

MEETING NOTES

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

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mary Canney, Jill Grasso and Frank Ordia; (Emily Deeker, Tom Huston, Michelle Penn and Gil Peace absent).

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Arvind Gopalakrishnan, Paul Barnes, Collin Christopher and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Evan Gunn and Kit Williams with BVH Architecture; Joy Skidmore and Bridget Mudd of The Annex Group appeared via Zoom Video Communications ©; Daniel and Tamara Sloan; Matt Olberding of the Lincoln Journal Star; and other interested parties.

Acting Chair Mark Canney called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room. He noted the approval of the minutes will be postponed until the next meeting due to a lack of quorum.

CENTRAL AT SOUTH HAYMARKET, 205 S 10TH STREET

Arvind Gopalakrishnan stated that The Annex Group is proposing a six story building. The project would consist of 173 affordable housing units with parking off-site. That is being negotiated with the City. TIF (Tax Increment Financing) funds will be used. The building will be one, two and three bedroom units. The building will be split into two. The site slopes downwards going west. The central entrance will be on 'N' Street. Staff feels the plans are in conformance with the Downtown Design Standards. The committee is being asked to address the design of the building only. City staff will work with the applicant on the parking, landscaping, other streetscape details. They anticipate needing 117 parking stalls in Central Park Garage.

Evan Gunn stated that this will be 173 units of affordable housing. They will plan to have review and approval at the next meeting of the Urban Design Committee in December. The entrance is mid-block along 'N' Street. There will be a courtyard in the middle with a playground, dog park, grilling area and other amenities. There is a walkway that connects on the second floor. They primarily want to focus attention on the building design and the exterior. He showed an image of the building mass. They are prioritizing the first two levels and the pedestrian experience. They are using two different brick colors. Some brick patterning will be used to create a little more interest. There is a minimal pedestrian walkway. There is not a lot of room for planters or other elements to soften the edge. The intention is to connect the two different sides of the buildings and use the balconies and stair towers to break up the large volume of what is floors three through six. The fitness program will be on the ground level corner. Along 10th Street,

they are six feet above the pedestrian walkway. On 9th Street, the units are two feet above grade. The idea is to provide privacy to the residents. He brought some material samples for the committee members to review. They will be using some colors to highlight the balconies and openings to break up the building a little.

Canney asked if the applicant has determined what the material of the balcony rails might be. Gunn responded that they haven't determined yet. He believes it will be a metal guard rail.

Grasso wondered about the underside of the balconies and the underside of the main entry, and if they are considering fiber cement panels. Gunn replied yes. Grasso asked about the proposed size of the panels. Gunn stated they are looking at a smaller linear panel, perhaps 2' x 4' or 2' x 6'. They would use this for the soffit as well.

There were some questions about the windows in the walkway. Gunn pointed out which windows were resident windows.

Canney stated that there is a lot of nice detail in the proposal. He appreciates the brick and other materials. He asked if any thought was given to signage and directional signs. Will there be anything identifying wayfinding to direct guests? Gunn explained that will be thought of in the future. The streetscape will come back for review as well. Early spring 2024 is the plan. Canney likes the inset balconies as well. He believes they are a nice detail to incorporate into the design.

Ordia agrees with Canney. This design has come a long way.

Grasso believes this is evolving along very nicely. She likes the emphasis on the entry. The brick detail does a lot for the building. She encouraged the applicant to design it up, and give some push and pull. The details go a long way. She would suggest to enhance the inset under the windows. She likes the pop of color on the inset balconies. She would play it up. She encouraged the applicant to work on the lighting. She likes the angle cut of color on the entry. She thinks this has come a long way. The addition of corner glass for the fitness room adds a lot. The detail edge where the fiber cement panel turns and goes into the entry is critical. It would be interesting to see the interior views of the courtyard. She would recommend that be considered. The applicant is definitely on the right track. She encouraged them to keep emphasizing the detailing. She believes it adds a lot.

Ordia believes views from the courtyard are important as well. That would be nice to see in the future. He agreed that this proposal has come a long way.

Paul Barnes pointed out one other element. He asked for any comments or thoughts regarding highlighting the entry more in the vertical façade. He wondered if there were any ideas of how to highlight the entrance vertically.

Grasso believes that lighting is huge. That might be another way to emphasize the entry.

Gunn thinks there is a great opportunity there. They have set the brick face back a little. There are opportunities for lighting as well.

Grasso stated that the second floor crossover is nice as well. The glass pulls your eye into that area. Gunn was glad they were able to get that through Lincoln Transportation and Utilities. He believes that easier access to the building is a plus.

Barnes asked about the timeline for the NIFA application. Gunn stated it is the end of this month. Typically, it goes on hold. The process will continue mid to late February 2024.

Ordia suggested distinguishing the entrance with perhaps a different color or something. That would be nice. It would help to identify the main entrance or leasing office. Gunn looked at some design options. They kept finding that since they are emphasizing the pedestrian level, when we did the center of block entrance, it broke it up. Kit Williams added that when doing wayfinding, it is about the pedestrian experience. You want to emphasize the colors. She believes the colors pull you into the area. There are directional elements there to lead you into the entrance. They want the top mass to be more of a cohesive design. They will look into signage and lighting as well. When the streetscape is available, there will be more elements there to look at.

SIDEWALK CAFÉ APPLICATION FOR THE MILL COFFEE & TEA AT 1040 'O' STREET

Gopalakrishnan stated this is for a sidewalk café of 9' 4" x 34' 6.5" attached to the building with a capacity of 14 people. There will be 7, 22" two seater tables and three trash receptacles. Staff recommends that the metal bench just south of the café and the set of 2 benches north of the café be relocated. There was a slight miscommunication with the contractors. The sidewalk café has already been built. The fencing is square tubing and complies with minimum height and appearance. The City will coordinate with the DLA (Downtown Lincoln Association) to move the bike racks slightly east, along with the planter. The bench was relocated about three feet to the east. If you have alcohol you can only have one entrance, so one of the two entrances will have to be closed.

Canney thanked the applicant for their ongoing investment in the City of Lincoln with their businesses.

Ordia inquired which entrance is recommended to close. Gopalakrishnan answered the south entrance. Daniel Sloan agreed. He pointed out where the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) entrance would be.

Grasso thinks it is great having this business in the area. An outdoor café is a big positive. Daniel Sloan is excited to be in the area.

Grasso encouraged the City to remember to keep the bike racks in the area. They will be used.

Canney appreciates the flexibility knowing the streetscape has the potential to change. He also appreciates the applicant's flexibility on this. He thanked the applicant for their continued investment in the community. The work has been done nicely at other Mill Coffee stores in town. He applauded the applicant's effort to keep up the investment of making it aesthetically pleasing.

Tamara Sloan stated that the DLA has already updated the planters and street lights.

Ordia appreciates the rehabilitation of historic places as well. That adds to the experience.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

<https://linclanc.sharepoint.com/sites/PlanningDept-Boards/Shared Documents/Boards/UDC/Minutes/2023/110723.docx>