

## MEETING NOTES

*Advanced public notice of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website. In addition, a public notice was emailed to the Lincoln Journal Star for publication on Thursday, March 18, 2021.*

**NAME OF GROUP:** NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Friday, March 26, 2021, 8:30 a.m., City Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Heidi Cuca, Kile Johnson, Karen Nalow, Ann Post and David Quade; Mary Campbell and Delonte Johnson absent.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Collin Christopher and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Lynn Johnson from Parks & Recreation; Dallas McGee of Urban Development Dept.; Bob Ripley of the Capitol Commission; Doug Hanson and Michelle Potts of the State Building Division; Bob Caldwell from NEBCO; Jeff Chadwick from Clark & Enersen; DaNay Kalkowski from Seacrest & Kalkowski; and other interested parties.

**STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:** Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

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

K. Johnson then called for a motion approving the minutes of the regular meeting held February 26, 2021. Motion for approval made by Cuca, seconded by Nalow and carried 5-0: Cuca, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade voting 'yes'; Campbell and D. Johnson absent.

**PLACEMENT OF A NEW SCULPTURE ALONG NEBRASKA'S CENTENNIAL MALL**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**March 26, 2021**

Members present: Cuca, K. Johnson, Post and Quade; Nalow declared a conflict of interest; Campbell and D. Johnson absent.

Lynn Johnson stated this hearing is to review the setting for the Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte portrait sculpture. Clark & Enersen has been selected to do the design for the setting.

Karen Nalow presented the plans, including a rendering that was created of the space. The alley in between L Street and M Street has been vacated, between the parking garage for the State and the Scottish Rite Temple. She pointed out the location of the sculpture. The concept was to elevate this sculpture to the level that the subject deserves. Nalow stated that they are using a lot of natural materials in the design of the space. She believes it is fitting to have a limestone outcropping. They are proposing a series of elevation changes to raise La Flesche Picotte up three feet in height. The pedestal would be limestone, something with a natural edge and a larger outcropping behind it. They are proposing to extend the pavers from the main sidewalk running north/south along Centennial Mall. Regarding the limestone, the design team is still working through availability. They wanted to go with Indiana stone, but may need to shift to something from Illinois or Kansas. There is a continuation of the landscape palette on Centennial Mall with the use of native grasses. They are also including lilacs, which was one of the Doctor's favorite shrubs. They also want to include some other purple wildflowers. She showed an artist rendering of the proposed site. They are trying to show that the back side will be built up for screening so the transformer behind won't show. They are also looking at incorporating text on the wall. Lighting will be positioned to highlight her upper body as the main focus, as well as lighting the inscription. This will be a similar installation in many ways to the Standing Bear sculpture. They are proposing two bollards that match the ones that are already found on Centennial Mall. The bollards will have lights in them.

L. Johnson stated the intent is to install this project this summer and dedicate it on October 11, 2021.

Cuca wondered about sustaining the four large evergreen trees planted close together. Nalow responded that she wanted to create a design that would hide the transformer. Soil will be brought in to raise the grade in this area behind the sculpture. The added soil will provide enough volume to allow the evergreens to thrive.

Ripley noted that snow removal could cause damage to the landscape beds. He would like to see another bollard or limestone to help define the edge that the snowplow works through. Something with verticality to it would help to define the edge and keep a snowplow blade from damaging the bed. Regarding lighting, Ripley asked whether the sculpture would have uplighting.

He would encourage the design team to consider a dark sky concept where the fixtures don't cast a lot of ambient light into the sky. It would be wise to contain as much light as possible cast downward. Ripley stated that he thinks the proposal looks very good.

Nalow noted the spotlights would be angled toward the statue or the inscription.

**ACTION:**

Post moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed portrait sculpture of Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte, seconded by Cuca and carried 4-0: Cuca, K. Johnson, Post and Quade voting 'yes'; Nalow declared a conflict of interest; Campbell and D. Johnson absent.

**PLACEMENT OF A PEDESTAL AND PLAQUE TO BE LOATED ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF 1526 K STREET, HIGHLIGHTING THE HISTORY OF "THE PROTECTING HAND" SCULPTURE**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**March 26, 2021**

Members present: Cuca, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade; Campbell and D. Johnson absent.

Michelle Potts stated that they presented this project to the Commission last month for approval of the pedestal and plaque. They are back today with the proposed language and proposed location. She distributed a handout with the proposed language and potential location. They looked at the front of the building and determined the left hand side of the entrance would be best. She pointed out where the handicap street sign is located. They are working with the City to remove that.

K. Johnson inquired if the color and plaque design compare with plaques already on Centennial Mall. Potts responded the pedestal will match the Capitol building.

Nalow believes this is very complementary to the mall.

Post is happy to have this new plaque here.

Cuca thinks the plaque looks great. Quade agreed.

**ACTION:**

Quade moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed plaque related to "The Protecting Hand" sculpture, seconded by Cuca and carried 5-0: Cuca, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade voting 'yes'; Campbell and D. Johnson absent.

**DEMOLITION WORK AT 1111 LINCOLN MALL, 601 SOUTH 12<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND 1106 'H' STREET**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**March 26, 2021**

Members present: Cuca, K. Johnson, Post and Quade; Nalow declared a conflict of interest; Campbell and D. Johnson absent.

Collin Christopher stated this application is for demolition work by NEBCO, Inc. Anytime there is a project that looks at demolition in the Capitol Environs, the design standards state that the application must come forward to this Commission. Often, review of the demolition and design work for new construction are combined into a single review. In this case, the applicant is on a pretty fast timeline and staff thought it would be appropriate to split the review into two parts to potentially allow them to move forward with demolition work. Even though the design work is in a pretty early phase, the conceptual vision is clear enough to allow the applicant to apply for a certificate of appropriateness for demolition now, and then have them come back in the next few months for a full review of the design of the site.

Bob Caldwell of NEBCO, Inc. appeared. He believes they are known on Lincoln Mall for the projects they have done. The design submitted is very similar with other past projects. They have been working in partnership with the City on this project and have selected a tenant to occupy the space. Currently, there is a two-story building on the west end of the block that is unoccupied. The middle building is a four-story building that they are engaged in moving the tenants from. The building on the east end of the block was damaged by fire earlier this year. They feel the redevelopment proposal is very fitting and a positive step for downtown. It will be 159,000 square feet with parking underneath. Jim Abel wanted him to pass along that architecture is his number one priority as he works in Lincoln. He believes this should be a catalyst for the area.

Jeff Chadwick of Clark & Enersen stated that he has a good knowledge of the project area, and has used that knowledge and experience to develop a palette of materials that fit along Lincoln Mall. They want long lasting, durable materials. The building will be a combination of precast concrete and brick, much like Landmark 1 and 3. They will carry these materials throughout the three stories. There will be colonnades. He showed some quick renderings of the main entry. They are looking at how they can screen areas on the south side, and the views from the northwest and east. Chadwick stated that they will maintain all the trees along the mall. He showed an overview of the entire project, and closed by saying they are excited to have a new neighbor across the street.

Nalow asked Chadwick to point out the two existing Landmark buildings. Chadwick marked their location on the rendering. He included some overall views and some of the details in their application, but said that there are still many things to work out.

K. Johnson thinks the proposal looks great.

Quade agreed the buildings complement the Mall very well. This will be a great addition.

**ACTION:**

Cuca moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition work at 1111 Lincoln Mall, 601 S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street and 1106 'H' Street, under the condition that the applicant be required to come back to the Environs Commission to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction, seconded by Quade and carried 4-0: Cuca, K. Johnson, Post and Quade voting 'yes'; Nalow declared a conflict of interest; Campbell and D. Johnson absent.

Ripley commented that as an Ex-Officio member, he wanted to take the opportunity to publicly acknowledge and thank NEBCO and Jim Abel in particular, for the incredible development along the mall. This will put a new face on Lincoln Mall. When this commission was formed, there were a series of smaller, unimpressive buildings. Landmark 1 and Landmark 3 have provided closure along the Mall and defined the presence of the Mall in an exceptional manner. Extra effort was put into preserving larger trees. Since this Commission has been in existence, NEBCO has been a provider of the gold standard. He thanks them greatly. He laments the loss of the original 1111 building. He knows with its loss, the community will get a more exceptional building in its place. He offered his thanks to NEBCO.

K. Johnson noted that Ripley's comments were well said. He also looks forward to seeing what NEBCO has planned at 13<sup>th</sup> St. and 'K' St. as well, and expects that project will represent another nice contribution to the Environs District.

**LINCOLN MALL DESIGN STANDARDS FOR MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS:**

Christopher stated that the Commission discussed the design standards last month, and he has since tried to incorporate some of the comments from that meeting. Text was revised to include markers and plaques as parts of Sections 22.6 and 23.5 so that everything is covered. Language was also added for both Centennial Mall and Lincoln Mall to address inscriptions on markers and plaques. This new language was based on a suggestion from Lynn Johnson that gets at the content of what is being said on the plaques. It limits advertising and derogatory or disparaging language. The Centennial Mall section (22.6) was also modified to include vertical surfaces, in addition to horizontal surfaces, as an allowable surface treatment location for plaques and inscriptions. Finally, a bullet point under 23.5 which talks about seating related to monuments and memorials on Lincoln Mall was revised. The change generally discourages new seating along the Mall, but it is still flexible enough to allow new seating if deemed appropriate.

Christopher reminded the Commission that they would need to recommend approval before the text amendment can be moved forward to Planning Commission and City Council for review and action.

Nalow appreciates the time involved in preparation of this.

Post appreciates the reference to seating. She can understand the challenges. She believes this strikes a balance. In looking at this, she was trying to work through the reference discouraging plaques that might reference religion, and is concerned about not wanting to be discriminatory.

L. Johnson stated that they developed this language with the City Attorney's office. They encouraged guidelines to avoid something that could be seen as offensive. The City can't limit the language without guidelines. This was developed about ten years ago.

K. Johnson inquired if you could advertise the group behind the plaque language. Christopher believes this wouldn't be allowed in the public right-of-way. Sponsorship logos would be considered advertising.

K. Johnson wondered if the language could state who it was donated by, if that would be allowed. L. Johnson responded perhaps, but a business logo would not be allowed. The text could recognize the donor name. K. Johnson asked if the donor would be just a name or if a company name would be allowed. L. Johnson replied perhaps it could be allowed. Christopher stated that the language doesn't exclude the name of a company. It excludes a logo, slogan or anything that would be considered advertising. He believes you could identify the company by name, just not a logo.

Quade looked at the reference to discriminatory language and noted that times change in terms of what is considered discriminatory. That could possibly cause some issues down the road. However, he believes the intent is reasonable.

Post understands that the City Attorney has been consulted on this. She appreciates this was already taken into consideration.

K. Johnson agrees about the seating. Things could change in the future. There might be a need for more in the future. He believes there is enough on the Mall right now. Christopher believes there is enough flexibility to accommodate future needs.

**ACTION:**

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Nalow moved approval of the design standards for monuments and memorials as proposed, seconded by Post and carried 5-0: Cuca, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade voting ‘yes’; Campbell and D. Johnson absent.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

- Christopher stated that the Planning Dept has been working on an update to the comprehensive plan. Planning staff will be coming to the April meeting to discuss some policies related to placemaking and the Capitol Environs District. Materials will be sent out before the meeting for review. This material will include proposed policies and action items to be considered. He believes it will be a good conversation, and stated that now is a good time to get feedback and get it incorporated into the comprehensive plan update.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.