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

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

Munn requested a motion approving the minutes for the meeting of February 16, 2017. Motion for approval made by Johnson, seconded by Gengler and carried 4-0: Gengler, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting ‘yes’; Bavitz, Francis and Hewitt absent.

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

Zimmer said it is somewhat unusual that the only part of this project within the boundaries of the historic district is this 3639 Apple Street house, which is to be demolished as part of the site plan, seen by this body last year with the special permit application. A condition placed on the special permit was that the project would return for review for standards of appropriateness. It makes sense to unite the discussion for the demolition with the discussion of the design.

Action:

Motion for approval of the certificate of appropriateness for demolition of 3639 Apple
Street made by McKee, seconded by Johnson and carried 4-0: Gengler, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting ‘yes’; Bavitz, Francis and Hewitt absent.

Jeff Monzu, architect with Leo A. Daly, 8600 Indian Hills Drive, Omaha, stated the design process has moved further along.

Meagan McColloch, architect with Leo A. Daly, 8600 Indian Hills Drive, Omaha, said the layout is very similar to what was presented before. One neighborhood concern was off-street parking. That was alleviated by having a large lot. The building will still hold the street edge to integrate better with the neighborhood. There is a service area off to the side with screening to keep it away from neighbors. The facade is broken up and incorporates more residential building materials such as cement board siding. Great effort was made to make sure the East Campus Community Organization (ECCO) were happy with the design.

Monzu said there will be one more working session with the ECCO planning group to fine-tune details like landscaping and the location of the fence.

Mary Belka, Secretary for the ECCO Board of Directors, stated the small planning committee working with the architects acknowledged that the neighbors who live closest to the fraternity have the most voice and are part of that working group.

Gengler asked if parking needs were met. McCollough said as of now, there are 76 stalls. The house can hold a maximum of 88, though it is not at capacity now, and not every member drives, so most parking will be captured by the lot. The requirement was for 67 stalls. Belka said ECCO is working with City Council member, Cyndi Lamm, to address the parking problem in the neighborhood surrounding East Campus. Monzu added that according to polls, there are usually 10-12 students who do not have cars.

Gengler asked if there is permanent street parking. Belka said yes, from 8:00-4:00. They are also working with the Clinton and Malone areas on parking as this has been an issue for many years near campuses. Johnson noted that some of the parking details do not directly relate to this project, but are things to keep in mind.

Monzu said there were a number of other provisions being worked out, mainly technical details, such as the power line through the middle of the property.

Gengler asked the expected construction schedule. McColough said the demolition will occur when students are out for the semester this spring. Construction will begin in June and the neighborhood will be kept in the loop to make sure they know what is happening. Completion is expected the following June or July.

Gengler asked if housing for students is taken care of. Monzu said everyone will have housing offsite, including in a housing project downtown. The time frame basically amounts to a school year.
Munn thought the character of the building is a sensitive solution. Gengler agreed. Zimmer said the letter mentions this is a multi-year process. Farmhouse has been very responsive to neighborhood concerns. In urban design terms, the building is very much in the same location; it does not look the same, but functions in the same way. Belka said the neighborhood has greatly appreciated the changes, especially since they amounted to some loss of income while students live out of the house. It really is a better design for the neighborhood.

Action:

Motion for approval of the certificate of appropriateness for the reconstruction of the FarmHouse Fraternity at 3601 Apple Street made by Gengler, seconded by Johnson and carried 4-0: Gengler, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Bavitz, Francis and Hewitt absent.

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR FY17-18 APPLICATION TO THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANT.

Zimmer said this is an annual process for a local government to be eligible for grant funds. Planning has been involved since 1984 and typically asks for in the range of approximately $20,000 to $25,000, which must be matched on a 40/60 basis, the “60” being that of the Historical Society. This year’s request is for the same amount as last year. A key project will be the Eastridge Neighborhood. In addition to that, another key project will be an upgrade in web presence within the Planning Department’s website. Omaha uses a program called “Story Map” which is built into the basic GIS program and will provide additional means to access information and will look cleaner. Stacey Groshong-Hageman will be the project manager, working with GIS staff. Zimmerman will help with writing and content. There is already a notable presence on wiki, particularly with architects, and that can be built upon. Another thing covered by grant funds is subscription fees to work on research sites. Commissioners and staff discussed various online research resources.

Zimmer added that it is possible they would be eligible for more funds, but he tries to fit this into the broad picture in terms of hours for the match. The hours count towards the match as long as they have a historic component. Staff cannot apply for the grant without the consent and permission of this body.

Action:

Gengler said this is terrific. She complimented the design, GIS, and research skills of staff and noted the convenience of being able to accomplish so much in-house.
Gengler moved approval of support for the FY17-18 Application for certified local government grant; seconded by Johnson and carried 4-0: Gengler, Johnson, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Bavitz, Francis and Hewitt absent.

FIRST DRAFT, NOMINATION OF EASTRIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES. MARCH 16, 2017

Zimmer explained that though this is a draft, it is substantive enough to present in front of this group. Some maps need to be strengthened. There is so much information about the area that presenting it can be challenging. Among the categories of significance are commerce and marketing. The Strauss Brothers were very active buying newspaper ads and publishing pamphlets. This was also the beginnings of Lincoln’s planning and subdivision process and was the most ambitious project of its period. Several notable people lived in the neighborhood, including the Mayor, the Planning Director, and all four partners in the Strauss Brothers organization.

The houses are not as high-style as others, but there is uniformity with variation within a range of styles built. That shows the amount of care and thought that went into the neighborhood. The landscaping was modest, but with the trees planted, the area is now in the midst of a forest. Only a few dozen out of the roughly 500 of the homes are non-contributing. Eastridge School’s appearance is altered by its added hipped roof and Eastridge Presbyterian church was also enveloped within additions.

Gengler asked if there are specific property types that repeat over and over. Zimmer said there are general characteristics that get refreshed and shift from year to year. Some of the specific models were matched up to specific existing houses. There are more like 2- to 3-dozen model-types, with variations like enclosed garages or number of bedrooms.

Zimmer said the southernmost portion of Mulder Drive is within an Eastidge Addition but was not built by the Strauss Brothers, but rather by Evans & Evans, at the end of the neighborhood’s development in the mid-1960s. Those houses are more typical ranch houses and are included to provide comparison. A shopping area was advertised and might have been proposed for the Pius X site, but that did not come to fruition; Gateway Mall is nearby so another shopping area did not makes sense. A school and church were planned and built. The neighborhood pool was not mentioned in the original planning, but was built quite early. It is non-contributing because the pool house was rebuilt. A neighborhood meeting will be held in the next month.

McKee noted that the neighborhood demographic is returning to the original demographic, with younger families moving in.

Gengler said she is aware that the houses were built in an unusual way, with narrow pockets between walls, and some contractors turned down the job because of this. Zimmer agreed that some speedy techniques were used and there was some off-site
building of trusses at a Strauss Brothers-owned lumber yard. The entire area was largely built in about five years and the whole development was filled within a decade.

Johnson asked if the streets follow the topography. Zimmer said the area tips down towards Randolph Street and the overall layout is quite contour-driven. The construction was rapid from north to south and there was hardly a clear delineation. McKee wondered if J Street was the first lettered street to run north and south. Zimmer said it could be, probably because it was a short street, it was not renamed, leading to the unusual intersection of J and Randolph Streets, which throughout the rest of the city parallel one another.

Zimmer said that 10-15% of residents were military families. There was also a good UNL representation, as well as entrepreneurs and middle management. Though not claimed as a category of historic significance, a few figures became prominent during and after their time in Eastridge.

McKee said the prices went up dramatically towards the end. Zimmer said the Strauss Brothers built some houses for themselves, but they are not dramatically different and do not stand out. McKee added that not many of the houses have been torn down. Zimmer said the integrity of the neighborhood is remarkably high. Part of the interest is in how the houses evolved slowly over time and that is itself historically interesting and is why rigid design standards would not be desirable. Gengler said there are comparable neighborhoods in Denver which have been interesting to research. Zimmer said the Strauss Brothers eventually ran into tough economic times.

Gengler complimented the map with single color grades. Zimmer said the span is quite tight so that map tells a story.

McKee thought the brothers built in other areas of Lincoln. Zimmer said the Trend Home name was used in other places. A redraft of the report will come forward in the near future.

**Staff Report and Misc.**

- Gengler said she is working with Department of Roads on the South Beltway area. There is a commemorative marker on the southwest corner of 70th and Saltillo that needs to be relocated. Spring Creek Prairie is being considered, as are locations near parking areas around trails. The marker is not site specific so the location is flexible, but Department of Roads hopes to find somewhere more visible to the public.

- Zimmer said there was a bronze plaque for Captain Donovan’s Cabin in the Haymarket, installed at the time of building in 1927. It stated the cabin was located 525 feet north. That plaque has been lost. McKee said when trying to locate it, he concluded the railroad may have taken it. Zimmer said there are still
people interested in getting a plaque remade and installed, but at the original cabin site, not on Lincoln Station.

- Munn said he worked with Tom Kaspar to design new bronze bowls that are being placed in the courtyards of the Capitol Building. They are based on a sketch done by Goodhue, but were never built. They arrived and are an impressive eight feet in height and weigh 4,000 pounds. It is a bittersweet memorial to Kaspar, who passed away just before they arrived. He put much effort into this project.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:43 p.m.