

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, January 31, 2007, 11:45 a.m., Rm. 113, First Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jon Carlson, Gene Carroll, Michael Cornelius, Dick Esseks, Gerry Krieser, Lynn Sunderman and Tommy Taylor. Roger Larson and Mary Strand absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kent Seacrest of Seacrest and Kalkowski; Mark Bowen of the Mayor's Office; Marvin Krout, Kent Morgan, Ray Hill, Stephen Henrichsen, Mike DeKalb, Brian Will, Tom Cajka, David Cary, Christy Eichorn, Brandon Garrett, and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: **Vision 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 11:49 a.m.

Kent Seacrest began by stating that the Vision 2015 committee appreciates the opportunity to speak to the Commission. The Vision 2015 is based on plans which have all been approved by the various governmental entities.

Seacrest noted that the purposes of the Vision 2015 plan are to expand the economic base by fostering entrepreneurship and investment opportunities and to increase opportunities for post college-age students and our children to become long-term Lincoln residents. They feel it is a three-legged stool to bring people to the community; it includes better jobs, attractive housing, and expanded entertainment and recreational opportunities. Other purposes include assisting the University of Nebraska in leveraging its research, technology, education, arts, and student athletic mission; encouraging private charitable giving and business investing; and increasing public-private partnerships to advance strategic community projects. The overall goal is to enhance our community's quality of life.

Seacrest continued by stating that they believe there are ten pillars in the community to build upon. They include the West Haymarket arena, a new convention center and headquarters hotel, an expanded Haymarket Park, a Nebraska sports triangle, an arts and humanities center, a downtown plaza and tower/garage project, the P and Q Streets corridor, the research and development corridor and the State Fair Park/ Lancaster Event Center project.

The Mayor's Events Facility Task Force recommended replacing Pershing and placing a new arena in the West Haymarket. They want to use the historic Lincoln Station as a possible entry to the arena. They want people to use the garages in downtown and use the trolley to facilitate entrance into the arena. New roads would be needed to do this. The public would be asked to finance the bulk of the arena. The sister projects are the convention center and hotel. They feel they need the arena because large concerts and events are not being held in Lincoln. They would also like to locate sports facilities in the site as well as an arts and humanities center. Studies have shown that if there are cultural activities, you are three times more likely to volunteer in your community.

Every great downtown needs a ground zero, so they would like to create a downtown plaza at 13th and P Streets. They would like to have a mixed use tower with retail stores and a hotel. The plaza and tower are on the P & Q street corridor. They envision a vibrant retail from the Haymarket to Antelope Valley.

The Antelope Valley projects are an integral part of Vision 2015. There is an east downtown park with water features. Antelope Valley also has a research and development corridor. In the middle is the existing Beadle Center, which brings in many research grants and jobs. This is a huge economic engine, but they are out of research space. They would like to add several more research and development centers. They believe the private research and development companies will want to be close to the public research and development companies so they can collaborate. They feel the State Fair Park area is a prime location for research and development. State Fair Park has been a great facility in the past, but they do not feel it is well-positioned to go into the future. They think the solution is to co-locate with the Lancaster Events Center. Instead of having two facilities, they are proposing one state-of-the-art facility to attract trade shows and expos. State Fair Park would become part of the research and development corridor.

Seacrest concluded by stating that the vision starts with West Haymarket arena and a new convention center and hotel and continues with the expanded Haymarket Park, the Nebraska sports triangle, the arts and humanities center, the downtown plaza and tower, the P & Q Streets corridor, the research and development corridor and the State Fair Park/Lancaster Event Center project.

Taylor asked about the size of convention center. Seacrest replied that it is proposed to be 30,000-60,000 square feet. They plan to build it smaller with the potential for growth.

Esseks stated that the plan looks very good, but he is concerned about the political part of selling it to the public. This is a new fiscal challenge on top of the Antelope Valley project. Seacrest stated that there needs to be paradigm shifts, and one of them is the attitude towards money. They feel it is time for the private sector to provide funding. They also feel that it is crucial to cluster the community facilities.

Cornelius asked about the relationship between the Vision 2015 group and the University.

Seacrest stated that the University's Master Plan has called for another sports center. They are receptive to studying another location for a sports center.

Carlson stated that he applauds the group for their efforts.

Seacrest noted that there are two bills in front of the Legislature currently. One bill is regarding the costs and benefits of the University's research and development corridor. Part of that is the State Fair Park being used for research and development. The second bill is regarding the costs and benefits of the State Fair Park area.

Krout asked if they have looked at how Salt Creek could be beautified. Seacrest stated that they have not, as they have been concentrating on Antelope Valley.

Seacrest stated that one of the values of the Vision 2015 committee is that Lincoln needs to look better architecturally. Good design gives people confidence in their investment.

Esseks stated that trying to attract the younger generation is great. He asked if they have looked at outdoor recreation opportunities near their homes. Seacrest stated that they have an alliance with the Parks and Recreation Department. They know that this may take a bond issue at some point. Many of these pillars are traditional government pillars. There are still many details to work out, but they felt it was important to bring the plan to the Planning Commission at this point.

Carlson asked about the next steps. Seacrest stated that there will be several action teams formed. Some will be private, and some will be public.

The meeting concluded at 12:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Abendroth
Planning Department