MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP:	PLANNING COMMISSION
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:	Wednesday, March 16, 2016, 1:00 p.m., Hearing Room 112 on the first floor of the County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Cathy Beecham, Tracy Corr (arrived at 2:20 p.m.), Maja V. Harris, Chris Hove, Jeanelle Lust, and Lynn Sunderman. (Michael Cornelius, Dennis Scheer, and Ken Weber absent); David Cary, Steve Henrichsen, Paul Barnes, Tom Cajka, Andrew Thierolf, Brian Will, and Geri Rorabaugh of the Planning Department; media and other interested citizens.
STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:	Regular Planning Commission meeting

Chair Chris Hove called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the back of the room.

David Cary, Planning Director, came forward to introduce the new Long Range Planning Manager, Paul Barnes. Planning Commissioners have known him for the past few years as a Development Review Planner and the lead on the South Haymarket Neighborhood Plan that was just approved last December. It is very exciting to have Paul fill this position. He will do a great job.

Paul Barnes stepped forward to state that this is officially his fifth day as Long Range Manager and he and his division have been diving into the LRTP, CIP, and the Comp Plan Update. There is a lot going on in this division, so taking the pressure off of the Director, who occupied both positions for a period of time, is an appreciated opportunity. He is looking forward to working with the Long Range Division and with Commissioners in this new role. There are many good plans and projects underway. The Commissioners congratulated Mr. Barnes.

Hove requested a motion approving the minutes for the regular meeting held March 2, 2016. Motion for approval made by Lust, seconded by Harris and carried 5-0: Beecham, Harris, Lust, Sunderman, and Hove voting 'yes'; Cornelius, Corr, Scheer, and Weber absent.

CONSENT AGENDA
PUBLIC HEARING & ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION: **March 16, 2016**

Members present: Beecham, Harris, Hove, Lust, Sunderman; Corr, Cornelius, Scheer, and Weber absent.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items: **ANNEXATION NO. 16002; CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 04054D; CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 16002; and COUNTY CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 16003**.

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Lust moved approval of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Sunderman and carried 5-0: Beecham, Harris, Lust, Sunderman, and Hove voting 'yes'; Cornelius, Corr, Scheer, and Weber absent.

TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 16003
AMENDING THE CITY OF LINCOLN DESIGN STANDARDS FOR OUTDOOR LIGHTING BY ADDING CHAPTER 3.100
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION: March 16, 2016

and

TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 16005
AMENDING SECTION 26.27.005 OF THE LINCOLN MUNICIPAL CODE
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION: March 16, 2016

Members present: Beecham, Harris, Hove, Lust, Sunderman; Corr, Cornelius, Scheer, and Weber absent.

Staff recommendation: Approval.

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Staff presentation: Tom Cajka of the Planning Department introduced Eric Steffen from Lincoln Electric System (LES) who is on hand to answer questions. Text Amendment 16003 is to add Section 3.100 to the Design Standards requiring that all street lights in new subdivisions be LED. Currently, they are high-pressure sodium. The City and LES have been working together on a variety of issues since 2013 and are now ready to move forward with this portion. LEDs are more energy efficient, last longer, and have lower maintenance costs, though up front, they cost more, averaging $185 per pole. Text Amendment 16005 to the Subdivision Ordinance allows the City to subsidize increased costs associated with the required improvements for previously approved final plats. Since final plats already approved fall under the current standards, they would not be required to put in the LED. To encourage them, the City is willing to subsidize the difference in cost between the previous light fixtures and the LED. Again, this is only for previously approved final plats.

Eric Steffen, Lincoln Electric System, stated the biggest benefit for LED lighting is the maintenance savings over the life of the fixture. They are tested to last at least 25-30 years without maintenance. The high pressure sodium fixtures have a bulb that will go out in 4-5 years, so that cost is reduced substantially. There is less light trespass with LEDs since the diodes can be aimed exactly where they need to be on the roadway. Environmentally, they use less electricity so will save on the carbon footprint.

Hove asked if the LED lights use a completely different fixture, and if they therefore cannot be converted. Steffen said correct, the old would have to be completely replaced. Hove asked for confirmation that there is no plan in place to replace the old, and that this will only apply to new fixtures. Steffen confirmed this only applies to a new fixture. Hove went on, for clarification, to say that in some way, this effectively transfers some cost to the developer who pays the additional price for the light, but then the City gets the benefit. That is why the subsidy is there to help. From here on out, it will be the developer's responsibility. Cajka said with new subdivisions, it is the case that the developer is responsible for paying for light installation, then LES takes over. Steffen agreed that the City takes over ownership, and LES maintains the fixtures.

Sunderman asked if there has been any feedback from the development community. Cajka said they were notified of the change and no feedback was received.

Hove asked if LES is the applicant. Cajka said yes.

There was no public testimony on this item.

TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 16003
ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION: **March 16, 2016**

Lust moved approval, seconded by Beecham.

Lust stated this is a good public policy that will save City costs in the long-term. Without objection from the development community, it is a good plan and should move forward.

Hove said he echoes those thoughts. Although there is some cost transfer, it is good for the City and it will save money.

Motion for approval carried 5-0: Beecham, Harris, Lust, Sunderman, and Hove voting 'yes'; Cornelius, Corr, Scheer, and Weber absent. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 16005
ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION: **March 16, 2016**

Lust moved approval, seconded by Harris.

Lust said this is a good plan implemented by the City to assist in absorbing some of the cost that developers had not initially planned for as part of their development. She supports this.

Hove agreed.

Motion carried 5-0: Beecham, Harris, Lust, Sunderman, and Hove voting 'yes'; Cornelius, Corr, Scheer, and Weber absent. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 16005
FROM H-2 HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT
TO B-5 PLANNED REGIONAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
GENERALLY LOCATED AT 225 NORTH COTNER BOULEVARD
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION: March 16, 2016

Members present: Beecham, Harris, Hove, Lust, Sunderman; Corr, Cornelius, Scheer, and Weber absent.

Staff recommendation: Approval.

and

PRE-EXISTING USE PERMIT NO. 3AG
TO AMEND THE BOUNDARY OF GATEWAY MALL USE PERMIT
AND AUTHORITY TO CONSTRUCT MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING OR COMMERCIAL
AT PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED AT 225 NORTH COTNER BOULEVARD
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION: March 16, 2016

Members present: Beecham, Harris, Hove, Lust, Sunderman; Corr, Cornelius, Scheer, and Weber absent.

Staff recommendation: Conditional Approval.

There were no ex parte communications disclosed.

Staff presentation: Andrew Thierolf of the Planning Department came forward to state the Change of Zone from R-2 Residential to P Public is in an area with an existing substation and parking lot, so this element is a clean-up on the map to reflect the current use. There is an additional request for a Change of Zone from H-2 Highway to B-5, Business, which is a Use Permit District. It includes an area on the west end across Cotner Street and is currently a Home Real Estate office building.

The applicant is looking to construct an apartment complex with up to 153 dwelling units, or up to 36,000 square feet of commercial space. The upper floors will be residential and some portion of the ground floor may have commercial, but the exact number has not yet been determined. The Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as a primary redevelopment node with 500-1,000 new units and the development of walkable, mixed-use centers. There are many employers and shopping areas within walking distance, so the idea is that if people lived on this site, they could walk instead of driving.

There are two waivers associated with this project. The first relates to parking. For B-5, the ratio is two stalls per unit. The applicant asks for 1.4 stalls. The condition attached to that request is that there cannot be more than 60 units in this complex that have more than 1 bedroom, limiting the amount of units with more than 1 vehicle. Taking a broader view, there are other zoning districts that have less stringent parking requirements. The request for 1.4 seems reasonable.

The other waiver is for height. B-5 allows 40 feet and the applicant wants 55. The site is H-2, so as it is, 55 would be allowed; they are simply looking to return to the height currently allowed, but under the new zoning. To the north and south of the site is H-2 zoning, so all of those properties have the right to 55-foot height. To the east is Ameritas. Some portions of their building are 5-stories, so it is hard to imagine negative impacts for them.

Harris asked how the 1.4 number was arrived at as an appropriate number for parking stalls. Thierolf stated he was not present at that stage of the decision making, so the applicant can better answer. Harris said she wondered with demographic trends regarding vehicle choices, if it is still a safe assumption that a single bedroom is associated with a single vehicle. She theorizes there may be couples with no children or grown children who wish to downsize to a smaller living space, but retain two vehicles. Thierolf said there are no hard numbers, but at this location, it is hoped that the proximity to amenities could reduce dependence on vehicles. Harris asked if it is the nature of this specific location and its potential walkability that causes Staff to accept the reduced parking number. Thierolf said yes. There is also a bus route nearby.

Beecham wondered if pedestrian access across busy Cotner Boulevard and the large mall parking lot have been looked at. She wondered if there was a plan for how pedestrians will get from place to place. Thierolf said that is a good point and is an important component of the long-term redevelopment idea with this node. For this particular site, there is a crosswalk at R Street across Cotner. Beecham said traffic moves quickly in this area. If walkability is a focus, and particularly if the reduced parking was justified by that potential, then we need to make sure it is safe. Thierolf agreed, stating he has walked in the area several times and it is currently not the most pleasant walking environment.

Proponents:

1. Mike Eckert, Civil Design Group, came forward on behalf of the applicant who has owned this site for over 30 years, originating back to when they owned Home Real Estate. Home Real Estate continues to lease the building but are consolidating offices just to the west of this location; therefore, the opportunity arose to reconsider the best use of this site. The building is probably functionally obsolete due to its layout. The applicant wants to create a multi-family use. Planning Department is to be commended for their thought process in looking into the best way to make this option work. It will require some form of commercial on the first floor.

The B-5 zoning allows the desired 153 units. The architect came up with a floor plan that includes 60 two-bedroom or single bedroom/den configurations. Those units would be allowed two parking stalls each. Then there are 90 efficiency or 1-bedroom units with 1 stall each. There will be some surface parking in a courtyard area with amenities and probably a pool. A leasing office and common area are located off the eastern wing.

This vision achieves goals of the Comprehensive Plan by creating an urban infill, multi-family building. The applicants see this type of living situation being attractive to both Millenials and Baby Boomers who want to reside close to services. The presence of existing grocery stores in the area was also a key factor in the decision making for this site.

We have met with the neighbors to the north who will be the most impacted neighbor. Their building has no windows where we abut, so they are generally fine. We told them we would work with them, especially during construction. The Stem Gallery, the nearby bank, and Ameritas are also supportive. In fact, Ameritas showed strong interest in obtaining corporate units for folks they have in town for extended periods.

The developer will pay $260,000 in impact fees, even with the commercial credits and water main coming in. They are experienced developers who pride themselves on a quality product. There will be two stories of underground parking and this will be an expensive building. As such, the rents will be commensurate. We apologize for a lack of details regarding the facade at this phase, but we want to get through the government process before investing more in that area.

Beecham asked the distance of the nearby school. Eckert said he does not know. Beecham reiterated the importance of considering safety and walkability. Eckert said he agrees. In time, there will be more development and changes along Cotner. Closing one access point from Cotner to the site will help. We will also be proponents for Public Works putting in a designated crosswalk. The sidewalks will be redone, which will create a better streetscape than exists today. P Street traffic is fairly minimal, but this is a good opportunity for us to push for the striped crosswalks. Beecham said yes, if the area is developing, let's start thinking about these issues at the front-end.

There was no testimony in opposition.

CHANGE OF ZONE NO. 16005
ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION: **March 16, 2016**

Lust moved approval, seconded by Harris.

Lust said this is a good project for the area. It is nice to see residential development within the commercial area and that is what we wanted to encourage with the Comprehensive Plan.

Hove agreed and complimented the applicant for proposing this. At first, it doesn't look like it will fit, but in the long run, this will be a good project for the area.

Motion carried 5-0: Beecham, Harris, Lust, Sunderman, and Hove voting 'yes'; Cornelius, Corr, Scheer, and Weber absent. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

PRE-EXISTING USE PERMIT NO. 3AG
ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION: **March 16, 2016**

Lust moved approval, seconded by Harris.

Harris said she asked about the parking out of curiosity and not out of concern. There has been discussion about parking, demographics, and choices in transportation and housing. This is a good infill project.

Motion carried 5-0: Beecham, Harris, Lust, Sunderman, and Hove voting 'yes'; Cornelius, Corr, Scheer, and Weber absent. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

STREET AND ALLEY VACATION NO. 16001
TO VACATE A PORTION OF NORTH 50TH STREET
GENERALLY LOCATED BETWEEN ST. PAUL AVENUE AND BALDWIN AVENUE
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION: **March 16, 2016**

Members present: Beecham, Harris, Hove, Lust, Sunderman; Corr, Cornelius, Scheer, and Weber absent.

Staff recommendation: Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

and

PRE-EXISTING SPECIAL PERMIT NO. 23H
FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A 75,000 SQUARE FOOT, 3-STORY EDUCATION BUILDING GENERALLY LOCATED AT NORTH 50TH STREET AND HUNTINGTON AVENUE
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE PLANNING COMMISSION: March 16, 2016

Members present: Beecham, Corr, Harris, Hove, Lust, Sunderman; Cornelius, Scheer, and Weber absent.

Staff recommendation: Conditional Approval.

Harris stated her husband is on the Board of Governors of Wesleyan University. She has attended a few dinners where these plans were referenced.

Staff presentation: Andrew Thierolf of the Planning Department came forward to state the amendment areas are along the west side of the Wesleyan campus. The proposed new science facility is a 75,000 square foot, 3-story building that would be located in the 50th Street right-of-way, with associated parking. There are two existing lots that will be reconfigured to make room for the new building. A height wavier is requested to allow a building of up to 46 feet in the R-6 zoning, which has a normal height allowance of 35 feet. If you look around the area, Lincoln Manor to the east is four stories tall, the church to the northeast is three stories, as is student housing to the south. This increase meets the character of the area.

The street vacation is for 50th Street between St. Paul and Baldwin. University Place is a well-developed grid system with the exception of the campus which interrupts several streets. If this were to be vacated, it would push local traffic over to 49th Street and reduce traffic connectivity in the neighborhood.

The Comprehensive Plan provides some guidance in consideration of this project. It supports efficient transportation systems that allows people to move from place to place in as direct a route as possible. It also encourages street networks in existing neighborhoods be maintained. Those are two negative aspects to consider if 50th Street is closed. At the same time, the Comprehensive Plan also says we should support the expansion of educational facilities and that they are significant for the city, as long as the expansion is done in a way that is responsible and respectful to the neighborhood. We must ask what is considered respectful.

In 2004, there was a North 48th Street/University Place Plan put together. It involved residents, stakeholders, business owners, and the university. That plan identified the area west of campus from 50th to 48th Streets as an area for future campus expansion. It did not address closing any streets. The plan also has a broadly conceptual development plan for University Place and 48th Street Corridor area. It shows 50th as remaining open, but that plan was not set in stone. There are several negatives, but Wesleyan is a significant academic institution for the City and is important to the neighborhood. Expansion is needed for them to continue to be successful. Planning staff feels that the positives outweigh the negatives.

Lust noted that the discussion has revolved around 50th remaining an existing through-street, however, it does not go all the way through to Holdrege; it dead-ends well before that. Thierolf agreed that the street ends at the park on the south side.

Beecham asked if there were meetings with neighbors and the church. She wondered about their opinion of this project. Thierolf said meetings were held. Beecham went on to say that even though the church is taller than three stories, this is a very large new building going in next to an historic building, so she would like to know what the thoughts are. Andrew stated that representatives have met with neighbors. First United Methodist is in support.

Proponents:

1. Tom Huston, Cline Williams Law Firm, came forward on behalf of the applicant. The new science building will house various departments and is required due to the increase in programming for students and the inter-disciplinary approach to education at Wesleyan. From the design perspective, according to the architects, the most ideal location for the project would be in the current right-of-way of 50th Street.

We have worked with neighbors and stakeholders for the past 12 months. Prior to 1989, there was no special permit process for Wesleyan. In 1994, the first pre-existing special permit was issued for them. Since that time, there have been multiple revisions to that permit. The Comprehensive Plan supports the expansion of educational facilities as long as they are sensitive to the existing neighborhoods. As demonstrated by the 12-month process, we can show that careful consideration and sensitivity has been given to the neighborhoods.

It was mentioned that the plan developed in 2004 encourages Wesleyan to grow to the west of the campus. More importantly, it discourages them from growing to the north and south, into the neighborhoods; 56th to the east is a natural barrier. So west was the only possibility.

The height waiver is consistent with heights of existing buildings in the area. We also think that locating the building within the right-of-way shifts that impact away from neighbors to the west.

Parking was another factor that influenced the decision for the location of the building. Every single parking stall is valuable in this area, so the original plan indicates a net gain of 13 stalls. There is an issue we need to address with Condition 2.2 which suggests a reconfiguration of the parking lot due to the potential impact of cars backing into the alley. If that were done, we would lose 18 stalls. We have two other options in mind. One would involve the vacation of the alley which would require additional discussion with Lincoln Manor and First United Methodist Church. A more likely avenue is to ask for a deviation to the Access Management Policy to avoid conflict. Preserving those 18 stalls is important.

With regard to the street vacation, a typical question that arises is regarding why this location was chosen. We believe it is important for pedestrian connectivity. There could be thousands of students visiting this building and the location also minimizes adverse impacts to the church, preserves the parking lot, and forms a desirable quad with the existing Old Main building.

We first met with the University Place Community Organization (UPCO) in March of 2015. At that time, there were real concerns about the location and building. For the last 12 months, multiple discussions have been held. We have attended five meetings with them including their board meeting, annual meeting, and at least one committee meeting. Moreover, the university worked with the church to talk about the impact to the entire neighborhood. They addressed the need to deal with traffic circulation, parking, and directional growth of both the university and the church. Those conversations produced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered into by both parties that will serve as a guide moving forward. In addition, there many individual conversations held with neighboring business. There are nine letters of support from those surrounding business owners. There are things that need to be resolved before this goes on to City Council.

Beecham asked about feedback regarding the design of the building, since this area is so historic in character, the proposed building is very modern. Huston said there was initially concern about the western facade but changes were made and UPCO was pleased. There are schematic designs, but the architect has been asked to suspend until the site is secured before the building can truly be designed. One thing we asked, to make the west facade more inviting as an entrance from the parking lot. There is a juxtaposition between the old and new elements. The firm employed is the Celli-Flynn Brennan Architects & Planners, an architectural firm out of Pittsburgh. They have a reputation for designing university science buildings. There is a lot of support within the university campus.

Beecham said she does not doubt the support within campus. There is always a potential for problems with a university surrounded by community in terms of growth. That makes it even more critical that new structure fit in with the existing. She has trouble reconciling this modern building with being respectful of the area. She hopes there is a way to continue to involve the church and the neighborhood. Huston agreed that would certainly be done. He stated Pastor Moffet of First United Methodist is present to speak for the church. The MOU reflects their support of the design. There are other campuses around the city including both

Bryan Hospital, Union College, and the Gateway Mall campus where connectivity is important. As they grow, the vehicular connectivity may decrease, but not the pedestrian. In answer to the question, we have not heard any specific negative comments about the design other than the western facade question that we addressed.

Beecham stated she did not see the letters of support. Other Commissioners confirmed they were provided via email.

Lust asked for more information about how this helps create more pedestrian connectivity on the campus. Huston said the campus has approximately 2,200 students and they are predominately self-contained. There is additional housing on the northeast portion of the campus and most students just walk to and from classes. Having 50th Street closed to permit pedestrian access, particularly with its relationship to the Old Main and the Student Union, is really what the objective is from a design perspective.

2. Lynn Ayers, 944 N. 55th Street, came forward in support. She serves as Vice Chair of Board of Trustees at First United Methodist Church, also is a past president of UPCO and lives in the neighborhood. First United Methodist has a history that goes back over 125 years and the partnership with Wesleyan is greatly valued. In an effort to move forward together, we have had significant meetings with Wesleyan representatives. Our concerns around the design were addressed. Initially, the side of the building we faced was a solid wall, and that was not what we wanted our view to be as a church, so design elements were changed. We entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Wesleyan that spoke to the need for shared parking and also discussed future growth and the desire for St. Paul Avenue to remain an open street. As a representative of the church, we are in support of Wesleyan and this plan.

2. Larry Moffet, 5324 Madison Avenue, came forward as Senior Pastor at First United Methodist Church. Closing one block of 50th is not optimal, but the current situation in a neighborhood where parking is at a crisis point means that we need to collaborate on parking and future growth plans for Wesleyan and our church. Though we are separate entities, the same people founded the university, church, and University Place, which was annexed by the City in 1925. They were Methodist people who came from all over the state to start a new town with a university, church and community. The plan was to design something so closely knit that people payed attention to each other. The houses, businesses, school and church have lived on top of each other from the very beginning. That is now called the new urbanism.

There have been many significant collaborative efforts between the church and school during the 129 years of shared history. The future growth of Wesleyan will impact positively on the growth and stability of the church, University Place Neighborhood, and northeast Lincoln in general. It is extremely positive to make a significant investment in the area. The issue of parking became a much larger part of our conversations. There are aspects of the MOU that help to address that. We also have an agreement that we will work on upgrading

some housing in the neighborhood, along with some City and non-profit organizations. We also know Wesleyan needs to follow the original 2004 plan in moving as it can towards 48th Street. First Methodist has also identified potential zones for growth. The culmination of our numerous discussions was a unanimous vote by the church council to be supportive of these plans.

Beecham said she knows from personal experience how tricky parking is on weekdays. She asked if the church is comfortable that this project will now add even more people. Moffet stated the church has plans to increase parking themselves. The MOU allows for specific community events to have reserved spaces in the parking lot to be developed on the east side of 50th Street. That will be a big factor in easing parking.

Lust asked if they are supportive of Wesleyan's request that Condition 2.2 be eliminated so that they can have the "L" shaped section of parking. Moffet said yes, and part of the understanding is that the alley will be a way to connect some of the very local traffic between the church and campus.

Beecham asked about the level of comfort with the modern design and if there is a desire to continue to be involved. Moffet said the church has been very generously involved in conversations with the architects at various times. Mr. Celli has also done renovations of historic churches and is highly sensitive to the architectural gem that the 107-year-old First Church is. One of the things the architect did when he moved the building to the east is to suggest the main entrance and pass-through area be on the north side closest to the church. He designed common space with lots of glass and community gathering areas. The lecture halls in the current building are already used for community events. The glass incorporated into the facade reflects the old architecture so that there is a conversation for legacy architecture and the new and modern that is reflective of the continuing conversation between faith and science. Those were concepts we talked about at length.

Beecham asked if the church is on the Historic Register? Moffet does not believe so, but it is treated as a treasure and landmark. The congregation is working on a variety of improvements, including addition of community space to the north part built in 1955.

3. Sheryl Snyder, 3500 Faulkner Drive, came forward in support. She has a long history with Wesleyan and University Place, and serves on the Board of Governors for Wesleyan. This project will be a great enhancement for both the campus and University Place.

4. Chris Erickson, 16755 Francis Street, Omaha, 68130, came forward as owner of the the shopping center at the corner of 48th and Leighton and the car wash on the corner. He confirmed that Wesleyan has been having conversations with locals for about a year. He was at the UPCO annual meetings both last year and this year and believes there was a substantive change in the neighborhood attitude between the first meeting and now. There is much more support now. He is very supportive of this action primarily because the economic engine that Wesleyan is for University Place. They have a significant effect on

growth in the area. It is important that the employment and students be supported and continue to grow. He understands the concerns with the street closure but has seen it done elsewhere where with large pedestrian populations crossing. This could actually alleviate frustration for motorists and address some safety concerns for students.

Commissioner Corr arrived at 2:20.

Opponents:

1. Gary Bohaty, 5429 Cleveland Avenue, came forward to say that the street closure will have a significant negative effect on parking in the area. There are several food and businesses in the area and closing off the street will take away accessibility for neighborhood traffic and will increase traffic on Baldwin and Madison, which are both already heavily traveled. This is made worse by the narrowness of these streets which makes it extremely difficult to pass when cars are parked along the sides. Parking was built to the south of his home which caused extensive problems for him, including flooding which the developer was ultimately responsible for. There was no neighbor representation or discussion when that lot went in. Commissioners have heard today about the parking being a “crisis” situation and of thousands of people visiting the new building. He wonders where they will come from and park. Parking for the church is already difficult and parishioners walk a long way. The new building will block the view of the historic areas that are valuable. He received no notification about these changes. Solving parking issues needs to be first on the list of priorities. The design should be second.

Hove asked where Mr. Bohaty lives in relation to this project. Bohaty said he lives off of Cleveland, north of the stadium. Madison is practically impossible to get through with parking on one side. Hove noted that the reason he did not get the notification is that his home is outside of the direct vicinity. Bohaty added that there is a lot of traffic from his area that uses 50th Street to access the local business and it is one of their last through streets

Harris asked if he is opposed to both the building and the vacation. Bohaty said he is not opposed to a new building. He wants parking and traffic issues addressed. Harris asked for clarification that it is only the vacation that is a problem. Bohaty said yes. The building will get built no matter what but, again, the parking needs to be addressed. He wonders why there is no discussion about building a nice garage. They have the ability to do that.

2. Paula Bohaty, 5429 Cleveland Avenue, stated she wanted to note that when we traveled down 50th Street, we counted approximately 30 cars parked on the street. She wondered where these 30 cars will be parked if the street is vacated.

Staff Questions:

Thierolf presented the letters in support for review by Commissioner Beecham.

Lust asked for additional information on Condition 2.2 of the Staff Report. Thierolf stated the current configuration shows cars that would back directly out to the alleyway which is not allowed by the Access Management Policy. The applicant would need to reconfigure that to remove those spaces, get a deviation from the Director of Public Works, or vacate that alleyway. Lust asked if it was possible to amend that point to say that the parking is allowed if the applicant receives the deviation. Thierolf said yes.

Beecham asked how many people can be expected at the new building and how many parking spaces will be added. Thierolf said that hinges on the details of Condition 2.2; we do not know exactly how many spaces we are adding without approval of the submitted plan. As shown, it was 13 net spaces added for off-street parking. We lose somewhere between 20 and 25 on-street spots. With this permit, there is no specific parking ratio or requirement, so it is left as something that could be added as a condition. He does not know the number of people visiting the building.

Beecham said she guesses it is more than 13. This is a 3-story building with a big impact, for only adding a little bit of parking. Theirolf said that is a question for the applicant. He does not know if enrollment is expected to increase as a result of this building. Beecham asked for confirmation that staff felt comfortable that the parking would be enough for the building. Thierolf said yes. We look campus-wide, so from that perspective, the impact is not as great.

Beecham went on to ask if there has been discussion about only allowing parking on one side of 49th Street. Thierolf said not that he is aware of, but it is very tight with parking on both sides.

Applicant Rebuttal:

Huston clarified that the student population is approximately 2,200 students. They do not anticipate and increase as a result of the new building. It is designed for expanded programming for existing students. One key component of the Memorandum of Understanding is the recognition that the primary traffic pattern of this neighborhood is east/west and the MOU protects the corridors to allow St. Paul and Baldwin to remain open and uncluttered for the long-term future.

Our concern with Condition 2.2 is the loss of 18 stalls, which is material for this campus. Staff asked us to update this parking table to make sure we have an accurate count moving forward for all of the various uses. We show over 1,100 parking stalls on campus. Even with that, we are trying to maintain the number. The amendment to 2.2 would give us the option and would be greatly appreciated. We have an option to vacate, but that does not make sense due to the commitment to the church and their patrons. The Access Management Policy recognizes that there are exceptions to be made in a built environment, which this certainly is. We have a favorable argument to put forward for the request for deviation.

Harris asked how Mr. Huston would propose the amendment read. Huston said, in the alternative, that a deviation be made to the requirements of the Access Management Policy. He said he would characterize the letters of support coming from roughly half residents and half businesses in the area. A meeting was held in April and notice was sent to all property owners along 50th Street and two blocks in each direction, and along St. Paul and Baldwin. We did not get up to Cleveland. There were approximately 30 people at that meeting. I think all told, we have had 15 meetings over the past year. In his view, the property owners, the church, and the UPCO were the three main constituents. Wesleyan did a marvelous job of reaching out.

Beecham said there does appear to be tremendous business support. She wonders if UPCO has voted to support the project. Huston said they opposed the closure of 50th Street a year ago in March. In January of this year, we updated them, but he is unsure if they had subsequent votes.

Beecham asked the Administrative Officer if UPCO had received a notice regarding today's public hearing. Rorabaugh confirmed that they did. Huston said he is also aware that they received notification. Thierolf added that there was one letter of opposition.

Corr asked if Wesleyan has a plan about where the building will be located if the street vacation is not approved. Huston said no. Corr said there is no other alternative. Huston agreed.

Corr wondered what will happen to the existing science building. Huston said it will continue to be used and coordinated with the new building to accommodate the expanding science program.

Huston stated that this project is viewed as a "100-year decision". Because of the long-term plan and the future growth of the campus, the site was selected. The decisions may reflect that 100-year vision and are what brought us forward today.

Corr said she did not understand the vacation of the alley. Huston said it is between St. Paul and Baldwin. Corr said she does not understand why they do not want to vacate. Huston said it is a viable alternative to preserve the parking stalls, but it would have an impact on Lincoln Manor to the west, and they may not be in favor. It is also contrary to the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding that Wesleyan has with the church, because a commitment was made that if we sought vacation of 50th Street, we would not vacate the alley. They want to make sure their parishioners to the south still have access to the church and that parking lot. Corr wondered whether, if the alley were vacated, there would not be that entrance off of St. Paul. Huston said that is not what he meant. If it were vacated, it would become private property. An option would be imposing an easement on it, but that unduly complicates the situation. Corr asked if Wesleyan already allowed parishioners to use that alley and parking lot even though it is private property now. Huston said yes. Corr wondered, if that is the case, how the vacation would change anything. Huston said it would

not. Corr said she strongly encourages the vacation of the alley because if it allows for more parking spaces, it would alleviate concerns. Huston said the complication for Lincoln Manor is not a conversation we have had yet. If this can be accomplished through the deviation, that is a path of lesser resistance. Corr said she is saying go for it all and get all the parking that you can. Huston said he agrees with getting as much parking as possible.

STREET AND ALLEY VACATION NO. 16001
ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION: **March 16, 2016**

Lust moved approval, seconded by Sunderman.

Beecham said she is not insensitive to the issues of traffic, especially in older neighborhoods. When we are faced with issues like universities looking for spaces to expand, we are looking at the 100-year plan. This is a creative solution. We are preserving historic buildings and using the open space that is available. Areas around campus are going to continue to become more and more pedestrian-oriented in the long-term.

Sunderman said the north/south traffic will end up going to the west. 49th Street does have a lot of parking on both sides. He is familiar with the area because his daughter attended Wesleyan. The traffic is only a block away from 48th, and it makes more sense for cars to stay away from the parking and pedestrians.

Hove said he will vote in support, though he is sensitive to the parking issue. In the long-run, the area and students will be better off.

Motion carried 5-0: Beecham, Harris, Lust, Sunderman, and Hove voting 'yes'; Corr abstaining; Cornelius, Scheer, and Weber absent. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

PRE-EXISTING SPECIAL PERMIT NO. 23H
ACTION BY PLANNING COMMISSION: **March 16, 2016**

Lust moved approval, seconded by Sunderman.

Harris asked if that included the amendment by the applicant. Lust said yes, the motion is for approval, as amended by the Applicant. Sunderman agreed that is the motion he seconds.

Beecham thanked Wesleyan for the extensive outreach they have done. The success of large projects in academic settings hinge on a team approach and being part of the community. She still has concerns about the historic nature of this neighborhood, university, and First United Methodist Church in putting a really modern structure next to it. When West Haymarket went in, there was discussion about not replicating historic features, but being respectful and reflective. There may be a way to have a few more "tips of the hat" to the

historic elements. Growth for projects like this are important, as are filling in the cracks for development when surrounded by the community.

Sunderman said he agrees with the point about the building being respectful of the surrounding historical elements. One thing he likes to see in an academic setting is seeing the combination of the old and new and the combinations of the history and the future. The whole purpose of the university to remember the past and still move forward. He likes the architectural conversation the new building has with the older buildings. He also likes the statement made by Pastor Moffet about the combination of faith and science, and the image mirrored in the windows. Though the building is still in the concept phase, he admires that concept.

Lust said she plans to support this. Having gone to a similar institution in Sioux Falls where her husband is also on the Board of Trustees, it is important for a university of this size to continue to expand its programs to grow. Adding a science building that is respectful of the neighborhood can only help the university be vibrant. It is a jewel for our community and we should support their efforts. I am cognizant of the parking problems, but with the amendment, hopefully, we can actually gain some stalls by building this.

Hove said this is a great move for Wesleyan. He appreciates the work they have done with the church. The only downside to this is the parking issue, and they can resolve that in the future in an area that can support it.

Rorabaugh asked for clarification about whether the amendment eliminates Condition 2.2. Lust said the condition remains but language is added clarifying that a deviation from the Access Management Policy must be obtained.

Motion carried 5-0: Beecham, Harris, Lust, Sunderman, and Hove voting ‘yes’; Corr abstaining; Cornelius, Scheer, and Weber absent. This is a recommendation to the City Council.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Note: These minutes will not be formally approved by the Planning Commission until their next regular meeting on Wednesday, March 30, 2016.