

MEETING RECORD EXCERPT

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, September 24, 2015, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jim Hewitt, Jim Johnson, Jim McKee, and Greg Munn; (Liz Kuhlman and Tim Francis, absent). Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman and Amy Hana Huffman of the Planning Department; Kevin Abourezk from the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

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

Munn requested a motion approving the minutes for regular meeting held September 24, 2014. Motion for approval made by Johnson, seconded by McKee and carried 4-0: Hewitt, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Francis and Kuhlman absent.

The opportunity was given for persons with limited time or with an item not appearing on the agenda to address the Commission.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR SIGN AT 801 R STREET, HILTON GARDEN INN IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT.
PUBLIC HEARING: September 24, 2015

Members present: Hewitt, Johnson, McKee and Munn; Francis and Kuhlman absent.

Ryan Haffey, Nebraska Neon Sign Company, said this is a straightforward sign. It will be considered an under the canopy sign even though there is a walkway. The letters will be dimensional material mounted directly to the background. The purpose of the sign is to get this salon more exposure since they are on the garden level.

Munn asked if there was any lighting or if it was simply a sign to make their presence known from the street. Haffey replied there is no illumination. It is similar to the Hudl sign that hangs below and serves as an entrance sign. It is very basic and simply to provide a bit more exposure.

ACTION:

McKee moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for sign at 801 R Street in the Haymarket Landmark District, seconded by Johnson. Motion for approval carried 4-0: Hewitt, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Francis and Kuhlman absent.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR SIGN AT MITCHELL FAMILY RESTAURANT, 727 S. 9TH STREET, IN O'DONNELL-GALBRAITH HOUSE, A DESIGNATED LANDMARK.

PUBLIC HEARING:

September 24, 2015

Members present: Hewitt, Johnson, McKee and Munn; Francis and Kuhlman absent.

Zimmer explained this is a vinyl banner on the front of the Mitchell Family Restaurant. This sign could be thought of as temporary. In this zoning district, ordinarily there are no vinyl banners like the ones seen in other typical commercial districts, however, there is broad permission for real estate signs. For years, this building had a "For Lease" sign on it. When Mitchell's put up a sign, they put up a blue vinyl banner where the "For Lease" sign had been. It is not the ultimate sign that we would want to see there for a long period. This body might want to carry this over until next month, or further into the future.

McKee asked if the applicant expressed a desire or willingness for a plan for the future sign? Zimmer said this is the one they can afford at this time, so the Commissioners should be aware of it, but do not have to act on it today.

McKee wondered if the restaurant is advertising. He does not remember reading a restaurant review. Zimmer said there has been a review. He went on to instruct that Commissioners might direct him to explore this matter further.

Johnson asked if a motion was needed to direct the Historic Preservation Planner to explore the matter further? Zimmer said no. He hesitates to ask the applicant to remove the sign, but wants to make it clear this should not be sanctified forever.

Munn mentioned that in Zimmer's note, it was stated that the Commission could approve vinyl banner for a specified amount of time. Zimmer said he was still exploring that option.

Hewitt added that he thought allowing the sign to remain through the end of 2016 was a lengthy period and that he would be more willing to allow six months.

Zimmer said he would discuss it more with Building and Safety.

Commissioners agreed that gathering more information and revisiting this topic next month would be the right thing to do.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

DESIGN FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (VASH), LINCOLN VA CAMPUS.

PUBLIC HEARING:

September 24, 2014

Members present: Hewitt, Johnson, McKee and Munn; Francis and Kuhlman absent.

Zimmer reminded Commissioners that this review should be taken in the context of a redevelopment agreement that will be proceeding to City Council for action on September 28th. The Senior Foundation meets for final signatures on September 29th and then the goal is to break ground no later than October 1st.

Zimmer said this item was presented before as an overall, preliminary plan. The VASH housing was originally proposed as a four story building in the southeast corner. In response to comments from this body and from the neighbors, they found another location more in the heart of campus, nearly in the middle. A three story building is now proposed. It has a distinct break in the middle to shorten the perceived length as it is seen from either of vista. Zimmer stated that to his eye and for recommendation, it is a more appropriately designed and better looking building for the campus. With regard to process, this design has changed enough in architecture and location that it seemed worthy to bring back before this commission to show the results of past discussions.

Brad Korell, Olsson Associates, stated he is serving as project facilitator for this project. At the meeting with neighbors, the main concern with the original location of the building was that it was too close to the single family dwelling units. The existing historic four buildings and hospital are visible from 70th street. There are some garages and older accessory buildings scattered around the back. The goal is to maintain the historic facade across the front of the parade grounds. The view corridor to the State Capitol will also be maintained, but for Saint Elizabeth hospital.

Korell expanded on the concern of neighbors. Primarily, the main concern was the setback of the building. It created an awkward transition from a single story family environment to a significant four story building. They just felt that transition was too abrupt. In response to this, the plan was modified. The VASH housing was moved and converted to a three story structure with with a greater setback. It still maintains the seventy units as planned before. Other buildings on the proposed redesign were also shifted. Four-plexes were moved back to allow for better transition. Then there are two story apartment buildings that across the back of the property. Everything else has stayed the same from the design seen about a month ago.

Johnson said it does look like the concerns of the neighbors have been addressed. He asked if the neighbors have seen the new design? Korell said yes. This was presented to City Council twice and at the public meeting that included the vote on the site plan, the neighbors sent a representative that came and spoke in favor of the project and thanked the developer. We have their support.

Matthew Gulsvig, Holland Basham Architects, said that the building footprint was made smaller to reduce the overall impact of the building on the campus. The concept makes provisions for seventy, approximately 650 square foot, one bedroom units. There will be parking near the site and cross parking will be utilized across the entire site. The design team and the developer, America First, have gone back and reworked and refined the design. Historic Development design standards were referenced for the entire campus so this design is responsive to the larger fabric within the historic campus and meets and parallels the design requirements. The design incorporates a higher level of materials in terms of masonry and pre-cast, in response to campus trends. The pitched roof is also more along the lines of what exists on campus. There was a comment about the long appearance of the building. To address the lengthy appearance of the building from architectural plan standpoint, a jog is shown where the two wings of the building are pulled apart to create a more undulating appearance. This is not overpowering to the site in any way.

Hewitt I had understood that the senior center that is downtown on O Street is being contemplated as a tenant on this property. He asked where it will be located?

Korrell said the hospital today has added clinic space. The VA is not occupying the entire building, which is about 175,000 square feet. Building Two is attached to the main complex and has three stories. The VA has agreed to vacate this building and they would move offices to other parts of the hospital on a temporary basis to free up that space. There are also plans to utilize existing buildings at the back to house the vans used to transport clients. The details of the arrangements and the lease are being negotiated with the City, but that is the intent, generally speaking. They would maintain their own identity, though their services would be tied together.

Zimmer added that the details of the lease are important in terms of how it will function financially. Not all matter are settled, but there has been detailed and productive discussion to that ends. It is part of the overall concept that the campus will serve Veterans and all seniors. With the exception of the VASH, all the other housing would have Veteran preference, followed by senior, followed by some market rate. There could be non-senior veterans.

Munn asked about the materials being used. It looks like brick and a precast band. He asked if one portion of the building uses a composite fabric siding? Gulsvig said that what is envisioned at this point is a cement-based siding. It would be prefinished, very stable, it is consistent with existing campus.

Zimmer as part of the change from the earlier design, the windows were made to appear more characteristic of those on the whole campus. The elevation is harder to read and that offset is not as clear. It makes the entrance feature much stronger than the elevation can represent.

Munn stated, just to be clear, today the only building being discussed is the VASH building. Zimmer said the entire redevelopment agreement is going to the City Council. This is the design element that has the most connection with the work of this body, so it is a blend. He stated he will speak to whatever discussion and action that is undertaken today.

Hewitt asked what action needs to be taken? Zimmer said making a recommendation based on what has been shown is the appropriate action. It is not a certificate of appropriateness because it is not a Landmark, but this body is giving advice to the administration and City Council.

ACTION:

Johnson moved to recommend approval of the design of the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing, seconded by Hewitt. Motion for approval carried 4-0: Hewitt, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Francis and Kuhlman absent.

Mr. Achola of America First came forward to express his gratitude to Zimmer and the Preservation Commission for their input.

STAFF REPORT AND MISCELLANEOUS:

Zimmer said that he and Hageman presented the Wesleyan Hospital nomination to the State Board and got their unanimous recommendation to move it forward to the Parks Service. They asked that the information regarding the multitude of small hospitals that used to be in Lincoln but no longer are be expanded upon. Of the historic hospital buildings of the era, what remains today is the VA and Wesleyan Hospitals. That factor made a difference, particularly given the obviously weak integrity of the interior, about which we were very frank. The scarcity of this once abundant resource of small hospitals and training schools seemed to be compelling, so they asked that more information regarding that be incorporated into the nomination. That portion was expanded and included many illustrations, which is the primary change from what Commissioners saw at an earlier date. Parks Service will probably in about three months.

Zimmer said one of the best resources were the yearbooks and student newspapers, such as the Wesleyan newspaper. There was great information including when the cellar was dug and each of the changes of ownership. It is hoped that having cleared part one, which was the preliminary certification of eligibility for tax credits, this answer from a different branch of the Parks Services will be positive.

McKee asked if anything is known about Wesleyan's plans for businesses along east side of 48th Street, quite a few of which they own? Zimmer said he has not heard anything recently.

Zimmer went on to say that he has had contact from two parties that are interested in the Landmark Special Permit process for adjusting uses or yard requirements, one in the Everett neighborhood, and one in College View. There is potential in both. Hopefully they will come forward in the next few months.

Zimmer said there is no confirmation yet, but there strong interest in having a joint meeting regarding the Telegraph District at 21st and N Street. The Mayor has agreed that it would be appropriate do is jointly, since there is some historic resource, so by the Ordinance, this body would be the sole advisor, but most of it is a built urban design area so it would be stronger with both groups present. Commissioner Kuhlman had suggested it, and we asked the Mayor's consent since it is a more informal process. It might be ready by October.

McKee asked if building materials being stored on an empty lot near the Telegraph District are related? Zimmer explained that area is being used as a staging site for the student housing being built on the 18th and P Streets block. They are constructing four buildings simultaneously on the site so they had no extra room.

McKee asked if the the two residential houses that sit on the Telegraph District are they in flux? Zimmer they are still static, privately owned properties. They sit on that block across from the large Windstream Building, and for the time being, are staying.

Hewitt asked if there are plans to relocate or refurbish the existing Lincoln Telephone Museum? Zimmer said they are in active discussions about ways to keep it. Most of the museum or elements of the displays will remain on the campus, though not in the same building. Hewitt said he finds it a whole lot easier to go along with plans if there will be some tie to the history of the area, and the museum would be an integral part of that.

McKee added that the people in the museum are concerned, but there is so little use that they have not invested in relocation to potential other locations.

Zimmer said current discussions include creating heightened visibility in the new development. Hewitt agreed that it is not prominently placed now. McKee added that it is a good museum. Zimmer said they might move it into the historic warehouse, which is a more interesting structure, and would have some commercial space and activity, and hopefully housing above.

Zimmer went on to say that item will come before this body at a fairly preliminary stage, and then might come back as things develop further. They are talking about many stages or sub- parts to the project, but trying to do them all almost simultaneously, so it will be interesting to see how the schedule really turns out.

Zimmer said he and Hageman will also bring the South Haymarket sub-area plan. Elements of it have been seen before, but it is nearing completion and is moving toward formal process, so there will be another report on that.

McKee asked about the status of the Speedway Properties cooperative senior housing project that was tacked on to the parking garage and if it is still moving forward? Zimmer said it is not currently moving forward and the property may go back out for a new invitation for projects. McKee said it all that empty property seems awkward.

Zimmer concluded with information that Hudl has broken ground.

Hageman noted that for the South Haymarket, Commissioners will be on the email notification list that regarding the public Open House on October 8th.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:02 p.m.