needs to subsidize the development of affordable housing. However, I do not believe it should be on environmentally sensitive land and using tax increment financing as is the case with this NW 48<sup>th</sup> Redevelopment Plan Area recommendation.

Respectfully,  
Gene Hanlon  
2710 Ryons Street  
Lincoln, Ne 68502  
402-318-9250