

## BRIEFING NOTES

<b>NAME OF GROUP:</b>	PLANNING COMMISSION
<b>DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:</b>	Wednesday, January 17, 2018, 12:15 p.m., Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 South 10 <sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.
<b>MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Tom Beckius, Tracy Edgerton, Deane Finnegan, Maja Harris, Chris Hove, Christy Joy, Dennis Scheer and Sändra Washington; (Tracy Corr absent).
<b>OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	David Cary, Paul Barnes, Rachel Jones, Dessie Redmond, George Wesselhoft, Ed Zimmer and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; David Landis, Wynn Hjermsstad and Dallas McGee of Urban Development Dept.; and other interested parties.
<b>STATED PURPOSE:</b>	Briefing on “ <b>Urban Development Department Reorganization</b> ” by Urban Development Dept. staff.

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

David Cary thanked everyone for attending. He felt this was important information to share. This has implications for how we conduct our work with and in neighborhoods.

David Landis stated that the Urban Development Department has been reorganized. They will be conducting some of its business a little different than it has in the past. Their participation in Taking Charge explains the City in terms of eight big ideas. Safety and Security is one. Another is Livable Neighborhoods, along with Economic Opportunity. There are many projects and programs that Urban Development deals with. Economic Opportunity is why we do redevelopment projects. Wynn Hjermsstad has been asked to lead the Livable Neighborhoods section. They are aligned now with serving a larger overall purpose that crosses numerous ideas. One source of inspiration was the Taking Charge initiative. The second source was experience. It was a matter of some luck. A project was done on Idylwild and Holdrege. It took out the old Valentino’s on 33<sup>rd</sup> St. and Holdrege and replaced it. It changed two blocks and added housing and office space. It is a significantly and aesthetically viable alternative. We engaged in a conversation with the neighborhood. We wondered if it would change traffic patterns. Medians were looked at by Parks and Recreation. The curbs were in bad shape on the boulevards. Public Works and Utilities agreed to do the curbs. They were going to do a resurfacing of the streets and boulevard. Valentino’s agreed to help with the small park. When it was all done, we had new housing, better traffic flow, replanted and enhanced boulevard islands, redone curbs, resurfaced streets and a better park. This happened in the space of a year or less, which made it very visible to the neighborhood. This was a cross departmental plan. We wondered why we don’t do that more often. Things aren’t always planned and coordinated as they could be. We have reached out to other departments. We agreed to take our housing programs and work on an area. We don’t make an effort to find customers because they walk in the door. If we could get a clustering and neighbors could see

improvement in their area, we think there could be a halo effect. If this was also a sidewalk or street tree area, that would be another layer. Parks and Recreation has put aside some money in the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) which would allow them to do their part of this on a collaborative basis, as has Public Works. Urban Development will do this with a portion of their housing money. Once you get in the habit of collaboration, it will hopefully become habit. A neighborhood can see street trees, sidewalks, road improvements and park improvements. What the City does on a day by day basis becomes dramatic.

Finnegan absolutely loves this. Landis sees the problem as when is it my turn in my neighborhood. Metrics need to be developed. This doesn't expand resources. He believes it creates efficiency.

Washington would like to know how Urban Development created the neighborhood that was done this year. Landis replied that one factor was the Prosper Lincoln study that identified areas of growing poverty. Secondly, the outgrowth was to initiate a widespread and well attended and sometimes combative neighborhood response. This was called the South Downtown area. That has given rise to some neighborhood associations. A plan was created by a consultant. He thinks this builds on a demonstrable database of an area of need. It builds on the neighborhood responding by becoming more active. It is hard to do community development in areas where there is no organization.

Washing loves the idea of collaborative becoming a habit. Landis noted that we don't have metrics at this point. In the end, all have to have is Mayoral approval of what will be done. He doesn't think this is their responsibility to the exclusion of others. He believes it would fall to Urban Development to move the process. He believes we are the convener of a multi- disciplinary process.

Harris inquired what the estimate is on what constitutes a cluster. How far is the distance between one point of improvement and another? Do they have to be, adjacent to another, how spread out to be called collaborative? Landis doesn't know. He doesn't believe resources will be sufficient to take large swaths. Urban Development does roughly two million dollars of housing work a year. It is Federal money. It has been flat lining or declining. He doesn't see a huge budget for affordable housing. Construction costs can be quite pricey. Maybe 120 projects can be done in a year's time. He thinks he could get ten to twelve projects of housing improvement. He believes that neighbors talking to neighbors would create a visibility, as well as an attempt to reach out to the neighborhood. We don't advertise or send out flyers on our programs. This is a place where we might reach out with a mailer to have a specific area come in. He doesn't have a firm formula. He will know more next year. We will learn from experience.

Beckius would like Landis to speak to how Urban Development as a department will approach this collaborative development. What happens in a case where certain residents don't wish for development or City initiated help in the neighborhood. How will the City respond? Landis responded that we already have a pre-working relationship with Shawn Ryba from NeighborWorks and two neighborhood associations in the area. We anticipate having conversations with those neighborhoods and some of the less formal organizations and groups. It is a fair question to ask if we are prescribing

something to an unwilling patient. He is not sure we have to say you have to have an association for us to do this. The next area might not have an association. If there are suggestions from this group, we will take that into account. We haven't solved the idea of everything yet. Beckius wondered if there is a neighborhood you try to work this in and the residents aren't interested, would you would back off and move to a different project? Landis believes that might be likely, but not in the form of something that says, if we pick sidewalks for example and identify a danger and the City is going to pay for it, what happens if the neighborhood says don't do it? Our liability grows if we don't fix something unsafe. We have a duty to do it. Beckius thinks it is an interesting question. Landis believes he raised a fair question. He hadn't contemplated an issue where the neighborhood doesn't want it.

Scheer thinks the idea that implementing South Downtown for example, as the focus, is a good way to approach this. To address Beckius' comment, implementation efforts should always follow the plan. Lincoln has multiple plans for different areas such as the Downtown Master Plan, the Comprehensive Plan and various neighborhood plans. To follow all the previous work is a good way to go. You are following something that has already had community input. When you implement planning, it shows the community the importance of planning. He questioned if the Neighborhood Roundtable has a role in this somehow. Landis is sure they will. The change of Urban Development's reorganization started December 1, 2017. We are only 40 days into it. There will undoubtedly be a relationship.

Harris asked if there will be a formal input process from stakeholders. Landis replied that we aren't that far along yet. He can see the need to have a demonstrable legitimacy that the community can share and accept where the next neighborhood is. He would anticipate a public process, but can't say what it would be.

Cary stated that one of the most current items is the CIP coordinated program that will come forward. This idea of different departments working together on this program, you will see it as part of the CIP. The Planning Commission will have a role in reviewing that document and the projects as to conformity. Two weeks from today, there will be two briefings after the regular Planning Commission meeting. There will be information on the new Downtown Master Plan that the Planning Dept. is sponsoring in association with the Downtown Lincoln Association. You will also hear from Kris Humphrey from the RTSD (Railroad Transportation Safety District) regarding the 33<sup>rd</sup> and Cornhusker Hwy. study. The Planning Dept. is sponsoring that study as well. There is a subarea planning effort along with a corridor study.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.