

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Monday, April 1, 2013, 11:00 a.m., Room 214, County/City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tom Laging, Karen Nalow, Jeff Searcy, Cecil Steward and Jon Weinberg. Christie Dionisopoulos and John Kay absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Shane King (Olsson Associates); Roger Figard and Randy Hoskins (Public Works & Utilities); Lynn Johnson and JJ Yost (Parks & Rec); Matt Hansen (Capitol Commission); Marvin Krout, Ed Zimmer, and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

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

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Discussion with Public Works on Centennial Mall

Nalow began by providing a brief overview of the presentation made at last Thursday's meeting on the phasing of construction on Centennial Mall.

Steward noted that he raised a concern at the previous meeting about an engineering detail that is contrary to the east and west paths, and he believes this creates a difficulty for handicapped persons. Handicapped persons can only conveniently use the west pathway. Having crosswalks designated but not equal creates a safety hazard for these two blocks for pedestrians. Pedestrians will need to know that there is a preferable pathway.

Hoskins stated that they would not necessarily consider the east pathway a crosswalk. They were trying to get a consistent pathway throughout the intersection.

Steward questioned if a pedestrian would think that is a normal crosswalk.

Figard asked if they are trying to create a pedestrian corridor on the east and west.

Laging stated that DAS is going to occupy the Assurity Building, and state employees will be going back and forth. They will take a shortcut, and this is a safety concern. Also, L Street is a crosswalk and you stop in the middle of the block.

King stated that at L Street there is a signalized crossing on the west side, so from the crosswalk on the west side, that falls within the middle of the Mall.

Laging stated that there should be consistency. The intent is to have ornamental paving. Also, the State plans to have a parking garage, so that creates additional pedestrians. There are big groups that would benefit from extra crossings.

Searcy noted that the intent has always been to create parallel pathways along both sides of the Mall which make the area very pedestrian friendly.

Figard stated that Public Works has no interest in doing something that is not safe for pedestrians. They had discussed having a single crosswalk in the middle. The other thing they have been dealing with is that the Mayor has been talking about sustainability and only having so many poles and signs. It is difficult to talk about safety and cost. These are unique poles and traffic signals to the system, and they are trying to be sensitive to the budget without sacrificing safety.

Steward stated that it is simply from the standpoint of watching the handicapped downtown. This forces someone who may or may not be familiar with the path to put themselves in a potentially unsafe situation.

Figard noted that a down side to another set of crosswalks is snow and ice and having another set of ramps that need to be cleaned and kept open.

Figard asked what is not desirable about bringing folks together and then separating them. Zimmer stated that part of the design concept is to create two accessible pathways. There are lots of features in the middle, but the pathway is uniform. Because the main event is the capitol, the intention is to hold things of height to the edges.

Figard stated that sometimes the public feels that Public Works has the final say. Our goal is to end up with a final solution that everyone is happy with.

Johnson stated that there is a line along the Mall, and the intent is to carry the lines through the intersection.

Laging stated that there is an importance of maintaining consistency throughout the Mall. This breaks the rule on two streets in an area where we are trying to maintain pedestrian consistency. It makes perceptual sense to have these two crosswalks.

Searcy stated that the Spirit of Nebraska pathway is on both sides of the Mall and gives a valid opportunity for fundraising. There is a tendency to think that one pathway, the west pathway, would be more valuable than the east pathway. He asked if there are other alternatives.

Hoskins stated that they are looking at the difference in vehicular traffic. At the north end, there are a fair number of students crossing. There is nothing to say that we couldn't signalize both crossings on the south end. There are a number of things that went into that decision, and they felt just doing the west side was a good solution.

King stated that at K Street, there would be a mast arm on the west side, and there would be the 10' tall pole on the other three locations. At L Street, the traffic pole with the mast arm would be on the east side and the other three spots would have the 10' tall pole.

Johnson stated that the poles around the capitol block are unique, so they may not be able to match the pole.

King noted that the additional cost would be approximately \$30,000-\$35,000 for the extra signal.

Johnson asked if the bidding documents could be changed to add a line item for a dual crossing. King stated that they could.

Figard stated that one of the challenges for Parks and Public Works is the maintenance of the equipment.

Steward moved to initiate the process for an alternate bid for a dual crossing strategy and that a timing decision be made that can be passed along to the fundraising committee for an estimate of what that funding may be.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:58 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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