

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, July 20, 2017, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE** Liz Bavitz, Melissa Dirr-Gengler, Jim Hewitt, Jim Johnson, Greg McCown, and Greg Munn (Jim McKee absent); Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman, and Amy Huffman of the Planning Department.

**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.

Greg McCown, new Historic Preservation Commissioner, was welcomed by fellow Commissioners.

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 June 15, 2017. Motion for approval made by Johnson, seconded by Bavitz and carried 6-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown and Munn voting 'yes'; McKee absent.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 700 O STREET, IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT.**  
**(UDR17048)**

**JULY 20, 2017**

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

Ed Zimmer said this is an application from Lincoln Lancaster County Suicide Prevention Coalition to install public service signs on the west side of this building. One option is a full-wall mural with pattern in dark grey and dots and dashes. Ed suggested that in his opinion, covering the whole wall would not be a good precedent to establish. A unique circumstance with this building is that it is under demolition permission (Certificate of Allowance) in accordance with the Zoning Code as more than 6 months have expired since a certificate for demolition was denied by this Commission.

Rose Hood Buss, Co-Chair of Suicide Prevention Coalition, said Nebraska is in the top 10

nationwide for suicides between the ages of 10 and 24. In looking to involve the community as a whole, this proposed location became desirable for a mural because many youths spend time in the Haymarket and like the atmosphere. This building is set for demolition so they are working with the owners, WRK, to utilize the space in the meantime. The mural is something prominent to draw people to. It does not mention suicide prevention, but instead focuses on a message of hope and directions to the website, [hopelink.org](http://hopelink.org). This is one piece of a broader plan that includes public service announcements, community influencers, parents, and the community at large.

Eric Miller of StoryHook said that Ms. Buss approached them about doing larger pieces such as billboards. Since artwork has been installed in the alley, it has been nice to see more and more young people congregating and stopping and take photos; there is now something to engage with. The goal is to get them to engage in the same way with the mural as they do with the artwork in the alley.

Miller went on to say that this building was their first choice for a mural. The dots and dashes in the design are not random; they are Morse Code for "Speak up, bring hope". It may not be apparent, but it is a subtle design element that has been incorporated. It was recommended by Zimmer that the mural be placed on the west side, where people tend to walk, rather than on the south side. In general, they are open to any sign as long as it is a large piece that attracts the targeted demographic. The goal of the campaign is to normalize conversation about suicide and mental health.

Buss said they are checking on other locations since this location will be short term. This particular location will be rolled out this fall.

Gengler asked if other areas have been identified. Buss said they are considering locations around all the local universities and colleges since that is the targeted demographic. Gengler asked if the project is all murals. Buss said there are signs, posters, t-shirts and other mixed media, all part of the larger effort. The idea is to help people to step up and say they are struggling and to know they have a community to support them.

McCown noted that the placement of the arrows pointing towards a door in the mural design gives the impression that they are headquartered in that location. He suggested adding a kiosk or something people could interact with. Miller agreed, noting that the west side has been challenging to work with due to the windows and doors. His concern would be that anything that can be picked up could get destroyed easily. Buss agreed that they do not want to put anything out that will just end up as litter.

Johnson commented that WRK might be willing to allow a sign in the door with the phone number or website listed.

Buss said the coalition also wants to put signs in parking garages, so something similar could be placed in the door indicating there are resources available if people need help.

Bavitz asked what the time frame of this project. Buss said a September rollout is the goal since that is Suicide Prevention month. The Governor will issue a proclamation at that time and it will be a good opportunity to make the community aware of the campaign.

McCown asked if there was some other way to incorporate the smaller sign with the dots and dashes, as opposed to going with covering an entire wall. Miller said the message would be smaller, but they can create a mock up.

Munn said he applauds the efforts being made. The larger design, however, divorces the building from the historic character of its surroundings. The smaller option seems warmer and more welcoming. The message of “speak up, bring hope” stands out better without the background. McCown agreed, adding that it would be a bonus to make the murals look aged to bring it into the Haymarket community.

Munn asked if the murals will be painted directly on the bricks. Miller said it depends on the size. They have looked into a vinyl wrap that mimics the appearance of painted brick that could be easily removed. He likes the idea of no backdrop. If it were smaller, he would want it on the alley side. Munn said that the fact it is on the brick will give it texture. Zimmer commented that to add the sign to the alley side would be challenging given the time frame and multiple parties that have an interest. There is a north wall that makes seems somewhat a part of the alley, but people would only see the mural if they stumble upon it. Miller said the spacing on that wall is worse due to the windows.

Zimmer said that seldom in Haymarket are their major wall signs painted on front walls, but they are common on side walls. The south side is a major street of sorts, but the west side is highly prominent and definitely a side wall. The activity on Canopy Street is busier than on O Street underneath the viaduct and probably is also more in line with their key demographic.

**Action:**

Gengler commended the project and noted this is a highly visible vantage point. She moved to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> alternative without the backdrop. Johnson seconded.

Buss asked if it would be acceptable to shrink the “hopelink” and put the backdrop behind it.

Gengler said she likes the way it looks and seeing the “hopelink” on the building is clearer. It is preferable from a design and historic preservation standpoint. Johnson agreed and said the sign on the door would be appropriate. Gengler said it would even work with the “Speak up bring hope”.

Motion carried, 6-0:

Bavitz, Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown, and Munn voting 'yes'.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 801 R STREET, IN THE HAYMARKET  
LANDMARK DISTRICT.  
(UDR17050)**

**JULY 20, 2017**

Ryan Haffey, Nebraska Sigh Company, said this sign for "Blown" was voted on in the past and approved.

Gengler asked if this is a hair salon. Haffey said yes, that question was asked the last time the establishment was here. They have been in that location for two years but never put the sign up.

Gengler asked if the location is across from the Rabbit Hole Bakery. Haffey said yes.

Zimmer said he recommends the non-illuminated sign that would be bolted on to the aviation cable.

Johnson said it does make the location more visible.

**Action:**

Bavitz moved approval, seconded by Johnson.

Haffey stated he does not believe Building and Safety will allow the sign to be mounted to the cable so it will have to be physically mounted to the structure, like Rabbit Hole.

Bavitz asked if that is an issue, from a historical preservation standpoint. Zimmer clarified the Building and Safety will not allow visible support of the sign itself. Haffey said it also states the sign cannot hang from cables or chains. Zimmer said he regards this as railing, though Building and Safety may consider it differently. It does not swing.

Motion carried 6-0:

Bavitz, Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown, and Munn voting 'yes'.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 151 N. 8<sup>th</sup> STREET, IN THE HAYMARKET  
LANDMARK DISTRICT.  
(UDR17049)**

**JULY 20, 2017**

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

Haffey said this applicant wants to put many signs on this building, but he has been talked into combining them onto one single, permanent, projecting sign. The owner's original idea was to put signs for every tenant. With the proposed directory sign, as tenants change, the signs can come and go easily. That makes it easier for him if he has an open space and it is easier for this body. The tenant pushed back about the all black and white design presented; they prefer to allow color logos.

Gengler asked the dimensions for the sign. Haffey thought it was roughly 4 feet by 20 feet.

Bavitz asked if the other signs are coming down. Haffey said the only one this will affect right now is Hudl. The existing sushi place to the north and Scooters will keep their signs. The Scooters sign is causing the spacing issues. If approved, every tenant with a major space would be on an existing sign, so moving forward, there would only be changes to the faces.

Hewitt asked if Hudl plans to stay in this building. Haffey said no, they will move to their new building in October and that sign will come down.

Zimmer said there is an interpretation issue on projecting signs. Projecting signs by themselves are not stated in the sign code to have a spacing requirement, but in a phrase about freestanding signs, it says a "projecting sign" may be substituted for a "freestanding sign". This is not much of an issue in Haymarket because there are not many freestanding signs, which must be located at least 50 feet apart. The interpretation has been that the spacing rule, by implication, applies to projecting signs also.

Haffey there has been talk to the effect that a clear rule needs to be established by setting a precedent or by getting it written into the code. In a freestanding sign world, it makes sense to have the 50-foot spacing. Zimmer noted that when this is applied to projecting signs in an area like Havelock, where 25 feet is a common module between stores, that would mean if one store has a projecting sign, the neighboring store cannot. There are few spots like that in Haymarket, like Tavern on the Green, Vincenzo's and Lazlo's. There could be solutions specifically written for Haymarket in the Haymarket sign code. That would take action by HPC, Planning Commission, and City Council action. There could be a change to the sign code itself saying projecting and freestanding are not the same for every purpose. The point is that there is a valid question raised about the interpretation. This gives an opportunity for Nebraska Sign to frame the question with a specific example and revisit whether that interpretation is accurate. This body is not asked to judge that interpretation, but only to judge whether this is an appropriate sign for this building.

Haffey commented that decisions should still come through HPC to decide on a case-by-case basis what is appropriate.

Munn said the rules make sense for neon signs for places like restaurants. The situation is

different for office and commercial spaces. We often talk about a sign located high above the street and there is a question of where to enter to get to those businesses. Haffey said that in this case, all the tenants enter through a single door.

McCown asked if the sign is illuminated. Haffey said it is illuminated. The panels are cut open, similar to Leadbelly's, aluminum panels open to the background where the lighting is inside and obscured so at night it just glows. Zimmer said it is not a glowing plastic face, but lit from within the cabinet, shining between the layers of opaque material.

Johnson asked if the sign faces both directions or is one-sided. Haffey said it is projecting at a 90-degree angle off the building, so it is double facing.

Zimmer said that as a smaller point, in the Telegraph District, they are using a similar concept of a single structure they could attach signs to. It has a "streets of Paris" theme. This should be visually distinct from that. If this is approved, the design should change to a geometric pattern or something that is clearly not the organic nature of the Telegraph District. The concept of being able to bolt a sign onto the structure is a good idea, but it should be visually distinct.

Gengler observed that the background makes the sign more difficult to read. Haffey said that it appears that way in the 2D version, but once the depth, the distraction is not there.

McCown asked how much farther beyond 6 feet the sign projects out beyond the cornice stone at the top. Haffey said from the cornice stone, not very much. The double layer of brick conceals the lower support structure portion. Zimmer said if question is whether the entire sign comes out farther than the cornice, it does, by a couple of feet. McCown said it seems large for the space to him. Zimmer said it seems like a lot numerically and on paper, but on a building, it is not out of scale. Haffey said it is similar in size to other signs in the area.

Munn asked if there was any thought given to putting it on the pilaster instead of the wall panel, noting that it is obscuring part of the architecture of the building. Haffey said he is worried there is not enough access there since it has to be sandwiched to the back side of the wall to make it secure enough. He is not saying it could not be done, but where it is proposed, there is access from the stairwell. Bavitz said that is too bad because she also likes Munn's idea. Munn observed it would also be closer to the door. Bavitz said it would be more meaningful to the composition if moved. She asked if it is an absolute 'no' to move the sign. Haffey said if this body said that is what has to happen, then a solution would be figured out, but he hopes the placement will not change.

Munn wondered if blade signs are more typically for restaurants whereas business signs are usually flat. Haffey said this was a good solution for getting enough visibility for all of the tenants. The sushi restaurant has a huge sign but only 2,000 square feet while some of these tenants are two to three times larger and only get a small sign space. That was the tradeoff. If

the spaces become smaller, the number of signs on this structure could go up to accommodate that.

Bavitz asked Munn if a flat sign would be preferable to him. Munn said a flat sign at a lower level might look better than adding more blade signs. Haffey said tenants want a sign to be visible enough so they are easy to find. Munn commented that in terms of function, the blade signs are useful if he is trying to spot somewhere to eat quickly, but when it comes to finding an office, the address is most likely known. Gengler asked if the target for the sign was more for drivers than pedestrians. Haffey said that is likely the goal.

Gengler asked what type of public is involved where the tenants are located there now. She wondered if a lot of people come and go. Haffey said Fuse has lots of events. Johnson said he had trouble finding Fuse when he attended an event, but as long as he could find the building, he would be able to figure out which entrance to use. Haffey said there is quite a bit of foot traffic to the tenants there. In other historic communities, there are more projecting signs.

Munn agreed it is a good way to organize the signs. Haffey said the nice thing about it is that it gives Speedway the chance to tell prospective tenants ahead of time what they will be getting, in terms of signage.

Zimmer said that, if found appropriate, he recommends leniency with logo colors. Adding color does not change the appropriateness and could make it more effective. Gengler said she agreed since the color could be recognizable at a glance as part of the business branding.

Gengler asked if the "151" address will be prominent. Haffey said that is important to Speedway. Gengler said that could be more critical than the individual signs to people hunting for the location. Haffey agreed it would be nice for a business to be able to say they are in the "151 Building" and have that be recognizable. There is talk of a branding campaign for the building since lots of space will open up when Hudl leaves.

Bavitz asked if all of the existing metalwork on the building is black since that will better complement the proposed sign. Zimmer said the window frames are very dark, if not black.

Gengler asked if this limits the owner from coming back at a future date to request additional signs. Haffey said it gives HPC a better chance to say that a concession was made for this larger sign, so the expectation is that it be used.

**Action:**

Gengler moved to approve the sign with the understanding that this is the signage for the building in its entirety beyond what already exists.

McCown said he likes the fact that the "151" is included in the sign. Gengler said she believes that is critical.

Johnson seconded the motion.

Bavitz wondered if the option for color is included in the motion. Gengler responded that although the presentation is in black and white, the motion would not be limited to that. Logo colors could be included.

Hewitt asked if they have to go to Building and Safety after this and whether the motion also includes that.

Gengler made a friendly amendment to her motion to approve the sign, with the address number and logos, provided the interpretation from the Building and Safety Department concurs with the interpretation made by this body that this is signage is meant to encompass building tenants in entirety.

Zimmer affirmed that the motion makes it clear that this body is judging appropriateness for the district with the understanding that there is still a question of interpretation to be considered. This body takes the position as a Commission that this sign should be sufficient for the upstairs tenants.

Bavitz asked if something should be included about the background. Gengler expressed that is getting into details. The concept of the sign is fine in her mind even if the background is not the preference. She asked if that part is easily changed. Haffey said that is the actual structure of the sign so it could not be changed easily, once built.

McCown said he assumed there was ownership interest based on the similarity of the background to that of the Telegraph District. He assumes they would want this to be more distinct so people would not make that connection. Zimmer said he will work on that portion based on discussion today.

Hewitt seconded the amended motion; carried 6-0: Bavitz, Gengler, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown, and Munn voting 'yes'.

### **Staff Report and Misc.**

Zimmer said he is hoping to have two landmark applications for the August meeting. One will be for the University Place City Hall. They seek to use Nebraska State rehabilitation credits, which can be used by a non-profit and sold to a taxable entity. That would close the gap in their fund raising efforts. It will not be a stretch to say they are a landmark. They are also involving the building just to the north. If the argument can be made that the north building could also

qualify as part of the landmark, that would benefit them greatly, but he is unsure yet whether that will be possible.

The second one is for Trabert Hall, which the County is getting ready to put on the market. It was the former nurses residence at the old St. Elizabeth and it has significance both architecturally and historically. The County Board and staff initially proposed to just zone it B-3 and get the pricing they seek. Planning Department let them know that it is not a B-3 site since it is adjacent to a school, a nursing home and a residential area and is more logically considered part of that R-4 District. If they want to support the current uses, they could apply for the Landmark and special permit. It would not be difficult to argue that the office or residential use is appropriate. Both of those would support a similar asking price.

Hewitt asked how the apartments in the old hospital in University Place are coming along. Zimmer said that project is now occupied and the apartments are very pleasant, unique units.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

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