

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, January 27, 2011 8:00 a.m., Room 214, County/City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: John Kay, Tom Laging, Jeff Searcy, Cecil Steward and Larry Stoll. Jim Hewitt and Kim Todd absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Bob Ripley (Capitol Commission); Dennis Scheer, Karen Nalow and Elizabeth Thomas (The Clark Enersen Partners); Lynn Johnson and JJ Yost (Parks & Rec); Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Approval of meeting notes of December 16, 2010

Laging moved approval of the December 16, 2010 meeting notes, seconded by Kay. The motion carried 4-0. Kay, Laging, Searcy and Stoll voting 'yes'; Steward abstaining; Hewitt and Todd absent.

Further Design Development, Plan for Centennial Mall, with emphasis on Donor Recognition (Parks & Recreation Department)

Johnson stated that they have been working with the design team on the Capitol Environs Design Standards. They feel that some modifications are necessary and will be recommending some revisions to the standards. They would also like to look at potential areas for sponsorships on the Mall.

Scheer stated that a number of standards are in conflict with the Master Plan. He briefly reviewed the recommended revisions.

On design standard 3, they are suggesting the addition of a statement of donor recognition. Ripley suggested clarifying that these are donor recognition sites with the exclusion of the Capitol.

It was further clarified that there are places on the Mall that are very prominent and should not carry a donor name.

On design standard 18, they are suggesting removing the sentence that states, "The landscape should be bolder and more colorful closest to the Capitol." Several suggestions on the guidelines were also reviewed including removing the phrase that benches should have backs; removing the sentence regarding water features being designed with sound rather than spray; increasing the grass height from 24" to 30" or less in height; removing the sentence stating that narrow, columnar overstory trees are discouraged; changing the language from "restrict" to "generally limit" shrubs to specific zones; changing the sentence regarding central turf spaces from "buffalo grass" to "low-input turf"; changing

the sentence regarding planting beds in closed mall blocks from “raise” to “design and detail”; changing the language regarding the hierarchy of the water features; and changing the language regarding lighting standards from “metal halide lamps” to “energy efficient lighting systems”.

Steward stated that he would like to have a requirement for the designer to issue a sustainability standard. Scheer stated that they would embrace that standard.

Johnson stated that he is hearing that the Commission is generally comfortable with adding donor recognition on the Mall, and he would prefer that action on donor recognition be taken today. The guidelines can be reviewed further if the Commission is more comfortable taking action at a future meeting.

Zimmer suggested the following language on Design Standard 3 and Guideline 3.1:

Design Standard 3: Memorials, Monuments and Donor Recognition

Installation of monuments and memorials should be based on the symbolic program established at the Capitol. Therefore no memorials should be added to the Capitol grounds nor donors acknowledged on the Capitol grounds. The Capitol itself is a memorial and has integral memorial spaces (the Nebraska Hall of Fame and Memorial Hall). Memorials may be considered for addition to the Malls, within their overall design guidelines, assigning memorials of statewide or national significance to Centennial Mall, and individual memorials to the other malls. Gifts and donations for capital improvements and ongoing care of public facilities may be recognized through placement of donor recognition markers and naming of features.

Guideline 3.1:

Recognition of donors should be accomplished in a manner that is durable, aesthetically pleasing, and reflective of the character and design of the feature. Some features, as determined by the Capitol Environs Commission, are of broad significance and may be named by the Commission with donors recognized as sponsors. Other features may be named in recognition of a specific donation. Features may be named in recognition of individuals, corporations or otherwise. Greater caution should be exercised in using the name of a living person. The Commission may decline the names of individuals and businesses involved in controversial enterprises out of respect for the public. With the approval of the Commission, donor recognition should be integrated within the design of the feature, and the placement and size of the recognition should not distract from the visual quality or character of the feature.

Steward moved approval of Design Standard 3 and Guideline 3.1, with the revisions suggested by Zimmer; it was seconded by Stoll. Motion carried 4-0. Kay, Searcy, Steward and Stoll voting ‘yes’ Laging abstaining; Hewitt and Todd absent.

Laging asked if the State is obliged to follow these guidelines. Zimmer replied that they are. Laging stated that recently he saw boxes, picnic tables and guardrails at the State Office Building and asked why that project was not brought to the Commission. It was suggested that a letter be drafted by Zimmer to the State Capitol Commission to address this issue.

Next Scheer reviewed the donor opportunities on the Mall. The thematic development was identified with K to L Street being “leaders,” L to M Street being “spirit of place,” M to P Street being the ‘stitch’ and P to R Street being “ideas.” He reviewed the individual elements for donor opportunities on each block.

Steward asked if there is a donor promotion strategy that gives the private properties that front the east or west edges of the Mall the opportunity to fund their front yard. Johnson stated that they will be talking with each of the property owners on the Mall and giving them that opportunity.

Commissioners were supportive of the concepts regarding donor opportunities identified by the design team.

Zimmer noted that it is important to acknowledge the State Historical Society’s impact on the Mall and suggested that a meeting take place with them.

Staff report/misc: 641 S. 21st Street

Zimmer mentioned that he was contacted by Jim Christo regarding the property at 641 S. 21st Street. Christo is proposing to remove the existing house and bring in a new design. The Commission will review the design based on the Neighborhood Design Standards.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Please note that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Capitol Environs Commission.

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