

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, January 22, 2015, 8:00 a.m., Conference Room 214, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Christie Dionisopoulos, John Kay, Karen Nalow, Jeff Searcy, Cecil Steward and Jon Weinberg; (Tom Laging absent). Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong-Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Lynn Johnson and J.J. Yost of Parks and Recreation; Robert Ripley and Matt Hansen from the Office of the Capitol Commission.

**STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:** Regular Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

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

Searcy then requested a motion approving the minutes for the regular meeting held November 18, 2014. Motion for approval made by Kay, seconded by Weinberg and carried 6-0: Dionisopoulos, Kay, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Laging absent.

### **A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT THE PRESIDENT AND THE AMBASSADOR APARTMENTS, 1330 AND 1340 LINCOLN MALL**

#### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

**January 22, 2015**

Members present: Dionisopoulos, Kay, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg; Laging absent.

Paula Rhian with Excel Development Group and David Wiebe with Architectural Design Associates appeared. Paula Rhian explained that they would like to replace the canopy between the buildings. David Wiebe added that they are trying to use the existing design, specifically on the arches of the south porches. This would be keeping below the existing window height and he believes, make a nicer entrance. The existing buildings have a lot of nice detail. They tried to pick up some of those also.

Rhian stated that many of the tenants have disabilities. They wanted to work with the tenants, preserve the buildings and still make it functional for the folks that are living there

Ripley questioned if the building doors are solid. Rhian replied that they are glass.

Steward asked if there is a landscape plan. Rhian replied that they are working on that right now. They will be designing it and bringing it back for review. They want to give the tenants more of a seating area in the courtyard. They would like to move the mail boxes if the USPS approves.

Steward wondered what happens at the north end of the courtyard. Wiebe replied that it is an Executive Building. Rhian added that there is an alley/driveway between the Executive Building and the Ambassador.

Kay asked if the cornice and parapet line were the same elevation. Wiebe replied that they didn't want to get the canopy too high on the building.

Ripley inquired where the mail box would be located if the applicant is considering moving it. Rhian would like to move them to the other side of the walkway. Tenants could get to them from under the canopy. Ripley applauds the efforts. This will be a considerable improvement.

Searcy likes the follow-through of the arches. Wiebe stated that the current canopy is fabric that runs perpendicular to the buildings. Searcy likes the arches and design elements.

Ripley asked if there will be any lighting in the courtyard. Rhian replied there will be light posts.

Searcy wondered if the applicant had any idea on the timing and construction. Rhian stated that the first phase will be interior work. This should last around two to three weeks. Then they will move construction to the President building. They need to do some tuck pointing and some exterior work. Courtyard work will probably happen closer to late summer or early fall.

Searcy inquired about a completion date. Rhian believes that everything will be complete around February, 2016.

Lynn Johnson sees this as a big improvement.

Ripley stated it will be interesting to see the landscape plan. Rhian is waiting on an official list of plants from the non-profit board. Ripley inquired about the art deco canopy on the east side of the building, which was nice. Rhian stated that it is currently being restored. It will be at least six months until it is completed. Ed Zimmer clarified that this canopy is on the east doorway on the center of the President, facing the Capitol.

**ACTION:**

Weinberg moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for courtyard improvements and a masonry arcade between the building entrances, near the center of the courtyard, as presented, seconded by Dionisopoulos and carried 6-0: Dionisopoulos, Kay, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Laging absent.

**PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL FROM NEAR SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION FOR A MONUMENT HONORING B.G. GOODHUE AT GOODHUE BLVD. AND A STREET**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**January 22, 2015**

Members present: Dionisopoulos, Kay, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg; Laging absent.

Brayden McLaughlin appeared. He stated that since the last time he appeared, Public Works & Utilities has offered to put in a sidewalk along with an ADA ramp. The design of the monument being proposed is pretty much the same. There has been an increase in the grant funding. This will be a big entrance to the neighborhood. The Near South board requests approval so they can move forward with this.

Zimmer stated that there was previously some discussion of the 1986 east and south mall plan that is referenced in the standards. This area was then called the South Mall, which is now Goodhue Blvd. The report focused on the role as a terminus on the south end of Goodhue. The 1986 plan had a contemplation of elements on the east. There was an idea of a plaza as an outline of the Capitol and a circle of fir trees, which would have height. That doesn't exist in front of Lincoln High today. On the south mall, there was reference to precinct markers flanking the sidewalks made of limestone. As you move up the street, there were central elements proposed in the median. Additionally, on Centennial Mall at the north end, there was a feature at R Street across the street from the Historical Society which is an echo of the curved front. On that wall was envisioned plaques and interpretive material. He believes low horizontal elements at the ends were envisioned. He believes what is proposed today is consistent with the plan. There are also some other precinct markers in town. There is Piedmont on Randolph St., which are very tall and are immediately adjacent to the pavement which is about 30 feet wide. He doesn't believe markers on either side of this location about 100 feet apart would have the same impact. Public Works indicated that they were agreeable to the marker at its proposed location. He recommends this fits within the standards and precedent of past designs warrants a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Searcy questioned if the sidewalk access matches the island. Ripley stated that this would not be a continuation of the crosswalk. Zimmer stated that the south curve of the median is about 35 feet beyond the curb of A Street. Ripley stated that in effect, people will have to walk outside the pedestrian crosswalk into traffic lanes to get to the median. Kay wondered if there could be a staggered crosswalk. Nalow wants to indicate to drivers that there could be pedestrians. Zimmer thinks it might make more sense if truncated domes were centered. Zimmer would suggest a path down the center of the crosswalk to the island.

Steward asked who would be responsible for snow removal. Lynn Johnson replied that Parks & Recreation has committed to snow removal. He wondered about extending the island further south so it lines up with the crosswalk. They might be able to talk to Urban Development and see if there is some community block development grant money available.

Nalow questioned if any thought has been given to low landscaping around the monument. McLaughlin replied that Parks felt it would be easier to maintain as grass. There has been a discussion about flowers around the base or something along those lines. Perhaps a bench to the north of the monument. Searcy thinks some flowers or something would be nice.

Steward would raise some concerns with the height of the monument if the median was extended. He doesn't know if there is any guarantee it won't be hit.

Nalow thinks if you extend the median it would still be set back a little bit. Ripley would encourage Commissioners to drive by and view it after a snow event and see how many vehicles drive right down the center of the island, routinely. Matt Hansen noted that the garbage trucks hit the median a lot.

Zimmer's suggestion would be for a ramp in the center of the median so you cross from the center of the crosswalk to the center of the median. McLaughlin believes the neighborhood would be fine with that. Ripley doesn't know if there is any safer option from what he has seen from traffic patterns.

**ACTION:**

Steward moved approval of the monument/precinct marker at the proposed location, but with reconfiguration of the pedestrian access to the center line of the island, with appropriate Public Works markers for traffic, design as presented, seconded by Kay.

Ripley stated that it is his memory that anything in a 45 degree angle zone from the ground up must be three feet or lower and any trees have to be trimmed to a certain height. J.J. Yost stated that this is proposed to be 30 inches tall and 6 inches of curb. Johnson believes it is well out of line of sight distance.

Johnson suggests that the applicant consider a plan for future graffiti removal. McLaughlin is happy to work with Parks & Rec.

Motion for approval carried 6-0: Dionisopoulos, Kay, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Laging absent.

Hansen stated that the Office of the Capitol Commission would be willing to review any text for accuracy on the plaque. Johnson added that they could have a webpage that would provide more information. Dionisopoulos stated that this could be on the same site as the Centennial Mall plaques. Searcy noted that the final lettering options and accuracy would be run by this Commission and Ed Zimmer.

**Miscellaneous**

- Zimmer mentioned the Emil Koop house at 15<sup>th</sup> & A, which was recently listed on the National Register. This is a George Berlinghoff house in lovely condition. There is also a Public Works project going on to move the sidewalks south of A to line up with the ones to the north.
- Zimmer stated that in regards to the 2014 Annual Report, he has one addendum to the final plaques. Standing Bear needs to be changed to Chief Standing Bear on page 15.
- Searcy has reviewed the excellent summary and believes this was a very exciting year to be involved in so many outstanding projects. He thanked everyone for all their efforts. The editorial board has been working hard on the Centennial Mall plaques. He is so excited how meaningful this rich tapestry is on the mall. This paints a picture and he thinks this will be a great springboard. He thanked all for their efforts.

**ACTION:**

Weinberg moved approval of the 2014 Annual Report, with the amendment as proposed, seconded by Nalow and approved 6-0: Dionisopoulos, Kay, Nalow, Searcy, Steward and Weinberg voting 'yes'; Laging absent.

- Ripley stated that a lot of serious improvements were made at McPhee School. He made an appointment with Kevin Wales of LES and thanked them for their efforts and talked about the desirability to go further down the block and relocate utilities. He made the same appeal to him for the further five blocks. This was a personal gesture, nothing on behalf of any commission. In the past, this Commission has sent letters of a similar request in hopes this Commission might endorse the idea to get the remaining five blocks of lines removed from Goodhue Boulevard. Searcy knows that we have a longstanding relationship with LES. He would love nothing more than to see more lines moved or buried. Perhaps it would be a great idea to have neighborhood support as well. McLaughlin believes that Near South Neighborhood Association would be willing to support it.

Weinberg would be supportive of sending a letter in support. Searcy agreed as well. The Commissioners agreed to prepare a letter in support of cleaning up the Capitol Environs vistas.

- Steward stated that his group intends to make proposals to the Mayor on February 3 2015 regarding the reuse of Pershing. Anyone is welcome to attend. It will be at noon in the Mayor's conference room of the County/City Building. They have also scheduled a presentation to the Downtown Lincoln Association board on the draft recommendation on February 24, 2015. There has been significant engagement with

LES. They have looked at the potential use of the stagehouse volume of space within the Pershing structure for an east district energy station location. The most significant possibility of that engagement is there has been discussion with GSA. They want to be connected with the district energy. This brings into play the retrofit of the parking garage. There is a real possibility for improvements on Centennial Mall. Ripley believes this is very good news. Steward stated that because this is a study of both food systems and the site, it is very complex. It is a push-pull, trial and error with a lot of risk involved in the outcome. The first efforts at architectural analysis was to take a look at both programs for a public market and a public library. While it is locationally and technically feasible, it is not, in his personal opinion, desirable to have both of those at the same location.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.