

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, April 6, 2021, 1:00 p.m., County-City Building, Conference Room 113, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Paul Barnes, Stacey Hageman, Collin Christopher and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Dallas McGee and Ernie Castillo of Urban Development Dept.; Aaron Burd of L.A. Real Estate; Kevin Riley; and other interested parties.

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 March 2, 2021. Motion for approval made by Huston, seconded by Deeker and carried 4-0: Deeker, Huston, Peace and Penn voting 'yes'; Canney, Eagle Bull and Hind absent.

25th AND VINE REDEVELOPMENT:

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

Dallas McGee has been working with Aaron Burd and his team on the development of a 36-unit apartment complex. They anticipate using TIF (Tax Increment Financing).

Aaron Burd stated this project started from six or seven dilapidated, run down properties. They obtained the properties and pursued working with Urban Development and the Planning Dept. to design a 36-unit apartment complex that was structured towards single-family affordable housing units and some student housing. He presented the plan.

Penn inquired about the location. Burd stated this will be located on the northwest corner of 25th St. and Vine St.

Huston believes this property is not subject to the Downtown Design Standards. Stacey Hageman replied it is subject to the Neighborhood Design Standards. There has been some back and forth

on the design of the building. More porch like features were added on the front which is a characteristic of the neighborhood. She talked about the façade in terms of offsets. She suggested there is a little more breakup or visual interest on Vine St.

Huston inquired about the proposed materials on the reliefs and facades. Burd responded that inside the alcove of the front porches would be natural stone. The beltline would be pre-finished concrete Hardie board with trim board. There will be verticals between the windows with prefinished Hardie board. In-between will be a heavier gauge vinyl at a price point they can do. The gables are Hardie board with pre-finished shake shingles.

Kevin Riley stated the intent was that this is reminiscent of the same design context for rural areas of downtown. They focused on eliminating any vinyl siding at the pedestrian level. Other elements are added for interest.

Penn asked if Hardie board will be used at grade. Riley replied yes. There will be factory finished cement board at the beltline for durability and greater longevity. It will not go all the way to grade. It will stop about eight inches above grade. There will be a little bit of exposed concrete. They are proposing landscape buffers all the way around.

Penn wondered about parking. Huston observed there are 54 stalls according to the site plan. Riley stated they have been working with Urban Development and the Planning Dept. The lot to the north was factored into parking numbers as well. Burd added they would pave the alley as well. They showed the bioswales for stormwater management. Penn asked how many parking spots there will be. Riley answered they are proposing 54 total, including two handicap.

Penn inquired how many units are affordable housing. Burd replied six. Riley added they are all set up to be two bedroom, one bath units.

Peace asked about the density per acre or lot, and if the applicant is above current zoning. Burd replied they are below density. He believes this would be considered cluster density for the CUP (Community Unit Plan). Parking became a bigger challenge. He believed 36 units would be a more suitable fit for this location.

Deeker asked about the streetscape on Vine street, specifically some of the light poles and the retaining wall. Riley pointed out the retaining wall that is going away. They are working with the landscape architect so some of the landscape is consistent with what is on Vine Street. There will be a lot of landscaping along Vine Street. Light poles will remain. Burd noted there is one pole shown. Deeker knows that these eyebrow plantings are hard to maintain. She encouraged the applicant to make sure to coordinate plantings with the City. They may or may not want the planting material that is there now.

Huston asked if there will be any outdoor seating area. Burd replied no. The units will have porches. Huston wondered about any opportunity for residents to have an outdoor gathering space. He doesn't believe the design standards require any. Penn asked if the porches have to be of a similar style on the same side of the street. Hageman stated the standard for porches is if 50 percent or more of houses have a porch, then the property should as well. Riley added that the porch structure is similar to houses down the street. They took some cues from that.

Huston saw a comment about a suggestion for differentiation. Hageman noted the standard is that 100 feet or longer should be broken up. Offsets of at least six feet is a suggestion. Since the offsets are not six feet, perhaps paring with another method would help meet the standard. Huston believes it would be acceptable to incorporate some different color differentiation. Burd is acceptable to some of that. There are seven different colors on the palette. He thinks too much color won't look as clean. He is not against incorporating something different for a different aesthetic feel. There was a picture in the agenda he feels is a little busy looking. Riley wanted to keep it fairly simple. Huston asked the applicant to point out the offsets. Riley did.

Peace noted the applicant mentioned they are working with Urban Development on this. Dallas McGee stated this came to us a long time ago. It was originally proposed as a single building. Staff felt that two buildings would be better than one and talked about parking. They encouraged them to look at Vine Street and how to landscape the front yard. He believes they have done some of that. There were some discussions on the façade. They are looking to this board for advice.

Peace is fully supportive of this project in general. The way the parking is in back and well screened is a positive. He thinks there are some things about the size of the building and the shape that could be tweaked. He mentioned some offsets and faces. They appear to be two feet and 18 inches. He would suggest making them a little deeper and perhaps more irregular so it doesn't look like two mirror buildings that are occupying a very long portion of Vine Street, especially if you look at the context in general. He believes that by varying things, it would break up the façade. He likes a varying color palette. He thinks the applicant can look at increasing the looks of the setbacks and varying the colors. Burd stated the issue they've run into is we've pushed the setbacks. The building will be stretched toward the alley, you will lose parking. They are set up for a pedestrian walkway behind the building. If we try to condense and squeeze the building, some bedrooms and some great rooms become small. Peace believes with some extra attention to detail, he thinks you can get there with a little more relief on the façade. Some deeper colors in some areas and some lighter colors in other areas could be used. He thinks you could cantilever some items on the back. Penn agreed. It would help the back wall not look flat.

Penn suggested the applicant might consider a way to make the windows a different style. She believes something that gives more presence to the entry is needed. Burd noted that perhaps shake shingles could be used. Penn observed that shake shingles are usually the most expensive products.

Penn asked if this is on a schedule for TIF or construction. Burd wants to resolve this and have everyone on the same page.

Huston inquired if the Redevelopment Plan has appeared before Planning Commission yet. McGee responded the amendment to the Redevelopment Plan is ready to move to Planning Commission. Ernie Castillo believes it will be on the Planning Commission agenda on April 28, 2021.

Riley stated they will go back and play with the model. Ultimately, they want to get through Planning Commission and City Council. Burd stated they are locking in the trades now. Site preparation has already started. Huston believes this committee has some specific suggestions for the applicant to consider. They are to look at color variation, façade differentiation and the windows on the front.

Peace would add try to get away from sheer symmetry and mirror image. That is for institutional buildings. That is not the way a neighborhood develops. You don't want it to view as pure mirror symmetry.

Riley stated they are already looking at another parcel to the north of this. It would be the same exterior finish. The difference being it will be on Y Street. They are proposing the same 36-plex with two 18 buildings, three story.

Huston noted that R-6 zoning holds a lot of density. That is what the district is for.

ACTION:

Huston moved approval subject to conditions that the project come back addressing color variation, façade articulation and window design on the front façade, seconded by Peace.

Penn would suggest you make up for any lost square footage in the rear from articulation. We want to be supportive of affordable housing. We want to make sure this will still look good in five years. She also wanted to know how the applicant will meet the grade. She asked if it will be concrete. Riley answered yes. Burd believes it would be most optimal to landscape. He believes any paint would flake off. Huston noted that according to the landscape plan, he doesn't believe it would be visible. Burd believes they have gone above and beyond the landscaping required by code.

Motion for conditional approval carried 4-0: Deeker, Huston, Peace and Penn voting 'yes'; Canney, Eagle Bull and Hind absent.

PLANFORWARD 2050 POLICY DISCUSSION:

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

Paul Barnes stated that today is to give an update on the Comprehensive Plan update process. Collin Christopher will talk about entry corridors and public art. In winter 2020/2021, staff had a lot of detailed discussion about specific policies and action items. We are breaking some items apart and will put them together in the new plans by policies and actions. For spring/summer 2021, we are having additional conversations about addition plan content. We are doing further outreach to the community. This summer we will have a draft plan published. The goal is to have it approved by the end of this year. The Community Committee consists of 13 different people representing different interests across the City and County. They have held 16 different meetings since January 2020. The Equity Subcommittee has met six times. There was a kickoff event at Pinnacle Bank Arena in 2020. Since then, we have held two virtual public events. There was also a LRTP (Long Range Transportation Plan) virtual event, a survey and focus groups. Staff has created a Recommended Growth Scenario that was released in October 2020. The website is PlanForward2050.com. The assumption is for more infill. The current Comprehensive Plan recommended about 22 percent infill. This would move it up to 25 percent. This is a trend that has been happening in more recent years. The area to be added into the City and urbanized area is 6.9 square miles. We are anticipating 48,000 additional households by 2050.

Collin Christopher stated that the Placemaking chapter of the Comprehensive Plan has several topics. Entry Corridors, Public Art, and Community Spaces are just some of them. Planning staff will be back next month to address more topics and other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. Regarding Entry corridors, the guiding principle is they should be protected, studied and enhanced. The current Comprehensive Plan identifies them as I-80, US 77, Cornhusker Hwy., 'O' Street, Homestead Expressway and Hwy 2. For action steps, we have done two studies in the last year or two. The West 'O' Street Plan was completed last year. Second is the Cornhusker Enhancement Plan. This was done in conjunction with the 33rd and Cornhusker Plan. We are looking to identify funding strategies. Both of those focus on the public side of this. The other part is looking at zoning tools, design standards and development tools that could guide reinvestment. Action Step 2 speaks to the importance of maintaining enhancement elements. Action Step 3 is to continue to implement and update. Entryway Corridors is where we start the process.

Regarding Public Art, we have described this as an important means by which the community can strengthen its sense of place and promote a positive image. Public art or a public art collection is guided by Parks and Recreation. They work with the Advisory Board to preserve existing art collections and make recommendations for future installations. Action Step 1 states that the corridors along I-180 and I-80 into downtown and Cornhusker Highway from 11th St. to 56th St.

are good opportunities for public art. Action Steps 2 and 3 focus on implementation of the Public Arts Master Plan. Specifically, one aim of the Master Plan is to spread public art throughout the community.

Huston wondered if there is a disconnect between Entryway Corridors and Redevelopment Plans from Urban Development. He believes they need to be coordinated. It can be hard to get buy-in from the private sector. He wants to make sure that PlanForward 2050 is coordinated with Redevelopment Plans. This is a great opportunity to help the corridors.

Christopher continued that Public Art Step 4 states that the inclusion of public art should be considered early on in the process, so it is context driven. Step 5 is to seek out artists early on in the design. Step 6 is to prioritize the inclusion of artists and public art advocates. Step 7 us to prioritize the implementation of projects.

Community Spaces has not been in previous plans. This centers on the need to create and preserve public spaces. As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, good successful community spaces is important as it has ever been. Step 1 is to develop a framework or toolkit. Step 2 is to engage diverse stakeholder groups that we can use to guide development of these projects. Step 3 suggests working with local organizations and businesses to better activate spaces. A classic example is Tower Square could be better activated. Step 4 is to identify and prioritize funding for new community spaces. Step 5 is to explore and implement temporary design solutions as a way to experiment and adapt public spaces. Step 6 focuses son community led placemaking. There are a lot of talented people in this community. The goal is to create processes and find a way to support that through funding.

Peace wondered if the design standard areas should be expanded. He has seen it in other areas where it has been expanded. He doesn't know the nuts and bolts. He inquired if this is being considered. Christopher responded that it has been talked about if it is relevant. Hageman stated that LPlan 2040 had a lot of language about commercial design standards, specifically. She was trying to touch on all of this. The Neighborhood Design Standards are limited to the 1950 City limit. Other cities have allowed higher density for the missing middle and specific standards to infill projects. There is the question if Commercial Design Standards, should be limited to certain areas of the City or should it target certain areas. We will touch on this more next month.

Peace believes we should do some research. Omaha is doing it and other places in the region. He hasn't set down and looked at text for Enhanced Design Standards. Huston stated that Omaha's approach surprised him. They are part of the permit process. He likes Lincoln's approach better. Peace is using the term Design Standards. In terms of a code, there are standards. It can be counterproductive to good quality design. Hageman stated that in review, we give a lot of weight to the intent of the Design Standards. Articulation can be hard to define. Deeker knows that we see some of the same issues come up. Finding a happy medium that provides more direction of

the expectations could be good. She believes a little more detail would be helpful. She would like to see better articulation, better color and materials. She wondered about streetscape standards and maintenance. What are some things we just say no? She knows that Parks and Recreation has some plants they don't want to use. She believes being more prescriptive about things we don't want to see would be helpful. She thinks more detailed guidance is needed. Huston has always thought that Design Standards in addition to a TIF review can be an odd fit. Deeker thinks having some level of guidance for the minimum expectation would be helpful. She believes we need Design Standards for corridors to create a cohesive feel. The committee is supportive of more guidance.

Barnes noted that staff plans to return in May with more information. He encouraged committee members to reach out to staff if there are questions or comments. The draft plan will be published this summer. There is still more time for input.

STAFF REPORT:

Penn stated that Tammy Eagle Bull is resigning from the committee. She has stated that due to her travel and schedule, she just doesn't have the time to commit that she believes this body deserves. There will be a new member at some point.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.