MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, September 18, 2008, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 206, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Cathy Beecham, Jerry Berggren, Berwyn Jones and Jim McKee; (Tim Francis and Bob Ripley absent). Ed Zimmer and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; and other interested citizens.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Acting Chair Jim McKee called the meeting to order and requested a motion approving the minutes for the regular meeting held August 21, 2008. Motion for approval made by Berggren, seconded by Beecham and carried 4-0: Beecham, Berggren, Jones and McKee voting ‘yes’; Francis and Ripley absent.

The opportunity was given for persons with limited time or with an item not appearing on the agenda to address the Commission. No one appeared.

APPLICATION BY SUITE ONE FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT THE SULLIVAN BUILDING IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT, 311 NORTH 8TH STREET

PUBLIC HEARING: September 18, 2008

Members present: Beecham, Berggren, Jones and McKee; Francis and Ripley absent.

No one appeared and there was no new information to present.

Update on West Haymarket redevelopment project

Dallas Magee stated the city of Lincoln identified locations for a new arena to replace Pershing Auditorium. The preferred location seemed to be West Haymarket. They looked for developer interest in a hotel to reinforce the arena and received proposals from Lincoln Traction Partners and John W. Hammons. Lincoln Traction Partners was selected. Four schematics were created.

Beecham inquired about the input for the proposals. Kent Morgan stated that the first three proposals were created by staff and the fourth proposal was created with input from urban design experts from other cities that are experiencing growth.
Magee stated that all four proposals were presented at an open house. From the four proposals, they are now beginning to sit down with Lincoln Traction Partners to create a single proposal. They will take pieces from each of the four proposals.

Morgan noted the next plan will be an amalgamation of all the proposals. Staff has been working with the railroads for some time now. The railroad has said the track alignment shown on all four proposals will work for their needs.

Morgan stated that the preferred location for the arena is immediately west of the Post Office and the parking would be to the north. That aspect remains the same on all four proposals. The Amtrack Station is relocated from the north end of Lincoln Station to the west end of “Q” Street. That is the same in all four proposals. Zimmer stated that the design for the new Amtrak station has been created in the spirit of traditional railroad stations—modern in feel but dignified and attractive. The road network shifts on the different proposals. The visiting urban designers responded strongly to the rail platform canopy. It creates a link between the old and the new.

Funds for an ice arena were donated by the Breslow family. A proposed festival space changes a bit in each of the different proposals. Vehicular access is different in all four proposals also.

Beecham noted there seems to be a constriction at the Amtrak station. Morgan replied those areas are designated drop-off locations. There would be an addition to the main lines of railroad track.

Magee stated that the ice center has minor buildings that would front on the north and east side for retail space. This would help it fit in the area.

Jones does not like the idea of disrupting the Haymarket street pattern.

McKee inquired if there are any buildings of significant historic value at the south end of the plan. Ed Zimmer replied not really. There are some lumber storage buildings that might be of interest, but not much else.

Beecham wondered at what time does the festival space get designed. She would like to see a little green space. Morgan replied that at this point, they are getting more of a sense of where it should be located.

Beecham doesn’t see where anyone would want a retail space facing the railroad tracks. Zimmer noted that some of the current residential in Haymarket seems to be enhanced by west (sunset) views. He has wrestled with “Q” Street and “R” Street and how Haymarket can best be connected to, and distinguished from, the new development west of it. He can envision an R Street connection that would be closed as the plaza in front of the arena during events. He is concerned that a Q Street vehicular connection between Haymarket
and West Haymarket could swamp Haymarket with event traffic, as well as severing the rail canopy.

Jones wondered what the Fire Marshal thinks of emergency access on the yellow plan. It seems to him that it may be a problem. Morgan replied that the Fire Marshall is most concerned with access to the arena and they believe they could get there in an emergency.

Robert Scott stated that it was everyone’s desire to integrate the ice center into the project. The Mayor’s Council was trying to find a better way since it is such a large building. They have tried every way to make it fit onto the grid system. The yellow plan fits the ice center in. The goal is not to distract from the historic Haymarket. There has been a lot of input from this process. They are trying to create mostly pedestrian friendly access. His goal is to bring as much investment to this area as possible. He is looking for input from the community.

Jones doesn’t want to lose the Haymarket feel. He believes the “loop” of Q, 7th, and P Streets in front of Lincoln Station needs to be preserved.

Beecham doesn’t like the Breslow Tower idea. She thinks if you start having really tall tower-like buildings, it changes the flavor of the overpass. Morgan replied that element hasn’t received a whole lot of interest.

Beecham questioned who is going to pay for the arena and if that would change how much say the city has into the design. Morgan replied that the city will have some say. It’s attractive to have someone who would help sponsor, but there has to be a balance.

Scott stated that the bottom line is that the city will still own the building.

Morgan stated that there was an immigrant hotel in the Haymarket in the 1870’s. The State Historical Society helped sponsor a test excavation. He believes evidence of the old hotel is probably under some existing railroad tracks and should be excavated as part of the project.

McKee can’t envision the height of the new buildings in the area. Morgan has talked about the height with the architects and developers.

Berggren noted that Burlington Station is the dividing line of the Haymarket.

Beecham inquired about bike trails. Morgan replied that they will design for bike racks, bike routes, etc. and are looking how to connect the bike trails in Salt Creek to this area. Morgan stated that they are continually refining the plans, getting input and working with many groups. They will be back with more ideas.
Zimmer stated that the west area is not zoned Haymarket. It will not be before this Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness, but rather for input on how the two areas should relate to each other. He is not sure how the historic district could be extended to include this area. He does not think it is possible.

Berggren believes that because the Haymarket is so important to the city, why shouldn’t this be formalized as a required step to appear before the Historic Preservation Commission? He understands that this won’t be in the area of the Haymarket Historic District. There is an obvious impact to the Haymarket. The Old Federal building was set up that when the applicant altered something, they had to come before the Historic Preservation Commission.

McKee wondered if Urban Design Committee would be involved.

Zimmer said one method would be to seek to include design review procedures in the development agreement. Berggren would like to see the Historic Preservation Commission have some kind of oversight. Jones thinks it is an excellent point.

Scott believes the economics will drive itself. He and his brother Will Scott believe that the more good minds that guide them, the better.

Beecham believes in 30 years, this project will continue to go on and she wants to make sure the same care is taken in the future. She agreed with the other Commissioners and would like Zimmer to look into what could be done to have Historic Preservation Commission review of this area.

Zimmer stated there could be a tool in the redevelopment agreement. This area doesn’t have its final zoning in place yet. The recently approved Downtown Design Standards probably don’t address this area perfectly. Elements would apply, but perhaps a different package could be created for this area and Historic Preservation Commission could advise. This area will always be sensitive. We can come up with design standards and review procedures for the ongoing development and its sensitive proximity to the Haymarket district to be addressed.

Berggren believes that design standards would address part of his concerns.

**STAFF REPORT:**

- Zimmer stated that the State Preservation Board will hold a tour this year of the proposed Boulevards Landmark District. He gave a walk of the area for Wachiska Audubon Society last week and about 100 people attended. Zimmer has had only one extended response that was semi-negative from someone who lives across from St. Matthews Church. He was worried that his neighbors will impose their wishes on him.
• Griswold House was approved by Planning Commission with unanimous approval. The applications go on to City Council. Charlie Ogden made his presentation and he will be effective at City Council. The immediate neighbor is in favor of the project.

• The Mayor’s office contacted Zimmer regarding the open seat on the Historic Preservation Commission. Jim Johnson was recommended. He works for the State of Nebraska. He has a citizen’s interest in historic preservation. He has been offered the position, but not officially appointed yet.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Berggren believes that Crabby Bill’s has numerous signs. McKee has seen many new signs also. Zimmer will talk to the owners.

Zimmer visited a log cabin in SW Lancaster County yesterday with an official from Building and Safety. The cabin is on SW 72nd St., south of Panama Rd. There was a homestead patent on this area in 1852. The family lived in a sod dugout and then built this with a sloped roof. It was originally located closer to the creek. It’s maybe 200 yards from the creek now. It was moved at some point. The family runs a dairy operation there now. They use it for education for the local kids.

Zimmer has walking tours of Wyuka, the Near South and Woods Park neighborhoods coming up.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.