

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** December 2, 2014, 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 210, County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Tammy Eagle Bull; JoAnne Kissel, Tom Huston, Michelle Penn and Michele Tilley; (Gill Peace absent).

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong-Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; David Landis, Dallas McGee and Ernie Castillo of Urban Development Dept.; Dave Hansen and Brian Boesche of Swanson Russell Associates; Jeffre Chadwick of The Clark Enersen Partners; Nick Hernandez; and Kevin Abourezk of the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

Vice-Chair Michelle Penn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Penn then requested a motion approving the minutes of regular meeting held November 4, 2014. Motion for approval made by Huston, seconded by Eagle Bull and carried 4-0; Eagle Bull, Huston, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Kissel absent at time of vote; Peace absent.

### **REVIEW AND ADVISE ON REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR SWANSON RUSSELL ASSOCIATES, 1202 P STREET**

Penn stated that if Kissel were present, she would have a conflict of interest on this item as it is her firm that is working on this.

Ernie Castillo stated that Swanson Russell Associates is a growing business. They have been looking at options for needed office space. This plan calls for the addition of two stories of office space to be added above their parking lot, which is north of their existing building. The two structures would be connected with a "bridge" across the parking at the second and third floor levels. They are looking at about a \$1.9 million dollar investment.

Huston questioned how many square feet the building is. Chadwick replied that the existing building has three floors and about 5,000 square feet of floor area. The new building would add around 3,000 square feet.

Chadwick stated that the project at hand is to create about 12,000 square feet of new space. There would be two floors above the parking lot. There is a garden level on the existing building. There is about a story and a half of parking area. There is currently a ramp that runs along the existing building. They would maintain as much of the parking as possible. It is approximately 88 feet from the building to the alley. One of the major constraints is a transformer on the northeast corner.

Kissel arrived.

Chadwick continued that the second floor, main body building is open office around a light well and court yard. They want to take advantage of the southern exposure to take in the natural light. There is a large board room/conference room. The existing building makes a connection between the two second floors. The parking garage would be screened with a partial wall. For materials, they are proposing the possibility of screening the transformer, as well as the cars in the parking area with brick, fiber cement panels, opaque and clear glass and matching EIFS/plaster. They are looking at what happens on the north facing of the alley. They are considering copying some detail from another face of the building. The existing brick has a brushed finish. They will match it as best as they can. The original building has a really nice façade to it. They are proposing Nichiha panels. They want something that recalls the modular pattern. They are at about the mid-point on this project in terms of design.

Huston believes there is an alley on the north. Dallas McGee confirmed that it is a platted alley. Tilley added that it used to run by Spaghetti Works.

Huston wondered about the implications of the Downtown Design Standards. Zimmer believes the proposed design is in the spirit of the standards.

Penn questioned if the parking is gated. Chadwick replied yes. Brian Boesche added that right now, there is a black iron gate. Huston asked how many stalls. Dave Hansen replied there is about 23 stalls. He continued that they have an outdoor patio, but they are a non-smoking campus. They clean out all the trash from the front of the building after weekends.

Penn questioned the patio upstairs and wondered if there will be a partial wall. Chadwick replied the mechanicals are on the west end. They want to screen visually from that. Hansen stated they would like to have a hedge up there. Zimmer noted they could consider screening the mechanicals to the west, as well.

Penn stated that otherwise, it is pretty clean on the roof.

Hansen stated that they wanted to make this look like more of a campus. For their employees, it makes more of a connection. They want to be able to have good flow and add an additional 30 people.

Zimmer questioned if fiber board is being proposed? Chadwick replied it is lighter weight.

Tilley thinks it is handsome. It is compact. She likes the way it matches. She complimented everyone on a good job.

Huston believes the new building will look like it has been there. He questioned the transformer screening. Chadwick replied there are a lot of plantings around it now.

Eagle Bull believes there are a lot of opportunities here to do something on the columns, on the garage level.

Hansen really wants to make this look like an advertising agency.

Penn thinks this will be great. This is an easy one. It is a great design. She hopes they can make it happen.

Dave Landis stated that they will work hard to make this happen. When he looks at the wall face, he sees a vindication of the Downtown Design Standards. The new face compared to the old space are immediately comparable. They are carrying the idea of a flair to the second and third floor. The windows and airiness increase the transparency. The city will work hard to make this happen.

**ACTION:**

Huston moved approval of the redevelopment project, with a finding that the proposed design is consistent with the Downtown Design Standards, seconded by Tilley and carried 4-0: Eagle Bull, Huston, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Kissel declaring a conflict of interest; Peace absent.

Huston thanked Swanson Russell for their commitment to the downtown area. The design looks great.

**AWARD JURY RECOMMENDATION ON 2015 LARRY ENERSEN URBAN DESIGN AWARD**

Zimmer stated that the jury assembled and toured various sites. There was a good preliminary discussion of about a dozen possibilities. There was a strong consensus for a single award for a unified Arena, West Haymarket and Plan Implementation. The jury noted that it is abundantly clear that the development is compatible with the Haymarket. The planning and execution have been good. There is more development to go yet. It is a transformative, urban place. It's working.

Ed was asked where the West Haymarket redevelopment process began. He believes it all started with Pershing. Expansion of that space did not seem possible. He will look back and see if there was a date to the original Pershing expansion study.

Kissel questioned if the award would be presented to the Mayor and/or the JPA. Penn believes you need a great leader to make things happen. Zimmer noted that the financing decision, with a public vote as the linchpin, was crucial.

Kissel stated that technically, this award is for projects, not people. Zimmer agreed, and continued that a large project like West Haymarket had a large cast of contributors, including the University of Nebraska.

Huston fully supports a unified award and believe this project deserves it. This one is a little unique in that it is not totally complete yet, but the placemaking is successful.

Zimmer believes the timeliness is important also.

Eagle Bull sees that this whole area really took hold in the last year.

**ACTION:**

Penn moved approval of a single recognition to be awarded for the Pinnacle Bank Arena and associated "West Haymarket" redevelopment, seconded by Huston and carried 5-0: Eagle Bull, Huston, Kissel, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Peace absent.

## Miscellaneous

Zimmer stated that Penn asked him about an article in the *Lincoln Journal Star* regarding a moratorium on new neighborhood parks. There had been letters to the editor about the idea. She also sent him an article regarding the Exchange at Antelope Valley. He believes low income housing and/or rent-to-own, in lieu of townhouses, has been proposed. Support seems less than enthusiastic. He believes the intent is to go out for a new RFP. Nothing is ready for UDC review yet, but the hope is to attract a strong, revised proposal. He believes the City feels that as substantial as the proposed revisions are (as suggested by the original developer), in the interest of fairness the city will encourage others to offer proposals as well.

Penn stated that she emailed Zimmer and Kissel because she read these articles in the paper, and thought they were important to the Urban Design Committee. She believes this somewhat falls under our umbrella. In reference to the first article regarding neighborhood parks, her personal opinion is, parks are part of what make Lincoln an amazing place to live. The article made it sound like J.J. Yost stated they had it all figured out.

Zimmer thinks there is no question that the Comprehensive Plan park policy is an urban design matter.

Kissel believes the Comprehensive Plan has a formula for new parks. She questioned if the City can ignore their own policy with regard to parks. Huston believes they can just ignore it, or form a new plan for a policy change. He understands this discussion occurred during budget discussions in August.

Penn stated that is the reason she brought this up. Kissel thinks it sounds like this committee can make a recommendation if there is a policy change. We can note that we have significant reservations. There needs to be a public process if this is going to occur.

Huston moved for an expression of concern by the committee that they anticipate being part of the discussion if a moratorium on new neighborhood parks is proposed , seconded by Kissel.

Huston is strongly in support of being part of the discussion.

Motion carried 5-0: Eagle Bull, Huston, Kissel, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Peace absent.

Penn believes strongly that if anything has changed on the Exchange at Antelope Valley building, it needs to come back for review by this committee.

Huston represents the developer, so he has a conflict, but he believes a redevelopment agreement would be involved.

Zimmer believes this whole project will receive a clean start.

Kissel saw that the article referenced a problem with financing. She questioned if this is a new type of housing that bankers aren't familiar with. Huston believes it is a juxtaposition of the site, the pricing and the market. It is expensive to get all the infrastructure in.

Zimmer stated there is continuing interest in this site.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.