MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, August 17, 2017, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska


OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Zimmer and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Deb Schorr, County Board of Commissioners; Susan McIntosh Kriz with the Lux Center for the Arts; John and Terry Thomas from the Burgess House; Chelsey Pounds; and Matt Olberding from the Lincoln Journal Star.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Acting Chair Jim McKee 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.

McKee requested a motion approving the minutes for the meeting of July 20, 2017. Motion for approval made by Johnson, seconded by McCown and carried 5-0: Bavitz, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown and McKee voting ‘yes’; Dirr Gengler and Munn absent.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON TWO APPLICATIONS FOR TRABERT HALL, 2202 S. 11TH STREET: DESIGNATION AS LANDMARK (CZ17020) AND SPECIAL PERMIT FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION (SP17030)

PUBLIC HEARING: AUGUST 17, 2017

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

Ed Zimmer stated that the County needs to establish a fair price and the zoning for the planned sale of Trabert Hall. It is zoned P Public Use today. It can’t be sold out of public ownership and retain the P zoning. The adjacent zoning is principally R-4 Residential. This property has been
in office use for about half a century. The application on behalf of the County is for a change of zone to R-4 zoning, with landmark designation and a special permit for historic preservation. Zimmer mentioned that the Commission doesn’t usually see a pre-emptive special permit prior to a sale. In this case it is necessary to establish for potential purchasers how this property can be used. It will likely come back at some point in the future for any adjustments. He believes this gives a predictable path forward. He recommends this easily qualifies for a landmark. He recommends approval of the landmark designation. Then, with a landmark designation, it will it be eligible for a special permit. These two applications will go as a package to appear before Planning Commission, then onto City Council.

Historically, Saint Elizabeth Hospital had a large, complex site. It was probably the largest square footage in a single building in Lincoln in the 1920s. The building was designed in 1928 by a Kentucky architect, D.X. Murphy & Brother. The firm still operates today under a different name. He would call the design institutional gothic revival. There is a limestone vestibule at the main, north entrance and metal-clad vestibules at the east and west entrances. There was an addition in 1960. The hospital itself was torn down in 1994, except for the chapel, which is now a landmark. When St. Elizabeth moved to S. 70th St., the County acquired the property. The former Nurses Home was named for J. Earle Trabert, Director of the County Welfare Department. He worked for the Nebraska Dept. of Welfare for 27 years, then almost a decade for Lancaster County. In 1972, the County Board named this Trabert Hall in his honor.

The special permit request is for 60 dwelling units. 60 units would work well with the existing parking stalls on the Trabert parcel, east of the building. There is an easement across the north parking lot. Most of that parking lot belongs to the Lancaster Rehabilitation Center. There is shared use of the parking lot. Trabert Hall backs against the neighborhood and the school grounds. Either residential or office use would have minimal impact to the neighborhood.

Deb Schorr stated that this was presented to the neighborhood at a meeting earlier this week. She didn’t hear any objections.

McCown questioned the size of the parcel. Zimmer replied it is 2.7 acres. McCown wondered about the size of the building footprint. Zimmer believes it is around 1/4 acre for the building footprint. McCown asked if the potential buyers would have the option to build on this parcel. Zimmer noted it would only occur under landmark review. You can’t simply come in and subdivide the land. There would be steps under the Preservation Ordinance to tear down the building and do something different.

McKee doesn’t believe anything could be built to the east. Zimmer believes there is some area behind the property. You could possibly build a southern addition.

McCown wondered about the overall condition of the property. Zimmer replied it is not great
but it is sturdily built with “strong bones.” It has been office space for a long time.

McCown questioned if this is all on one big boiler, or if there are any asbestos issues. Schorr is not aware of the condition of the boiler. Asbestos concerns were discussed regarding pipe wraps in some locations. Zimmer has heard it is behind drywall and encapsulated. Demolition would have to deal with any asbestos removal. He would guess any rehab use would involve mechanicals and asbestos removal.

Zimmer noted that this doesn’t determine what happens to this property. It provides opportunities.

McCown asked if there has been any interest in this property. Schorr stated there have been four inquiries.

**ACTION:**

Johnson moved to recommend approval of the change of zone to R-4 Residential zoning, with a landmark designation, seconded by Bavitz and carried 5-0: Bavitz, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown and McKee voting ‘yes’; Dirr Gengler and Munn absent.

Johnson moved to recommend approval of the special permit for historic preservation as described, seconded by Bavitz and carried 5-0: Bavitz, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown and McKee voting ‘yes’; Dirr Gengler and Munn absent.

**RECOMMENDATION ON LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF FORMER UNIVERSITY PLACE CITY HALL, NOW LUX CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 2601 N. 48TH STREET (CZ17022)**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**  
AUGUST 17, 2017

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

Zimmer stated that the Lux Center is the original City Hall and Fire Station of University Place. It was designed by John R. Smith. In cooperation with Nebraska Wesleyan University, this became a gallery. It was named in honor of Gladys Lux. They have expanded their program into a ceramics center west of the main building. They also have art classes. The main entrance is now on the south side. There is a stone balconet on the east façade bearing the title “City Hall”. The south side originally had three bays including two large doors for firefighting equipment. Some interior features remain. The bay for fire engines is the main gallery. The best interior feature is the stairway. Architect John R. Smith was a Lincoln High graduate who lived in University Place. Gladys Lux was a Professor Emeritus of the Nebraska Wesleyan Art Dept. She purchased the City Hall in 1985 and deeded the building to the Lincoln
Community Foundation. This has been on a major fundraising campaign which still has a gap to close. Landmark designaton would allow for a state tax credit. They have been in contact with the State Historical Society. This is the purpose driving the project.

Bavitz thinks it is wonderful that the building is used for art. She assumed it was already designated. McCown agreed. It is a great building.

Zimmer sees this as a great preservation purpose.

Susan McIntosh Kriz stated that they want to take care of what is there. This will allow them to renovate and upgrade the air conditioning and heating, along with other items.

**ACTION:**

Bavitz moved approval of the landmark designation, seconded by McCown and carried 5-0: Bavitz, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown and McKee voting ‘yes’; Dirr Gengler and Munn absent.

**RECOMMENDATION ON TWO APPLICATIONS FOR BURGESS HOUSE AT 6501 SW 40TH STREET:**
**DESIGNATION AS A LANDMARK (CZ17024) AND SPECIAL PERMIT FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION FOR A B&B INN (SP17031)**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** AUGUST 17, 2017

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

Zimmer stated that this property is located in Lancaster County, outside the Lincoln city limits, but in the city’s three-mile zoning jurisdiction. Its zoning status is therefore similar to Westview B&B. Lincoln doesn’t mention bed and breakfast inns in its zoning code and neither does the County. This property is just north of Denton Rd. and falls within the city three-mile zoning jurisdiction, and therefore eligible to seek landmark designation under the Lincoln code.

The applicants’ parcel is 29 acres, Zimmer is suggesting that 10 acres encompassing the tree masses around the house be included in the landmark designation.

Mr. Thomas is great grandson of Joseph and Annie Burgess, builders of the house. The previous Burgess home was burned down from fireworks soon after it was substantially renovated. The style is American Four-Square or Prairie Box. The house has substantial windbreaks around it. The barn still remains.

It is very well-maintained and has excellent integrity. It is an exceptionally fine setting. This house has six bedrooms. Two bed and breakfast suites are prepared with the possibility of a third. The impact seems negligible or beneficial. A light use is being proposed. Residential
acreages are the land use to the east and south.

Johnson would be more concerned about the growth of the City imposing on this property. John Thomas stated that directly to the south are three to five acre lots. It is still farmed directly to the north. Ownership of the farmstead is shared amongst some of the Burgess family.

Zimmer created a parcel of a simple rectangle around the property. It didn’t seem prudent to landmark farm ground.

McCown wondered if this was an original homestead. Mr. Thomas replied not as far as he knows. This property was purchased. Terry Thomas believes it was purchased from Otto Flake.

Bavitz asked if they have talked about their proposal with the neighbors. Mrs. Thomas stated that they moved to this property about seven years ago, and have always made it known of their intention to turn this into a bed and breakfast. It was her opinion that most people seemed indifferent or liked the idea. They have always been vocal about their intentions for this property. It provides a place for a lot of people to get away, but town is close.

Zimmer added that this application was subject to a mandatory notification by the Planning Dept. and he hasn’t receive any comments.

Bavitz thinks this is a wonderful place. She thanked the owners for preserving the property. McCown agreed.

**ACTION:**

Johnson moved to recommend approval of landmark designation, seconded by Bavitz and carried 5-0: Bavitz, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown and McKee voting ‘yes’; Dirr Gengler and Munn absent.

Johnson moved to recommend approval of the special permit for historic preservation for a Bed & Breakfast Inn, seconded by Bavitz and carried 5-0: Bavitz, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown and McKee voting ‘yes’; Dirr Gengler and Munn absent.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 801 P STREET IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT (UDR17057)**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** AUGUST 17, 2017

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

Zimmer stated that this is a simple request. The new owners want to use the dock as an outdoor drinking and dining portion. The former establishment had it configured for such a use. This is just new furniture.

McKee approved Hopcat and had some reservations at the time. Zimmer noted that came for an advisory review for being in the West Haymarket area. This is somewhat similar.

McKee questioned if they plan to take in the chair cushions every night. It could be a great spot for sleeping. The space has a pretty good cover over it. Zimmer stated that this is a furniture review since it will be on a public sidewalk. They have to go through the licensing process for a sidewalk café and a separate process if they want a liquor permit.

McCown noted that none of this looks like metal furniture. He wondered if it will be affixed to the platform. Zimmer replied no. McCown asked if it will be chained or cabled so the furniture doesn’t walk off during the night. Zimmer replied that a lot of other business owners either chain or cable, take it into the store for overnight or store it for the winter.

**ACTION:**

Johnson moved approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for patio furniture as presented, seconded by Bavitz and carried 5-0: Bavitz, Hewitt, Johnson, McCown and McKee voting ‘yes’; Dirr Gengler and Munn absent.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.