

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, March 2, 2021, 1:00 p.m., County-City Building, Conference Room 113, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Emily Deeker, Peter Hind, Tom Huston and Michelle Penn; (Mark Canney, Tammy Eagle Bull and Gil Peace absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Stacey Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Karen Nalow of Clark & Enersen; and Eric Reiner of Lincoln Electric System.

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

Penn then called for a motion approving the minutes of the regular meeting held January 5, 2021 and February 2, 2021. Motion for approval made by Huston, seconded by Hind and carried 4-0: Deeker, Hind, Huston and Penn voting 'yes'; Canney, Eagle Bull and Peace absent.

LES SUBSTATION LANDSCAPING AT N. 57TH & GARLAND STREET:

Members present: Deeker, Hind, Huston and Penn; Canney, Eagle Bull and Peace absent.

Karen Nalow showed the site plan for 57th & Garland. She stated that this is in a residential neighborhood. There are limitations with the substation plantings with the lines coming into the site. She pointed out where vegetation can be placed, but needs to be 15 feet or lower growing to not interfere with the lines. Residential property to the north has been purchased for future expansion. She showed the overall planting plan. They want to tie into the existing residential landscaping. Not being able to have a lot of overstory trees, they are looking at a combination of deciduous and evergreen shrubs, to tie it into the residential scale. They are showing the potential to add a few overstory trees on 57th Street. They are also looking at ornamental grasses. She showed the plantings that they are considering using.

Huston inquired if this substation has been there for quite a while and if any improvements are being made. Eric Reiner stated this is existing and has been there for quite some time. There is a large substation coming in 2023. Property was purchased for that expansion.

Hind noted the access easement in the middle of the property. He asked about fencing. Reiner pointed out there is fencing all around the property. Hind is concerned about the row of evergreen shrubs. There appears to be an area between the shrubs and fence where someone can hide. Nalow noted there will be eight feet of clear zone with gravel between the plantings and the outside fence. The shrubs could reach six feet in height at maturity. Anytime you create screening, you create opportunities for someone to hide. Hind doesn't want to create somewhere that you can't get out. It doesn't need to be 100 percent screened. It is important in the summer. In winter, snowpack flattens everything, He encouraged Nalow to think about safety.

Nalow noted these will be spaced for maturity. It will take awhile for them to spread. Deeker wondered about the sumac. It can look pretty messy. She would like to see the applicant stick to a cleaner look.

Penn has seen the aerial that shows some mature trees to the north. Reiner noted that property and an area to the north has been acquired.

ACTION:

Huston moved approval of the landscaping as proposed, seconded by Deeker and carried 4-0: Deeker, Hind, Huston and Penn voting 'yes'; Canney, Eagle Bull and Peace absent.

LES SUBSTATION LANDSCAPING AT S. 40TH & BENNET ROAD:

Members present: Deeker, Hind, Huston and Penn; Canney, Eagle Bull and Peace absent.

Nalow stated this site is completely different from the 57th & Garland site. There are few neighbors immediately around here. The substation has already been screened from the neighbors. They want to create a screening that ties into the character of the area. There are the same limitations of eight feet of clear zone surrounding the fence with no landscaping. There are areas of low vegetation. They are taking on more of a rural prairie feel for this site. Most of the screen around the substation is on the north and west corner. For the rest of the site, they are looking at planting more of a native low growing grass such as fescue and little bluestem. Around the perimeter is a combination of evergreens , overstory trees with a few understory trees. These will be planted much smaller trees to help with the impact and create the feeling of a larger massing once it grows in. They will be using shrubs to fill in areas between the trees. You get a few views into the substation from openings in the masses.

Hind questioned the uses around the substation. Nalow responded there is one residence to the south, ¼ to ½ mile away. The rest is open country. This is a rural agricultural setting.

Nalow continued that other than Bennet Rd., there are no major roads around this.

Penn asked if this substation is new. Reiner responded it was completed last year.

Hind wondered what happens if land to the east is purchased and a ton of large trees are planted. Nalow stated there are regulations for large trees under the power lines. Huston pointed out that new owners will be aware of the existing substation since it is already there.

Nalow showed the tree species being proposed. They are looking at bringing in a hackberry. It ties in with the honey locust and elm. There are a few additional evergreens in this area for diversity. Around the substation, they are looking at using a larger dogwood, along with a smaller viburnum. She believes a sumac could be appropriate for this site. There are a variety of native grasses being proposed. They will also bring in some perennial wildflowers.

Hind inquired how LES maintains these. Reiner stated that their building and grounds crew maintains these. Some properties are contracted out. He believes most rural areas are contracted out. Hind asked if irrigation is needed. Reiner replied no. They will be hand watered for the first years.

Huston asked if there are any improvements going on at this site. Reiner responded this substation was just completed last year. They like to get these established. Huston noted the surrounding land will be developable at some point. Urban residential people will move there with full knowledge of the substation.

Penn noted that in looking at the aerial map, there is a property farther to the south. She asked the applicant to consider more evergreens to the south for screening. Nalow responded she can take a look at that.

ACTION:

Huston moved approval of the landscaping as proposed, seconded by Hind and carried 4-0: Deeker, Hind, Huston and Penn voting 'yes'; Canney, Eagle Bull and Peace absent.

STAFF REPORT & MISCELLANEOUS:

- 2020 Annual Report

Stacey Hageman noted that in general, there weren't a lot of projects or meetings in 2020. For outdoor dining, there was only one review. There were a few large projects such as the Innovation Campus Hotel, Antelope Tower Redevelopment, Block 65 Redevelopment and Telegraph Lofts West. There were some smaller projects outside of downtown at 13th Street and 'O' Street, residential at 2400 'Q' Street and 2236 'R' Street. There were some public projects. The Larry Enersen Urban Design award recipient was the N Street Bikeway along with the bike share stations and the Block 52 Streetscape Project.

- Miscellaneous

Huston stated since four or five meetings were canceled last year, he would be open to meeting twice a month, if needed on some months. He doesn't know if there is the demand for it. Hind thinks another thing that might trigger some applications is a new building code that comes into effect in July. He believes Building & Safety is gearing up for a bunch of projects before that. There are some significant additional regulations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

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