

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, May 23, 2013, 8:00 a.m., Room 214, County/City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Christie Dionisopoulos, Tom Laging, Karen Nalow, Jeff Searcy and Cecil Steward. John Kay and Jon Weinberg absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Lynn Johnson and JJ Yost (Parks & Rec); Bob Ripley and Matt Hansen(Capitol Commission); Marvin Krout, Ed Zimmer, Sara Hartzell, Stacey Hageman and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

The meeting was called to order at 8 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Adoption of meeting record of March 28 and April 1, 2013

Steward moved approval of the March 28 and April 1, 2013 meeting records, seconded by Dionisopoulos. Motion carried 5-0; Dionisopoulos, Laging, Nalow, Searcy, and Steward voting 'yes'; Kay and Weinberg absent.

Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of 1236 H Street in the Capitol Environs District.

Zimmer stated that he has not received any information on this project at this time.

Centennial Mall Update

Yost stated that phase 1 of the Centennial Mall project includes the three blocks of Centennial Mall that are open to traffic. Landscaping is going in this week and is a little more than half done in terms of installation of plant material. It is anticipated to be completed next week. The second phase will be the 8 intersections of the Mall, specifically the aesthetic treatments of those intersections. That project is close to going to bid. There is a final review of traffic flow for that phase with Public Works. They hope this will go out to bid in a couple weeks with a contractor on site in mid-July. The goal is to get those intersections completed by the end of the year. They are coordinating this project with other projects in downtown to minimize the traffic impacts. They will work on the intersections one or two at a time and they will begin on the north end. There will be signalized crosswalks on both sides of the Mall, and a funding strategy is in place to cover the costs of this. Phase 3 is the two blocks on the north and the two blocks on the south. They are working on a final design. They want to get this project out to bid in late summer or early fall and under contract this year. They want to wrap up the project in entirety by the end of next year.

Ripley complimented the Commission members and staff for their efforts on getting the crosswalks on both sides of the Mall.

Laging asked how far down the P Street renovations go. Yost stated that it stops at the Mall. Nalow added that there is a Master Plan for a larger area.

Ripley asked if there has been conversation with the artist on the placement of the two granite boulders. Johnson stated that they have worked with the artist and will get his approval.

Laging asked if the state seal is still part of the design. Yost stated that the state seal is part of the southernmost fountain. Nalow stated that it will be granite and gray in color, instead of matching the blue of the seal. Ripley suggested that they use a color that contrasts with the color of the concrete as it will disappear. Nalow stated that the surrounding material will be concrete uni-pavers and will be darker in color so there is a contrast. Laging asked which direction the seal faces. Nalow stated that it faces north so that you can read it when you are facing the capitol.

Ripley asked about the current Capitol curb line on K Street as it is a safety problem when busses park there long-term during student tours of the capitol. Yost stated that the current proposal does not move the curb line on K Street. There is an alternate bid is to move that curb line so that it comes back out in line with the rest of K Street.

Johnson stated that the fundraising committee is working on recognition of agriculture and contributions to the state. They would encourage companies to purchase tribute tiles to be used in the Spirit of Nebraska pathway. They are also working on the First People of the Plains tribute. They would like to have recognition of 24 tribes that had connections to what became the state of Nebraska. Another piece would be recognition of native tribes. They are continuing to work with technology and public access along the Mall and dedicated data access for news media along the Mall and getting a web cam. A new piece is that the University of Nebraska sesquicentennial in 2019 and perhaps in the north two blocks there may be an opportunity of telling a little bit of the history of the University.

Johnson distributed a list of Nebraska Hall of Fame Honorees for the Notable Nebraskans tiles. He asked for the Commission's approval to begin the process of considering public memorials on the Mall. Zimmer suggested that due to legal public notice requirements, the Commission can give direction to bring these honorees forward for consideration; a Certificate of Appropriateness could be awarded at a future meeting. Steward asked about continuity in developing this list and an ongoing list. Johnson stated that they are developing an ongoing system to develop a process for the criteria for the honorees and notables. Steward asked the Commission to consider a sub-Committee to work on the Notable Nebraskans tiles. We need a comprehensive policy. Searcy asked Zimmer to bring some suggestions to the Commission at its next meeting on how to begin this process. Zimmer stated that staff will work on a draft document to bring to the Commission.

Searcy moved to give approval to begin the process of developing the Notable Nebraskans tiles, seconded by Steward. Motion carried 4-0; Dionisopoulos, Laging, Searcy, and Steward voting 'yes'; Nalow abstained; Kay and Weinberg absent.

Steward moved to request that staff organize a draft of an outline strategy for future approvals of recognitions within and along the Mall for consideration at a future meeting, seconded by Laging. Motion carried 5-0; Dionisopoulos, Laging, Nalow, Searcy, and Steward voting 'yes'; Kay and Weinberg absent.

“Focus group” discussion with Sara Hartzell (Planning staff), part of Planning Department’s self-evaluation of processes and effectiveness

Hartzell stated that the Planning Department recently conducted a self-assessment survey to evaluate how the Planning Department is doing and how the City sees itself moving forward on the growth of Lincoln. She would like to get comments from the Commission on how we can improve contact and information with the Planning Department.

She asked the Commissioners how they view growth and development in Lincoln. Comments included

- Lincoln is in a positive buzz and that stems from a lot of great people working hard to get to this point; the working relationship with Planning is excellent, and having representation from the capitol is helpful.
- There are some conditions in Planning that need more public attention, one specifically is subarea planning and the importance of edge relationships to the city.
- Some of the outlying areas of Lincoln keep getting bigger and broader and lack an identity. A coordinated development process is needed. This may take public and private entities working together.
- Efforts in downtown may be taking away from the efforts in the perimeter. There is a concern with the subpar building materials with some of the developments.
- How land is developed is very important. Design standards can play into making improvements and it is great to see the reFORM design standards taking place.

Hartzell asked the Commission how the Planning Department can serve the Commission better.

Comments included:

- Commissioners expressed their gratitude to Ed Zimmer for all his work.
- Perhaps an urban design staff member is needed at some point in the future.
- Turn the question around as to what the Commission can do to serve the Planning Department better.
- Thank the Commission for their work on the Centennial Mall project.

Miscellaneous

Ripley stated that he would like to see a policy stating that nothing be mounted to ornamental street poles in the capitol environs district. We have a clean environs district on the south and west axis with the exception of the Goodhue Boulevard at McPhee School. There needs to be a consistent policy put in place. He hopes that any traffic or parking signs are not mounted to street furniture. He would like to request that Public Works work in a like manner on the two poles in front of McPhee.

Laging moved to not permit signs on poles in the capitol environs district and the two at McPhee as well, seconded by Dionisopoulos.

Steward expressed a concern that this is a specific design environment. He wondered if there are several requests that could be made to bundle it for the district. Ripley stated that there are a few items that are not consistent, but they are individual hit or miss things, and they are already addressed. Nalow asked if we need coordination with Public Works for other utilities as well.

Steward offered an amendment that we hold this motion over to next month's agenda and the designers and the capitol architect attempt to identify other elements that can be added as a package. Motion carried 5-0; Dionisopoulos, Laging, Nalow, Searcy, and Steward voting 'yes'; Kay and Weinberg absent.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:23 a.m.

Please note that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Capitol Environs Commission.

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