

MEETING RECORD

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 Wednesday, April 19, 2023.

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Friday, April 28, 2023, 8:30 a.m., City Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Andrea Gebhart, Delonte Johnson, Kile Johnson, Karen Nalow, Ann Post and David Quade; (Heidi Cuca absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: David Cary, Collin Christopher, Arvind Gopalakrishnan and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; David Wiebe with Architectural Design Associates; J.J. Yost of Parks and Recreation; Matt Hansen with the Nebraska Capitol Commission; Bob Ripley; and other interested citizens.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

Chair K. 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 March 24, 2023. Motion for approval made by Nalow, seconded by Gebhart and carried 4-0: Gebhart, K. Johnson, Nalow and Quade voting 'yes'; D. Johnson abstained; Post absent at time of vote; Cuca absent.

NEW CONSTRUCTION AT 440 S. 13th STREET

PUBLIC HEARING:

April 28, 2023

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

Collin Christopher stated that in March 2020 as we were entering the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, there was a request from NEBCO to demolish the existing building on this property. When an applicant is requesting demolition, they typically must have plans for what is going back in its place. At that time, there wasn't anything specific. In the short term, they planned to turf it, which they did. They planned on using this site as a parking lot in the mid-term. Long term, they wanted to be able to redevelop it. The city was struggling with knowing how to handle public hearings during the lockdown, and so there was a determination by the Planning Director and Ed Zimmer, in coordination with Kyle Johnson as Chair of this

Commission to offer a Certificate of No Material Effect to demolish, with plans to return to Commission at a later date.

Regarding the redevelopment plans for the site, he believes the proposal is pretty straightforward from a building perspective. He identified some small concerns about how landscaping would fit in this small parking lot. His recommendation is for the applicant to come back for another review when they have a developed landscape plan. There are requirements for the landscape standards for parking lots, in addition to the Capitol Environs Design Standards.

David Wiebe has been working with the Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA) on this site for about a year. NCSA is currently located just down the street. They have an opportunity in working with NEBCO to take control of this property and expand their functions a little. He showed a plan for the site. The new building in the southwest corner is pretty much the same footprint as the demolished building. They will need to do more landscaping. They will address that. In talking with Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU), they are going to be losing the current drive off 13th Street. The entry will be just off the alley with an exit on 'K' Street. The building itself is an all brick structure with brick bandings and colors that are typical of the older buildings in the area. The main entrance is off 13th Street. He feels they are meeting the main requirements of masonry and durable construction.

Quade inquired if the mechanical units will be located on the roof. Wiebe replied yes. They will be screened by the parapet.

Nalow wondered if the presented rendering takes the rooftop units into account. Wiebe believes it is generally accurate. Screening can be accommodated if there are specific requirements as far as heights and view angles. They will look at those too. He believes that generally from the street, you won't see the rooftop units. Nalow spoke to the setback requirements for the units in the roof area. Wiebe agreed. The units will be at least ten feet away from the edge.

K. Johnson asked about screening on top of the roof. He wondered what would be seen on this roof from the Capitol. Wiebe didn't anticipate that. They can take a look at that.

Quade understands that the applicant is anticipating the height of the parapet will hide the units from ground level. Wiebe replied yes. You will see it from above. K. Johnson noted that some applicants have put up a wire mesh or screening, so from above it is less visible.

Post pointed out that comments from staff were regarding parking lot screening. Wiebe hasn't seen the staff report. He can accommodate whatever is necessary.

Nalow understands that the applicant hasn't addressed the screening or planting, to date. Wiebe stated they don't have a landscape plan yet. Nalow wanted to make sure that the requirements for Downtown Standards and Capitol Environs standards are met with regard to screening. Wiebe noted they are working with REGA Engineering. They will have a landscape architect take a look at that.

Post pointed out that the staff recommendation is for the landscaping and screening requirements for this site to be reviewed and approved before building permits are issued. She believes adding a review of rooftop screening won't cause any hardship. Wiebe agreed.

Gebhart was curious how many employees will be in this building on a daily basis. Wiebe believes current staff is about 15. They hold meetings and conferences for up to 50 people. They represent schools all across Nebraska. They get together for training sessions. The upper floor has a large conference area for multiple uses. Hence, for the parking lot, they wanted to provide as much parking as possible to provide that access for all the members.

ACTION:

Post moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction at 440 S. 13th Street, with the condition that the applicant return for approval of the landscape plan prior to submittal of a building permit, seconded by D. Johnson.

Nalow moved an amendment that the rooftop screening for mechanical elements be reviewed prior to submittal of a building permit, seconded by Post.

Motion for approval of amendment carried 6-0: Gebhart, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade voting 'yes'; Cuca absent.

Motion for approval as amended, for a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction at 440 S. 13th Street with the conditions that the applicant return for approval of the landscape plan and roof top screening for mechanical elements, prior to submittal of a building permit, carried 6-0: Gebhart, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade voting 'yes'; Cuca absent.

STAFF REPORT:

Centennial Mall Fountain

J.J. Yost wanted to give an update on some work on Centennial Mall in relation to the fountains. There is an electrical box that needs to be added for some electrical service that runs some of the fountains. He showed some images of where they plan to locate the cabinet. On the 'K' Street to 'L' Street block, there are a couple of existing boxes. They are at-grade lids to boxes that are there today. Further north of that is an equipment vault where electrical service is today. They are having a lot of maintenance issues. Water collects in that box as it is supposed to, but water levels rise above what the sump pump is able to keep up with. This has been an ongoing issue. They want to make it more manageable. At the property edge on the east side is where they intend to tuck the panel. This would be located on the east side of the screen walls that are about four feet tall. He believes it can be placed there nicely behind the trees. He showed some views of the area. There is already a backflow preventer with a cage. The cabinet would go north of that. He doesn't have a schedule for construction. He met this morning with a company that might do some of the work. They would like to move ahead with the work this summer as materials become available. Operating those fountains can become an issue. They need to replace some nozzles and clean out some pipes. This is the only element of that work that would be above grade.

Bob Ripley commented that he would like to see a dark green color for the metal cabinet. Yost stated he has thought about that. The cut sheet shows a tan color. He wants to look into that and see if they can get a darker color. The darker color could also be a target for graffiti. They will look into that and get as dark green a color as possible. Ripley asked if this will be the only above grade feature affecting the mall. Yost responded yes. Everything else is in the vaults.

Certificate for No Material Effect for 710 'J' Street

Christopher worked with Kile Johnson and David Cary to approve a Certificate for No Material Effect for 710 'J' Street. Due to the current bus supply, StarTran requested to raise the height of the garage doors by about six to eight inches. This will be a very small change. He showed the four garage doors. Along with that, they need to replace the paneling above the garage doors. It will be done with a similar product. This is perhaps not an ideal solution, but for an existing facility he believes it was an acceptable solution.

K. Johnson signed the Certificate of Appropriateness. He went to view the property and believes it will be hard to even see the difference.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Christopher introduced Arvind Gopalakrishnan who is a new planner with the Planning Dept. He has an architecture and design background. This Commission will see him occasionally, and he believes Gopalakrishnan will eventually take over staffing of the Urban Design Committee.

Arvind Gopalakrishnan stated that he is originally from Mumbai, India. He worked for a couple of years in India, Nairobi and parts of Nigeria. He moved to Calgary, Canada to pursue his master's degree in Planning. He worked in Alberta, Canada. He moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia to work as an urban designer. He has worked on waterfront projects, streetscape designs, university avenue designs, transportation plans and landscape architecture plans. He worked on visualizations and renderings for a firm in British Columbia. His fiancé is from the States. She was born and raised in Boston and California. She is going to medical school in Omaha. This brought him to the States. He is happy to join the team and is excited to present to this Commission in the future regarding the different aspects of what is going on in the City.

The members introduced themselves and welcomed him.

Motion for adjournment made by Post, seconded by Gebhart and carried 6-0: Gebhart, D. Johnson, K. Johnson, Nalow, Post and Quade voting 'yes'; Cuca absent.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.