

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, February 2, 2021, 3:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tom Huston, Gil Peace and Michelle Penn; (Mark Canney, Emily Deeker, and Tammy Eagle Bull absent). Peter Hind appeared online via © Zoom Video Communications.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Paul Barnes, Stacey Hageman, Collin Christopher and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Dan Marvin of Urban Development; Tim Gergen and Kelsey Moline of Clark Enersen Partners; Emily Anderson; and Jake Hoppe appeared in person.
Ernie Castillo of Urban Development; Michael Sands; Jeri Schlickbernd; and Mike Schlickbernd; appeared online via © Zoom Video Communications; and other interested citizens.

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

Penn noted that a quorum was not present, therefore the approval of the minutes of January 5, 2021 shall be delayed until the next regular meeting.

CENTER PARK GARAGE STREETScape

Collin Christopher stated this is a City initiated streetscape project. This is the home of Center Park Garage. Currently, there are a couple of challenges to this site. There is a significant overhang. The streetscape that exists now is almost all brick pavers. They have started to settle and buckle in some locations. We have some unused Downtown Streetscape dollars. The goal is to pull out some of the pavers and create a better balance, along with some landscaping. On 11th Street, the only landscaping consists of some triangle beds on the edge of the building. There are a couple of ornamental trees on the 'N' Street side and they don't really fit in the space. The plan is to remove those trees. There are five Ginkgo trees we are planning on maintaining but are also planning on adding a landscape bed. On 11th Street side are small beds with grasses. Those would be extended out. We are also creating a pedestrian node at 11th Street and 'N' Street. This would allow for some additional landscaping and a little pedestrian seating area in the future. Two street trees were added to the node as well. Eventually, there has been some ongoing discussion about a one-way to two-way conversion of the street. 13th Street is a priority at this point. We wanted to propose improvements that wouldn't have to get torn out. For 'N' Street, we would be adding some landscaping and decorative paving along the edge of the curb. This would all be understory landscaping. One unresolved issue is how much light we get with the overpass. We have done some sun/shade analysis.

There is limited sun. We are proposing using a bulb out for the 12th Street side, and the 12th Street and 'N' Street intersection. We are proposing to add landscaping at the node. This would create room for a future seating area. On the 12th Street side, individual trees would be encapsulated by a much larger bed. We haven't worked out the ADA (American's with Disabilities Act) ramp moving north to south. It doesn't make sense where it is today. We haven't solved how to improve it to create good pedestrian flow. We are working with Lincoln Transportation & Utilities (LTU) to figure out if the ramp could be relocated to create better access. In general, this would be moving massings of native planting that don't require massive amounts of water. They are planning for irrigation.

Huston thinks this is a great idea. The 'N' Street façade always felt like a back side of a block. The Downtown Master Plan envisions improvements on 'M' Street, the 'O' Street corridor environs area, and the project at 14th Street and 'N' Street. He inquired if there is any master plan for 'N' Street. Christopher responded there is no master plan for 'N' Street. Staff is getting ready to undergo a master planning effort for 'O' Street. He believes things will come out of that that could be applied to 'N' Street. They hope to set a trend we can use in the core of downtown. Huston noted this is a key corridor. It will set a standard. Christopher stated with that in mind, we want to move forward this year. We will likely hold off on site furnishings until 'O' Street is done so we have a standard we can apply.

Penn inquired if a plan has been selected yet. Christopher responded they will get into the details in the next few months. It will most likely involve large masses of plantings.

Huston thinks that is a good idea.

Peace questioned some sections that look a little narrow. There appears to be about eight or ten feet of clear sidewalk and then it narrows down. The offset on the 11th Street side looks like you will have people doing a shortcut. Christopher believes you can balance it if you try to align it with the standard north/south circulation. There is more room on the 'N' Street side. They are trying to tackle this with the City, making sure ADA routes are successful as possible and not use pavers.

Penn wants to make sure the streetscape fits with the other blocks and looks like it all meshes together. She would be inclined to wait and see what happens on 'O' Street to make sure it is all cohesive. Christopher agreed. There are suggested planters on 'P' Street, but they are waiting to see the 'O' Street recommendations.

Penn thinks this is great.

THE POST LOFTS ENTRY

Peter Hind appeared as applicant. Schemmer was hired to be the architect. After the egress logic was fermented and built on the project, it linked three buildings together into one and used staircases for egress. One exits to the east into a private alley. The other exits to the north. There is a four inch electrical conduit placed close to the door. There is no place else for it to go. The question is what to do with the door. They are proposing a steel galvanized canopy. The strategy for covering the conduit is a painted steel shroud system. This would cover the conduit while still giving access for future service. This design uses a painted bent steel plate system with exposed fasteners. The color will be a dark charcoal color, along with a tongue and groove wood ceiling with two small lights. He believes this new entry will grab people's attention also. They weren't told by Building & Safety that they were required to submit this to Urban Design Committee. They felt the committee should see this for their own feedback.

Huston thinks this is a creative solution to an eyesore. He supports it.

Penn thinks this is a great solution and she is in support. She thinks it will look really good. She inquired if this is in front of Urban Design Committee because it is in the right-of-way. Stacey Hageman replied she was correct.

Peace thinks it looks good as well. He believes the canopy itself could be two or three feet longer to the right, as you face it. It could visually obscure the exhaust cover. It looks like the access panel is in a removable rather than permanent section. It could be a technical challenge. He thinks this looks fantastic. Hind added the louvre was a trick to work around.

TIF DISCUSSION

Dan Marvin appeared. He wanted to talk about TIF (Tax Increment Financing) in general. He thinks you will see items more frequently with a City program called small TIF. Developments increment the amount that is used to repay. The smallest amount the department decided on is \$50,000. This means property would need to generate over \$2 million. The reason we have come forward is we have an Affordable Housing Action Plan that was approved by Planning Commission and City Council. We identified a shortage of affordable housing. 44 percent of apartment dwellers are cost burdened. 22 percent of people are extremely cost burdened. This means at least half of their income is going towards rent and utilities. We want to incentivize rehabbing properties so we don't lose apartments in the City of Lincoln. A new apartment unit costs \$150,000 or more to build. We need to preserve what we have and maintain them as affordable units. We want to be able to come forward with more projects that provide housing affordability within that TIF agreement and try to negotiate affordable rents. We also want to not discriminate against those tenants with housing vouchers. We feel through the redevelopment process, we can facilitate affordable rents and places where those vouchers could be used. We try to do that through the affordable housing plan. The TIF payment would in all likelihood be used for land acquisition costs. Projects will continue to come through the Urban Design Committee. He feels it is important to have input from this committee.

Huston believes there has been some change in legislation that allows some smaller TIF projects called micro blights. He inquired if that will be used in Lincoln. Marvin had a conversation with the Law Dept. 1645 Washington is in a project area that was just approved by City Council yesterday as a redevelopment area. They have just begun the conversation on how to micro blight or micro TIF to help rehab existing buildings. Huston knows that other communities have made good use of this.

Penn thinks some things that would help with the Washington project is knowing how much money is involved. It might have helped to have a list of requirements when they come in front of the committee. Aerial maps or a property map helps to see the surroundings. Huston agreed. Context is important. Penn continued that the front façade is still important to see. It should still be attractive. The money amount would be helpful for better understanding, along with the dollar values of the TIF. Marvin thinks that is a good point. Expectations need to be tempered with the amount of taxpayer dollars that are going into it.

Peace added these neighborhoods have had a lot of bad things happen in them over time. Now we are trying to rebuild them. The project on Washington really has some character. He was struck by how much character the front of the home has and how much would disappear. We need to set a good example. It

is a shame to lose the few houses still in this neighborhood with character. Marvin appreciates the comments.

1645 WASHINGTON REDEVELOPMENT

Michael Sands stated that the city is getting the small TIF category off the ground. With that comes some compromises. We took this committee's last comments to heart and investigated if we could implement anything on the porch, enclosure and siding. Those just aren't viable at this point. The owner really wanted to preserve the porch, but there was so much rain damage and no way to seal it off. It wasn't feasible to keep it. This was a logistical liability with the apartment underneath. This will look better than it does now. The neighborhood is excited about the project. He would ask that this committee keep affordability in mind.

Huston heard last month that the porch would be required to be enclosed to further mitigate the damage that has already been done. Sands stated it was investigated and it just wasn't viable.

Huston always thinks of the objectives. Design is the charge of Urban Design Committee. Other committees look at other aspects. He believes we have a conflict between different objectives. He understands we are hearing from the Urban Development Dept. that retention of affordable units can be done under the small TIF program. This project will retain or reuse eight affordable units. He will support the efforts of the developer on this.

Sands added that he doesn't want to convey that they are foregoing design. To keep the design elements that are unique to this house would take a passion project, not affordable housing.

Penn understands that vinyl siding is being proposed. Sands sent updated elevations. It will match as far as the paneling aspect. Penn noted the foundation is not shown in the elevation. She asked if it will still remain. Sands responded that the construction siding will not go all the way to the ground.

Penn commented that it is a shame to not have an enclosed porch. More windows could have been added pretty easily she believes for a few hundred dollars. Mike Schlickbernd believes more windows could be added. Sands will take that into account.

Peace likes this project and he is glad the building is being saved. He wishes the character of the building could be preserved, but he would rather have the project go forward. He thinks this is the first of several small TIF projects coming our way. He thinks we can work with Urban Development to preserve quality and character as we move forward.

Sands appreciates the comments. They are excited to kick off the program.

Huston fully approves of this project.

Penn agreed. We have given comments. She thinks the applicant can move forward.

WYUKA HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT

Emily Anderson stated they appeared before Historic Preservation Commission and it was determined there was no adverse impact to Wyuka Cemetery. They are here today to present the landscape plan. This

is west of Wyuka. She showed an updated site plan. They now have off street parking. There are now 98 units in six clusters of buildings. They are no longer showing the path behind the units due to civil engineering constraints. The plan consists of one, two and three bedroom units stacked in building clusters. The materials for the buildings have not changed. Fiber cement board will be used for the primary material. There will be brick face on the two-story units with accent panels. She showed the patio space. All units on grade will have a patio area.

Kelsey Moline shared a site plan of the landscaping. She showed the new public road north of 'R' Street and the new onsite parking areas. She pointed out the existing landscape screen. She showed the Evergreens that they wish to preserve. She showed the overall landscaping approach. They would introduce some moisture tolerant plants by the drainage. On the east side, there is a lot of screening with the existing Evergreens. They would also add some understory heritage shrubs. They are proposing to add street trees to the southwest and smaller shrubs to define the patio spaces. The east planting screen will introduce Spruce, Ponderosa Pine and Douglas Fir. Shrubs will be used to fill in the understory such as Forsythia and Juniper. On the west side, they will introduce more color and diversity with Eastern Redbud and Elms. She showed the detention cells. They look to add canopy trees, but use species that can handle the moisture, with a turf grass undercover. South of 'R' Street, they will have more space to work with to add some more shrub cover between the sidewalk and patio space, and in between the patio spaces. They are more constrained on the north side but will still be able to landscape with understory and shrubs.

Peace questioned if the change on 36th Street was by choice or recommended by LTU. He likes it. He asked about parking. Tim Gergen replied the change was due to a comment from the City.

Penn stated it looks like the parking will accommodate the apartments. Gergen stated this will accommodate all parking on the site and not take away any parking in the neighborhood.

Penn asked about connecting to the waterway. Gergen stated the channel takes on quite a bit of water from 'O' Street.

Penn thinks this is lovely.

Huston appreciates the removal of parking from the public right-of-way. The site grew with a little more land. It helps diminish the density somewhat.

Penn thinks this will be beautiful with all the colors and landscaping. This will be affordable housing. She would be rather proud of this for the City.

Peace liked it last time and likes it even more this time. He is excited to see it happen. He asked if the proposed landscaping is conditional on the development, not a code requirement. Gergen replied both. We have code requirements for street trees and screening that we want to be cognizant of. We are screening the cemetery for privacy and silence. Peace thinks it looks great.

Huston stated that the review last month was the official recommendation. Today is the update on the landscaping.

STAFF REPORT AND MISCELLANEOUS

- Hageman stated that 2020 was a unique year. The Urban Design Committee only held seven meetings last year. The difference with reviews was only one sidewalk café was approved last year. There were just a few big projects that were reviewed and include Innovation Campus Hotel, a project in the Telegraph District, a small project on 13th Street and 'O' Street, and some projects outside downtown.
- Hageman wanted to point out some dates for the Larry Enersen Urban Design Award. The Mayor's Art Awards will be in October. The jury will meet prior to that to choose a new recipient.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 4:25 p.m.

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