

MEETING RECORD

Advanced public notice of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website. In addition, a public notice was emailed to the Lincoln Journal Star for publication on Wednesday, February 14, 2024.

NAME OF GROUP:	NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:	Friday, February 23, 2024, 8:30 a.m., City Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 S. 10 th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Eileen Bergt, Heidi Cuca, Andrea Gebhart, Kile Johnson, Ann Post and David Quade; (Delonte Johnson absent).
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Paul Barnes and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Matt Hansen with the Nebraska Capitol Commission; Brett Daugherty, Acting Capitol Administrator; Dan Carpenter with Lincoln Transportation and Utilities; Bob Ripley; and other interested citizens.
STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:	Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

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

K. Johnson then called for the approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held January 26, 2024. Motion for approval made by Post, seconded by Cuca and carried 5-0: Cuca, Gebhart, K. Johnson, Post and Quade voting 'yes'; Bergt abstaining; D. Johnson absent.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONER EILEEN BERGT:

February 23, 2024

Paul Barnes stated that Eileen Bergt is the new commissioner and a landscape architect from University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). She was a member of Historic Preservation Commission in the 1990's.

Bergt stated that she is on the staff side at the University and does design work for campuses. She is within the landscape services department.

The other commissioners introduced themselves.

RIGHT-OF-WAY WORK AT THE INTERSECTION OF S. 14TH STREET AND LINCOLN MALL:**February 23, 2024**

Barnes noted this is an item for discussion. There is a study going to address pedestrian safety at the intersection of S. 14th Street and Lincoln Mall. There is a proposal to possibly install some temporary bollards. More information would come back for further review. There is not a clear design standard to apply to this proposal since it is temporary in nature. Staff is looking for feedback.

Dan Carpenter stated that they received a request for a two-way stop control in 2023. 14th Street has changed in the past five years or so when N. 14th Street was converted from one-way to two-way traffic. They started taking a closer look at this intersection to help enhance pedestrian safety. They looked at the standards for stop sign installation. This intersection didn't really meet any of the justification standards from a quantitative standpoint. Part of the desire for a stop is to improve sight distance from a pedestrian perspective. When vehicles are parked in this area, pedestrians on both the east and west side can't see oncoming vehicles. Nebraska State Statute states that any pedestrian in a crosswalk has the right-of-way. They considered temporary bump-outs. This would give some enhanced pedestrian protection. The complicating factor is the stop control at this intersection. Stop signs would be placed at the intersection in this temporary situation. The delineators can be placed at the intersection. He pointed out the location on a map.

Post asked if this would remove any parking. Carpenter stated the only shift would be for law enforcement parking on the east side. They talked with the State Capitol about potentially shifting one stall to the south.

Post understands this request would be temporary. Carpenter stated that due to the temporary nature, it can be built fairly quickly. They have implemented this at a couple of schools around town. It is a pretty quick installation and can provide a safety measure. Post wondered about the timeline. Carpenter stated that is a funding question. Permanent concrete bumpouts would affect drainage in the area and have a much higher cost. It also depends on funding availability. Post asked what that would look like. Carpenter stated that it depends on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) priorities. There hasn't been a crash at this location since 2003.

Quade stated that if a temporary measure is installed and is successful, he would have some concerns with the temporary becoming permanent. He wondered why we would want to invest more expensive means. He also inquired what other options there are, if this is not done for safety and protection. Could a greater distance be provided from the crosswalk, or perhaps a combination of temporary speed-bumps to slow down cars? Carpenter stated that with regard to removal of parking for sight distance, for northbound movement at intersection, there is probably the removal of one or two stalls. We would not want to impact parking in the area. We would likely have to eliminate the six stalls of angle parking for sight distance.

K. Johnson stated the angle parking could be made into parallel parking. Carpenter stated that when measuring the area, they would have to potentially take all the stalls for sight distance. The second to last stall inhibited the sight line. K. Johnson asked if stop signs were previously installed here.

Carpenter answered yes. K. Johnson wondered if this would work if the parking spot for the Capitol Security vehicle parking was moved. Carpenter replied yes. K. Johnson wondered about Lincoln Mall traffic movement. Carpenter stated that Lincoln Mall has right-of-way. There was a discussion of traffic accidents at this area. K. Johnson understands there have been no accidents at this intersection. Carpenter agreed that was correct. K. Johnson wondered how this proposition came to be. Carpenter stated that a member of the legislature requested it. There was a discussion of traffic in the area.

Post thinks overall, this is a good improvement. From her familiarity with the intersection, there are issues. You have to step into the street to see around the cars. She thinks the aesthetics in no way meet the requirements of the Capitol Environs district. It also makes sense that this is temporary so you want bright colors. What gives her the most trepidation about this is there is no funding source. Her communication from the City has said every dollar for road projects has been committed. It concerns her that this temporary situation could be there much longer than it should be to justify the bright bollards.

Bergt understands the Capitol building's original design is to be square all the way around. She knows they are working to get back to having all sandstone curbs surrounding the building. This side already has sandstone. She believes we need to think of other ideas. The proposed solution has multiple issues, in her view. One person complaining is not enough of a reason to justify a solution like this. She thinks there are also ways to look at striping of the concrete, on the Capitol side as well. She would vote against this. She wouldn't even want to see this as a temporary measure. When Goodhue designed the building, he didn't want any trees on the Capitol grounds outside the streets, so it made you feel like the base of the building was even bigger. She thinks on campus, we have done the bumpouts. She suggested they look at other places this has been done. This should not be done on the Capitol side. She believes it could be crosswalked. Cutting the cars back would help as well. She doesn't think this proposed solution, temporary or permanent, is a good idea.

Gebhart agrees with Bergt. She thinks the lack of maintaining some uniformity around here is not good. She thinks if you do this in one place, you should look at doing it in others. She can see the need for some pedestrian enhancements, but the bumpout doesn't feel like the right solution now.

Cuca echoed the other commissioner comments and concerns. The yellow candle sticks don't align with the environment. Carpenter noted that this would be black curbing and white candlesticks.

K. Johnson stated that the Downtown Master Plan has a lot of bumpouts proposed for safety. Is this part of that process? Carpenter doesn't believe this intersection was considered as part of the Downtown Master Plan, but noted that they look to that as a guide. K. Johnson believes the issue can be resolved with moving some parking stalls around. There haven't been any accidents here. He doesn't see this as a major improvement.

Quade stated that no one wants accidents, but questioned what the incentive is. There are other priorities. We see these pylons in a lot of different settings and they are unattractive. When we look

at the amount of pedestrians in the area, the problem is the vehicles in the area. Even when we have some of the bumpouts such as on 14th St. and 'R' St., there is a higher visibility.

Post wanted to say how much she appreciates Lincoln Transportation and Utilities commitment to responding to a complaint. She appreciates their response to citizen concerns.

Bob Ripley has some information to offer with regard to requests that come from the Capitol. They are a government building and have a lot of procedures. Freshman Senators are prone to call for something they would like to see done. When he worked there and they called the Office of the Capitol Commission, he would call the Legislative Board and that was usually the last he heard of it. Responding to a single Capitol request is a precarious request. Rather than comment about who made the request, he believes someone at the Capitol would take a dim view of someone going off site and making a request to a City agency. He knows there is a real desire to be cooperative and that is admirable. When you get a call from the Capitol individually, it should probably be run through the Capitol Commission.

Brett Daugherty is the Capitol Administrator. He met with Dan Carpenter and wanted to echo a lot of the commissioners' comments. They don't agree with this. It was their suggestion to move the Capitol security vehicle to the north. Another thing to think of is the intersection on the south side. He believes as far out as this would need to be to get around the angle parking would be difficult. There are school kid drop-offs with buses on this side of the building. If this would become permanent, they would be very concerned with snow removal. A corner would be created that would hold snow and water. His biggest concern is safety. 400 to 600 kids a week come into the Capitol. The Legislature does events on this side of the building as well. He believes a better solution would be to change some parking and go back to the original stop sign location.

Post inquired if these concerns were discussed with the City. Daugherty replied yes. They are doing their due diligence.

K. Johnson asked if this issue is going to the Capitol Commission. Daugherty replied yes. They are waiting to see what the decision of this body is.

Barnes noted that this site is within the boundaries of the Downtown Master Plan. In terms of bumpouts, a lot of that was proposed for 9th St. You will see bumpouts in that area.

Post questioned how we handle snow removal around bumpouts. There are a lot of them. Carpenter doesn't know the particulars. He knows it can be difficult and cause problems.

Bergt stated there are issues with drainage as well when bumpouts are designed. The curb is where water runs and you have to go around these.

Post supports and appreciates the prioritization of pedestrian safety. Carpenter understands that a lot of pedestrian safety measures come into direct conflict with drainage. These things need to be accomplished during the design process.

Post questioned what the next steps are. Carpenter thinks under the advice of this commission, bumpouts would not be feasible. They will have to look if there are any options to shift parking in this area. He doesn't believe moving forward with temporary bumpouts are an option after what he has heard today. They will have to look at this in more detail.

K. Johnson would suggest moving the security vehicle to the north. He believes that would be a definite improvement. Carpenter knows there have been discussions in the past.

Barnes stated that in terms of process, this would need to come forward for a formal certificate. There would be coordination with the State.

ADOPTION OF 2023 ANNUAL REPORT:

February 23, 2024

Barnes stated that the annual report has been put together highlighting the activities of 2023. This is a snapshot of activities that includes eight unique projects consisting of three City/County, two State, one Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and two private development projects. The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) building on 'K' Street has some improvements to access. The smoking shelters for the State were reviewed. The Nebraska Council of School Administrators (NCSA) building is under construction. The Pershing block has had quite a bit of review and the residential building was approved. The Community Action building had a couple of reviews for a protective barrier. Bike racks at Lincoln Literacy were reviewed. The Civil Protective Custody Center on 'J' Street was reviewed and approved. There was some Lincoln Electric System (LES) switch gear equipment approved off of Centennial Mall. The report also highlights the progress of projects from past years, including an 'F' Street infill housing project, St ,Mary's Catholic Church renovations and 2 Landmark Centre on Lincoln Mall. He would ask for a vote on this report.

Bergt had a question regarding the Pershing block on façade modifications. The report says the original plan showed light brick on the bottom. That was changed to dark brick below and light brick above, but the language still says light brick on the bottom. Barnes will check on the language and have that corrected.

Bergt stated that plants haven't been installed yet for the Community Action barrier. She questioned how we follow up on that. Barnes stated that Collin Christopher follows up on that. A lot depends on the time of year and weather. He will do a follow up with him.

ACTION:

Motion for approval as corrected made by Cuca, seconded by Post and carried 6-0: Bergt, Cuca, Gebhart, K. Johnson, Post and Quade voting 'yes'; D. Johnson absent.

STAFF REPORT & MISCELLANEOUS:

- Barnes stated that LB1417 at the State Legislature is proposing to eliminate some boards and commissions. He stated that the City works closely with the City lobbyist. Staff has been in close communication with him. The lobbyist believes the bill won't go any further this year. It does have a hearing coming up. City staff has asked to be at the table to discuss this if it proceeds any further.

Post stated that it would consolidate or eliminates several boards. K. Johnson added that it would take out both the Capitol Environs Commission and the Capitol Commission. Barnes stated that if that would happen, we still have local zoning jurisdiction. We would address that at the local level.

K. Johnson asked for help understanding why this is proposed. Barnes stated his understanding is perhaps the drafter of the bill doesn't understand all the details. He thinks it is under the umbrella of being more efficient.

Gebhart asked if there is anything we can do. Barnes noted it is a public hearing. Anyone can attend. The City takes a position to write a letter and testify. Given the direction the lobbyist has given, we are having him relay the concerns. Eric Gerard is the lobbyist.

- Barnes stated that the next meeting is March 22, 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.