

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 7, 2023, 3:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Canney, Emily Deeker, Jill Grasso, Peter Hind, Tom Huston, Gil Peace and Michelle Penn.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Collin Christopher and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Ernie Castillo with Urban Development Department; Cristy Joy and Trevor Watson with Archi + Etc.; Robert Wittler with Ayars & Ayars; Derek Zimmerman with REV Development; Tim Gergen with Clark Enersen; Craig Smith with Speedway Properties; Matt Olberding with Lincoln Journal Star; and other interested parties.

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

Penn called for a motion approving the minutes of the regular meeting held January 3, 2023. Motion for approval made by Huston, seconded by Hind and carried 7-0: Canney, Deeker, Grasso, Hind, Huston, Peace and Penn voting 'yes'.

N. 48TH AND MADISON REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT:

February 7, 2023

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

Collin Christopher stated this is the old Green's Plumbing site that was left vacant because of a fire in January of 2003. It has sat mostly vacant since then. For a while the site was used as a farmers market, and more recently it hosted a seasonal fireworks stand. This site is adjacent to another project that came before the Committee last year. That project, at the corner of N 47th and St. Paul, will include seven or eight attached rowhomes. There are also a couple of street rehab projects scheduled for 2023. The first is a resurfacing of N 48th Street from Leighton to Superior. The second is a residential street rehab project that will include the resurfacing of Madison Avenue. Both will consist of as needed sidewalk and curb repairs, in addition to the resurfacing of the street. The design team is in consultation with Lincoln Transportation and Utilities to coordinate improvements and construction timelines. As it relates to the N 48th pedestrian streetscape, there is an existing low wall that separates the street from the pedestrian

sidewalk. It is his understanding that will remain. There are no plans to do major streetscape improvements along N 48th at this time.

Cristy Joy stated that they brought some materials for physical review. They anticipate putting up a 40-foot tall brick building. There will be residential on the 48th Street side on the second and third floor. On Madison Avenue there is community space and residential proposed for the first, second and third story. The site design has 71 parking stalls on the site. They have been working with the adjacent development to utilize the existing alley that runs east/west as an access point. There will be 90-degree parking on the site. They will have areas for bicycle use and are looking at Madison Avenue as street improvements happen to provide protection for on-street parallel parking. The streetscape will have lighting. One feature is maintaining the pedestrian walkway so the building to the south of the property will have a pedestrian way in front of the outdoor eating area being proposed on the main level. There will be landscaping and other amenities on 47th Street. The trash area on the southwest corner will be enclosed and protected. She pointed out the different areas on the site plan. They plan on incorporating street cafés on the north and south.

Trevor Watson presented samples for review of the brick and mortar that they are proposing. Joy continued that they are looking at precast on the corner. The first floor is around 15,215 square feet. They are proposing 5,350 square feet of commercial, 1,425 square feet of outdoor area, and 9,865 square feet of residential. This includes stair towers and elevators. There will be a community area with gathering space, exercise room and mail area. There will also be a living area. The development team has some letters of interest that have been signed. There are some exciting users on the first floor. This complex will have 20 percent affordable units with 60% AMI (Area Median Income). They will be following all fair housing accessibility requirements. All areas have patios or a deck area. She showed some images of the building façades. Their design allows for some doors to be added if the tenants should require it. She pointed out the two different colors of the architectural paneling. The balconies are similar to other projects done by Speedway Properties such as Telegraph Flats. The interior space where the parking will be will have an exterior walkway. The same railing design will be used on all units. Market rate and affordable units will be the same. She showed the different elements of the property. The north side will have balconies. They are providing green space against the patio areas. The second and third floor plan will have 15,215 square feet of each floor. The exterior materials will be precast cornerstone, Yankee Hill brick with dark mortar, architectural wall panels in light and dark colors, and metal railing for the decks. On the interior, they will be similar to Telegraph Lofts East.

Canney thanked the applicant for the presentation. This has been a hole in this block for a long time. He suggested lengthening or enlarging the bumpout at the corner of N 48th and Madison to accommodate a tree and/or landscaping. He thinks the building looks great. He sees there is perhaps an opportunity to do some signage at the corner of the building. It would add some excitement to the corner.

Peace asked about the zoning height in this area. Joy stated they are five feet below what the zoning allows. This is zoned B-3 Commercial District. Peace stated it looks like this has corner brick and extra high parapets. Is this proposed to shield rooftop equipment? Joy stated yes, that is their intent. Peace noted it also appears the third floor is something special. The windows are taller. Joy stated that is part of the

design intent. The floors are aligned. That is a feature unit on the corner. It is a multi-bedroom unit. Peace thinks hiding the mechanical screening with a parapet is a good idea. It would be great to see this happen.

Huston remembers a client that looked at this site fifteen years ago and the numbers didn't work. He is glad to see this project move forward. He inquired if the applicant had interacted with UPCO (University Place Community Organization). They have a very active neighborhood association. Joy responded yes. They are on their agenda on February 14, 2023. They have had interactions with them already. They wanted to have everyone on the same concept. They wanted to come here first. Huston thinks it is great to see more investment in N. 48th Street.

Penn wondered if the alley is going to be two-way. On the plan, the east side doesn't look like two-way. Joy noted they are working with adjacent neighbors. This will be a 24 foot paved drive. From a City standpoint, easements for public and private will be worked out. Everyone will be able to use it as a two-way to come in and out. Penn pointed out an area on the east. Joy noted it is currently a pedestrian walkway. They will keep something similar with the walkway. Penn noted it appears there will be landscaping in the area. Joy stated she was correct. They are keeping the pedestrian walk. She pointed out locations of some bollards. Penn asked if the exterior lighting is controlled by the building. Joy replied yes. Penn likes the brick on the corner and the stature it creates. It is a nice design element. She applauded the applicant.

Deeker echoed Canney's comments about the corner and tree island bump out. She believes it would help soften the scale for the pedestrian. It will make it feel more to scale.

Hind would like to applaud this proposal. This is exactly what the City needs. He thinks the material scale use on the corner is wonderful. It appears the living units are accessed from the parking lot. It seems like everyone else has a special entrance. On the parking level, it would be nice if there were at least a few feet of landscaping. It would make it feel more integrated. He thinks this is a wonderful project.

Canney pointed out that frequently, trees in parking lots are requirements, but people don't always coordinate with the electrical engineers. He encouraged the applicant to make sure they are all coordinated. That conflict happens a lot.

Grasso believes this is a great project as well. She commented that the applicant should pay attention to the south side. You see a lot of that side. Perhaps there could be some vertical elements along the way to break it up. She believes landscaping would help too. She suggested a nicer wall sconce. This will be a great addition to the area.

ACTION:

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

Penn thanked the applicant for bringing samples. The committee would like to see more of this.

Motion for approval carried 7-0: Canney, Deeker, Grasso, Hind, Huston, Peace and Penn voting 'yes'.

WOODSIDE VILLAGE (NW 48TH AND W. HOLDREGE MULTIFAMILY PROJECT)**February 7, 2023**

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

Christopher stated this project was presented last month. There were siding material concerns regarding both aesthetics and performance. The Committee members had also urged the applicant to take a closer look at the push and pull of the building. He touched on the fact that they have now submitted a landscape plan. The landscape plan appears to have been done by Clark & Enersen. It is a well put together plan. He noted a couple of small things such as the fact that some of the parking lot islands are a little on the small side. This warrants some concern about the viability of planting a tree in those locations. The City also has a typical screening requirement for multi-family developments adjacent to other uses. The plan is showing a fence along the edge, but the fence doesn't really address that particular requirement. The City is typically looking for a combination of deciduous and evergreen trees to be planted between the building and the property line. He believes these are things that can be easily worked through.

Derek Zimmerman appeared and stated that he will work with Urban Development through the process to meet the landscaping requirements. He stated that they plan on doing evergreens in the rear. This proposal is for 289 units. This is a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) project with 20 percent affordable units. They took Urban Design Committee feedback from last month and discussed what could be modified. They have taken vinyl siding out of the program and are now proposing to use James Hardie siding. They wanted to break up the façade a little bit. He pointed out the shake, vertical and horizontal components. They added some general articulation with some different components and the roof. They also added some texture, and pushed and pulled to the extent that they could. They tried to be thoughtful of previous suggestions given by the Committee. They took elevators out of the three-story building, but kept them in the four-story buildings for cost savings. They are excited to move forward. The redevelopment plan has been submitted for review by Planning Commission and the City Council.

Peace studied the information in the agenda. This is a nice multi-family project. There is nothing he saw that didn't look like a nice project. If this project is pursuing TIF, one or two things should be happening. He believes it should be elevating the design to a point where it is not going to be mixed up with other multi-family housing. It needs to be elevated well above average, in his opinion. Alternatively, the project should include something that benefits the public, like a trail connection, some other amenity or a higher level of landscape plan. He isn't seeing any of those things. He believes that changing the footprint a little would really help this project and create reasons for multiple materials. It appears that there are several buildings proposed for a flat roof and one with a hip roof. He wondered how the rooftop units will be screened. Zimmerman noted this application will be in front of City Council as part of a PUD (Planned Unit Development). The neighbors wanted opaque fencing and a building design that felt like a transition to the neighborhood. He pointed out when you get to four stories, you can't have a pitched roof due to height restrictions and air rights. They tried to focus on using hipped roofs for the three-story building closest to the neighborhood, as well as the parking garages. They are proposing flat roofs elsewhere. They are capped out on height. Peace believes the height is measured to a half point of the ridge. This might be something the neighborhood wants, but they might not understand that there are a whole lot of

condensing units that need to find a home. He still feels if TIF money is involved, a little more effort on the third dimension would help.

Huston thanked the applicant for changing the vinyl siding. There is always a balance to achieve with public funds and affordability. The public benefit to this is the affordability of the units. He believes the applicant has done what was asked of them. These are hard to do. Zimmerman agreed it was difficult. Removing the elevators was a cost savings. They are trying to do what they can to make this project happen. This is a combination of affordable units. They will discuss energy efficiencies with the City. The programming of these are all on par with market rate. They are proposing high level finishes on the interior. He believes it comes down to a discussion of interior and exterior.

Penn understands the applicant is saying the elevators were removed to pay for the Hardie siding. She thinks the Committee asked to do some push and pull with the building façade. She isn't sure this took a step forward. There are very few times she isn't in support of a design. This is one of them. She is having a hard time with this one from the design aesthetic. She believes they asked the applicant to come back with some improvement. Zimmerman understands the discussion on the push and pull. He isn't comfortable with going back to the drawing board on this. They incurred a six figure cost from the last meeting. He pointed out they tried. There was significant cost involved. They are talking about a percentage of affordable. He understands and respects everyone's opinions. Given all the factors, this is what they were able to do to make this work.

Grasso understands this is a large complex and a large part of the corner. This will be there a long time. She understands it takes time and money. She also understands the applicant is asking for TIF. This is going to be in our landscape for a long time. Now is when you plan and make recommendations, so you have a better project in the end. She thinks if she lived next door to this, she doesn't know that this enhances the corner. We see a lot of low income and affordable housing. She would rather take some money out of the interior finishes and place it on the exterior. That is what is going to be around for a long time and what will be seen. Interiors can be upgraded over time, but the exterior is here to stay. Zimmerman stated this was a little bit of a challenge. Interior versus exterior comes down to preference and matter of opinion. He believes interior high end finishes carry a lot of weight. From an affordability standpoint, this is a TIF only project. There are no additional sources of funding to bridge the affordability gap. We are doing something in the area that exceeds design standards.

Hind asked if there will still be brick on the base. Zimmerman replied yes, about four feet.

Deeker questioned cost and the five different textures and colors. That has to add to the cost. It feels like it has gotten busy, as opposed to more design focused. There are multiple products and five different colors. It seems like that is adding to the cost. Zimmerman knows that was a discussion point.

Hind is of the mind to support this. He believes the applicant did what was asked of them, with the exception of the push and pull. He wasn't as strong on that point. He doesn't disagree with other members' comments. It would be better with some dimension on the façade. He believes this is an improvement from the previous submittal. He is looking at this on a broader scope. This will be here a long time. This is giving housing for a whole group of people who don't have housing now. He also supports

Deeker's comments that perhaps a few materials could be taken away. This might save some money. He would make it simple and elegant. He thinks if you are going to have an exterior like this, you need to ramp up and elevate the level of the landscaping. He would support this moving forward. He noted that he has some hesitation, but in fairness, this is almost what was asked of them.

Deeker stated that in looking at the renderings, she would suggest accentuating the vertical rhythm and eliminating some colors. She concurred with other member comments regarding the landscaping plan. Having a screen on the back would provide the neighbors with some screening. Perhaps this could be done on the corner as well. Canney would suggest some vertical elements on the flat walls. Deeker agreed. She would like to see something on the corner to soften it as well.

Canney looked at the dog run and it looks like a pen. It would be nice to have some trees there as well. It would help to break up the space and provide shade.

Peace inquired about Zimmerman's background and wondered if he is on the development or design side. Zimmerman stated he is a real estate lawyer, in-house counsel for REV Development. Most of the redevelopment projects he has worked on were in the downtown core.

ACTION:

Huston moved the Committee issue a recommendation of approval subject to caveats. He would like the applicant to do additional analysis, if possible, to break up the verticality of the building.

Grasso would like the applicant to look at the overall exterior design. She would like to see roof units, landscaping and the push and pull addressed. There could be cantilevering eight inches or a six-inch stud for some relief. She would like the applicant to be more thoughtful about the exterior and the project as a whole.

Peace noted that push and pull might mean something different to the design person. Sometimes materials can make the difference.

Penn pointed out that Studio 951 appears to be the architect. Zimmerman noted they are working with a lot of different professionals. The renderings came out of a group from Texas. They have a challenge on getting things moved.

Christopher believes the recommendations on parking and landscaping can be addressed. He believes that Zimmerman wants a decision one way or the other today. He believes the Committee should consider accommodating that request. The members could move approval with a condition that that they come back at a later date prior to the application of a building permit. The designs are very schematic at this point. Some additional design will be done. He believes it makes sense to have this Committee sign off on any design updates instead of staff.

Zimmerman believes that Urban Design Committee is constituted to make recommendations in their vote. This is an advisory body. That doesn't mean that the applicant returns. This is part of a TIF approval. He believes Urban Design Committee has the ability to give opinions.

Huston is a strong believer of adding conditions. Zimmerman pointed out that TIF is approved by the Mayor's office and City Council. Today is for recommendations that go along with the approval. There are certain things that the City decides. They can send us back to this Committee for further review.

Christopher believes that any conditions attached to the Committee's approval can potentially be enforced if included in the redevelopment agreement. If those conditions are nebulous such as more push and pull, or different uses of materials, that could be somewhat subjective. He would recommend this body be responsible for ensuring any conditions they wish to impose with their motion be addressed by the applicant.

Canney would like to see a recommendation for landscaping to break up the façades and provide some vertical softness to the building. He would like to see landscaping beyond the minimum standards.

Huston as motion maker agreed. His motion is for recommendation of approval subject to additional analysis if possible to break up the verticality of the building, and landscaping to break up the façades and provide some vertical softness to the building. Hind seconded the motion.

Hind believes the biggest problem with the design is human scale. They need to think about how people are going to inhabit this site. They need to have things that make the space occupiable. He would like to see the applicant come back. He would hope that they can zoom in a little more on what it is like to be in the space. Architecture and built environment are about occupying it and being in it. He wants to see the numbers on the energy efficiencies. Zimmerman can provide those. There is going to be PACE lending. Hind noted that someone will look at these things a lot closer for the TIF.

Huston noted a recommendation could be made to City staff to further examine design documents to ensure they meet Urban Design Committee recommendations. The applicant could also be asked to come back and show conditions were met.

Hind wondered what would happen if the applicant comes back and the criteria hasn't been met. He asked what the options are. Christopher believes Urban Design Committee could vote to recommend denial of a future review if the conditions of approval of today's discussion aren't met, which would direct City staff to deny their building permit until those conditions are addressed. Requiring them to come back at a later date to show they've met the conditions would not affect their TIF request timeline.

Peace believes this path would allow the applicant to continue with their process. He is a little concerned that no one from the design team was here today. He thinks when this comes back, it would be good if the design folks were here.

Huston inquired where this is in the process with the City. Zimmerman stated the redevelopment was submitted on January 25, 2023. Ernie Castillo noted that this will be before Planning Commission on

February 22, 2023. It would go on to City Council three weeks later, with a hearing and vote on the following Monday. They are just starting to work on the redevelopment plan. They generally like going to Planning Commission with a complete project. They could come back before the redevelopment agreement starts its process with City Council.

There was a discussion of the future timeline.

Zimmerman requested a deferral.

Huston withdrew his motion, Hind as second, agreed.

Huston moved to defer for one month, seconded by Penn and carried 7-0: Canney, Deeker, Grasso, Hind, Huston, Peace and Penn voting 'yes'.

STAFF REPORT AND MISCELLANEOUS:

- Christopher noted that Grasso, Peace and Penn were appointed to another three year term.
- There was a discussion about design elements and recommendations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.