

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, February 28, 2013, 3:00 p.m., Room 214, County/City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Peter Hind, JoAnne Kissel, Gill Peace, Michelle Penn, Michele Tilley, Scott Sullivan and Mary Anne Wells.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Josh Berger (Scott Woodbury Wiegert); Matt Metcalf (Davis Design); Hallie Salem (Urban Development); Ed Zimmer, Stacey Hageman & Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Special Meeting of the Urban Design Committee

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Scott Woodbury Wiegert (S2W) on "Project Oscar," mixed use building at P Street and Canopy Street, a redevelopment project (Josh Berger for S2W)

Zimmer explained that the redevelopment agreement for this project will be on the City Council agenda on the following Monday.

Berger stated that they began by reviewing the historical context of the district. The design team conceived of building design as starting with a white clay block. They carved and subtracted and settled on two back-to-back L shapes with a courtyard in the center. It will occupy a quarter of a block. A future parking garage will be built immediately to the west of it. There are four levels of the building. Level 2 cantilevers over the first floor to create a covered plaza on the north side. Level 3 is peeled back to create a rooftop area with a small external conference room with a link back to the parking deck. Level 4 is peeled back further opening onto the rooftop deck and courtyard below. He presented images showing views from the street and from different angles as well as several elevations.

The covered plaza will have lighting strips embedded in the pavement, each about 2" x 4'. There may also be illuminated columns. The building is 67' tall.

Kissel stated that this building is important in creating the context for the area. She is concerned about the pedestrian activity.

Tilley asked about what benefit there is for the courtyard. Berger stated that he believes the active edge is still there. The critical piece is getting the plaza right, and they have the budget to get it right. Sullivan asked what they want people to do there. Berger stated that they want people to hang out there. Sullivan then asked to do what. Berger stated that there is not a programmed activity. He added that it is covered so it will protect people from the elements.

Wells stated that she is concerned about the circulation patterns as the “seating circles” provide seats facing outward, away from one another, and do not provide an opportunity for people to converse. She feels that it needs to be much more inviting. More green space needs to be added to the courtyard to make it more inviting.

Tilley stated that she does not understand the lighting as she does not believe that will provide enough light. Berger stated that there are no final answers on the lighting, but they wanted it to be lit from below.

Hind asked about the type of glass on the punched openings facing O and P Street. Metcalf stated that the glass will likely be silkscreened with a “frit” pattern to help control glare and heat. Hind stated that he is concerned about shading materials on the inside and inconsistency. Since the windows are on the edge, he is concerned about seeing up into the space.

Berger stated that the courtyard is extremely important for restaurant use. Sullivan is concerned about whether the covered plaza is going to be a nice space to be in due to the height and proportion of the space, the sound with echoing, and that it will be dark. Metcalf stated that the light bounce from the atrium will be significant.

Penn stated that she does not believe there will be much light penetration into the building. She is concerned about how that space is going to feel. You do not want it to feel like the underside of a parking garage. She has the same concerns as Sullivan.

Wells stated that she feels there should be a gate at night as she is concerned about safety in that space at night as you could get cornered in there.

Tilley asked why there is a plaza. Berger stated that the redevelopment agreement states that there has to be a plaza. They also have an agreement to limit the retail space to 10,000 square feet.

Peace stated that there is a fundamental design to this district. Canopy Street is a big deal, and P Street is a big deal. This design seems to give is a little bit of a nod to Canopy Street and none to P Street. He would have a hard time voting for this design. The design is kind of bleak and bland. This district is about being a dynamic place.

Berger stated that they spent a lot of money on design and the redevelopment agreement, and they have been through a significant process already.

Sullivan stated that his biggest concern is the northeast corner.

Metcalf stated that he does not understand the argument that we have turned our heads to Canopy and P Street. He does not believe they have done that at all. He also does not believe that this will be a dark, dismal place to be.

Sullivan stated that he is struggling to find an example of a covered public space of this scale that works.

Tilley stated that there are some great elements, but if they can come back with a new design on the plaza, that would be great.

Penn stated that she believes there is context to draw from in the area with The Yard, the hotel, the new arena, and the train station. She feels that the design does not fit into the context. Zimmer noted that there is not only a lot of brickwork on the West Haymarket buildings under construction, there are also

considerable areas of metal skin in those buildings. They draw elements from both the arena and from the Haymarket. Peace stated that all of those buildings have a 3D exterior element. This design has a flat face, and it lends itself to be very flat and a little bit boring.

Hind stated that the south side has a two-story space and even in the winter time, there will be sun perforating through. From a material standpoint, he does not think this needs to be clad in brick. He hopes they can have faith in the developer that the materials will be appropriate.

Berger stated that they will come back to the Committee with the plaza space redesigned as well as address the lighting and the acoustics. They will look at the configuration of the tenant space along Canopy Street. They intend to have outdoor dining along Canopy, like the other buildings now under construction.

Sullivan indicated he felt the Committee should consider a motion addressing their concerns about the covered plaza and the urban design aspects of the P St. and Canopy St. pedestrian experience. The committee discussed language for a motion and asked Zimmer to summarize their discussion, as he had heard it.

Sullivan then made a motion that the Urban Design Committee is unable to recommend the project because of concerns regarding the covered public plaza, especially its impact on the pedestrian experience along P and Canopy Streets in terms of safety, comfort and desirability of public space; it was seconded by Wells. Motion carried 6-1. Kissel, Peace, Penn, Sullivan, Tilley and Wells voting 'yes'; Hind voting 'no'.

Members asked that the record reflect their mixed opinions about the overall design of the project, and to note that the Committee is not recommending against the building in style.

Members also indicated that the Committee strongly regrets seeing this project design at the eleventh hour and therefore is not able to add comments of value in the manner that is designed and constituted to do.

Enersen Urban Design Award

Zimmer stated that Dennis Scheer brought forth a recommendation for Antelope Valley as the recipient of the Enersen Award. There was also a recommendation for Langer's Cottage Court in Village Gardens. Antelope Valley is a public project, and Cottage Court is a private project.

Hind believes that the Cottage Court is not urban enough, which is how he feels about the Fallbrook development.

Hind moved to award the Antelope Valley project as the Enersen Urban Design Award recipient. Motion carried 7-0. Hind, Kissel, Peace, Penn, Sullivan, Tilley and Wells voting 'yes'.

Staff report/misc.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

**Please note that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Urban Design Committee. **

Q:\UDC\MINUTES\2013\130213.docx