

MEETING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Wednesday, March 3, 2010, 3:00 p.m., Room 106, County-City Building, 1st Floor, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mike Eckert, JoAnne Kissel, Michelle Penn, Gordon Scholz and Scott Sullivan. Mary Anne Wells absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Hunzeker (Baylor Evnen); Lyle Loth (ESP); Marvin Krout, Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Department.)

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Urban Design Committee

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Adoption of meeting record from the regular meeting of Feb. 3, 2010

Kissel moved approval of the meeting record of February 3, 2010, seconded by Eckert. Motion carried 5-0. Eckert, Kissel, Penn, Scholz and Sullivan voting 'yes'; Wells absent.

Recommendation to Planning Director regarding Special Permit No. 1816B, Soil Excavation, NW 40th Street and West Vine Street

Zimmer began by stating that this application was presented at the February 24, 2010 Planning Commission meeting. It is a Special Permit for a three year soil mining permit. The Planning Commission reviewed and conditionally approved the Special Permit with the condition that the applicant provide a screening and grading plan to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Director based on review and recommendation by the Urban Design Committee. There are not specific standards on screening and therefore the Planning Commission asked for help from the Urban Design Committee.

Eckert stated that he will act as an interested observer on this application as his firm recently had a mining permit and he does not want his comments to be misconstrued to benefit him in any way.

Hunzeker noted Eckert's statement and indicated he saw no conflict. He stated that there two places where you get a very short glimpse of the site from the interstate when heading west. There is a bank of dirt on the site which provides shielding of the excavation. The closest point where you see the bank of dirt is 800-900 feet from the interstate or more. The excavation will take place west of the dirt and is 300-400 feet from the interstate. If you are eastbound on the interstate, the excavation area is visible, and there is nothing that can be done to screen it due to the difference in elevation. There is really no standard for screening of these operations. The only suggestion for screening is discretionary. He believes it is appropriate to say no screening is required. But Lyle Loth has another plan for screening which is to add another berm. Loth stated that the berm will provide additional screening. The site will be restored to farmland as quickly as possible. Ultimately it will be developed industrially, and there would be no screening requirements at that time.

DeKalb stated that some people perceive this to be an eyesore from the interstate. It was felt it was appropriate to screen it, but there is no standard for screening. The language of the code states that it "may" be screened but it is a matter of discretion on a case by case basis as to what is appropriate. There is some natural screening provided by the hills, and so the question before the Committee is to determine what, if any, added screening is appropriate.

Kissel stated that she believes in a case like this, it is more important to find a distraction rather than screen it.

Committee members felt that the view of the site heading west on the interstate is minimal. When heading east on the interstate, the view to the capitol would provide the “distraction” of the view to the site.

Scholz asked if there have been any complaints about the views of this site. DeKalb stated that there have not been any complaints regarding the view. The only complaint has been regarding the dust on the county road.

Scholz asked if there were any points made by the Planning Commission that they felt the Committee should be aware of. DeKalb stated that there were many options discussed at the Planning Commission, but in the end, they decided to have the Urban Design Committee provide advice to the Planning Director.

Kissel stated that this is a natural area and is set far enough back from the interstate that she does not see a problem with the site.

Kissel moved to approve the site plan as submitted with the berm and including seeding of the berm, seconded by Penn. Motion carried 4-0. Kissel, Penn, Scholz and Sullivan voting ‘yes’; Eckert abstaining; Wells absent.

Enersen Urban Design Award

Zimmer stated that at last month’s meeting, the Committee members discussed the Antelope Valley bridges as a candidate for the public project of the Enersen Urban Design Award. Other candidates include the Antelope Park Rose Garden and Barrymore’s Alley.

Committee members requested that all members submit a vote on their choice for the award. Zimmer stated that he would facilitate that process.

Misc.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

Please note that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Urban Design Committee.

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