

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: June 2, 2015, 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 210, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Emily Casper, Tammy Eagle Bull, Tom Huston, JoAnne Kissel, Gill Peace, Michelle Penn and Michele Tilley

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong-Hageman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Doug Boyd of Affordable Housing Initiatives, Lilly Blase and Brayden McLaughlin.

Chair JoAnne Kissel called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Kissel stated that she found out the Mayor's Art Awards are on June 10, 2015. In the past, Urban Design Committee members were invited. None of the Committee members received an invite. Everyone agreed that it would be nice to receive an invitation. She stated that if anyone is interested, they can go online and see if tickets are available. Huston stated that he will attend and present the award.

Kissel then requested a motion approving the minutes of the regular meeting held April 7, 2015. Motion for approval made by Penn, seconded by Huston and carried 6-0: Eagle Bull, Huston, Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Casper abstained.

REVIEW OF NEW INFILL SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSE AT 224 N. 28TH (AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVE WITH URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPT.)

Doug Boyd, President of Affordable Housing Initiatives, appeared with Lilly Blase and Brayden McLaughlin. Boyd stated that AHI has been in existence for about eight years. It is an all-volunteer board. They were approached by Urban Development to do a project on a nonstandard lot. They opted for purchasing the lot. The existing home will be torn down. They will build a small house.

Brayden McLaughlin presented the overview of the front of the house. The lot is situated in the middle of the block. There is an alley. There were limited opportunities with what could be done with the house. They have a Queen Anne house on the property now. It has been empty for about fifteen years. Rehab is not feasible, but they will try to salvage what elements they can. The columns on the front porch will be saved, along with the dentals from under the soffits. They will also be taking two sash windows and installing them as two dormer windows on the second floor on the west façade of the new house. From the north, the garage access was originally from

the alley. There was no way to create access with today's standards. They decided to go with offsetting the garage five feet from the front of the breakfast nook.

Kissel questioned where the garage was before. Boyd replied there was no garage before. There are detached garages on the houses to the north and south.

Tilley inquired about the size of the lot. Boyd believes it is 48 feet by 55 feet. It is a small lot.

Lilly Blase stated that this gives the area another house facing 28th Street. It will have more of a street presence.

McLaughlin stated they are still trying to figure out the best way to use the basement space. There will be a bedroom with an access window. The first floor will have the usual kitchen, bedrooms and bathroom. All doors are handicapped accessible. The second floor will have a loft bedroom. There is a translucent panel with shelving underneath the stairs going to the second floor. There will also be another translucent panel at the top of the stairs on the second floor. The house will be designed with structural insulated panels. This will save a lot of money. It will open up the second floor without having to use trusses.

Blase noted this is very energy efficient. This is a visitable home. The whole idea is that if anyone with mobility issues wants to come visit, there is a bathroom on the main floor. It won't be full ADA, but the idea is that it can be adapted. Aging in place is another concept.

Kissel would like clarified that this was appearing before this committee since there is City money involved. Stacey Groshong-Hageman replied that she was correct. The applicant is working with Urban Development.

Huston wondered if it would be difficult to do this in Lincoln under today's standards, without a community plan, since this is a nonstandard lot size. He questioned if for the long term, we need to create a different zoning category to allow a smaller house. Perhaps we need to look at minimum lot sizes from a regulatory standpoint, if we want to facilitate a tiny house world. For example, in Village Gardens development, there are cottages around a common courtyard. That is done under a CUP. He believes it can be accomplished, he just wondered if another residential zoning classification needs to be considered. If there was a new builder that wanted to build a series of tiny homes, they could not do it under today's standards.

Boyd believes that there is a sense for smaller homes than there was in the recent past. Apparently there is about 80 lots in town that are smaller and nonstandard.

Blase stated that in her neighborhood, there are three little houses. The older neighborhoods are dotted with those. Older neighborhoods are very diverse in the sizes of houses.

Huston believes the special permit process requires five acres. Groshong-Hageman concurred. McLaughlin believes this can be a great opportunity for the city to develop these lots that no one

thought could be developable. With the design we have here, we can take the shape of the house and turn it into a lot of different architectural styles. He is hopeful the City can see this as a good opportunity.

Huston stated that the Comprehensive Plan speaks to housing options. We should be exploring ways to make it possible for a 'tiny house nation'. There is an upcoming trend towards a smaller footprint.

Tilley knows that a lot of people have trepidations about buying a nonstandard lot.

Huston thinks this is great. It raises bigger questions that he believes the Planning Dept. should try to address.

Tilley thinks this is being done in a really clever way.

Kissel questioned if this will be the only attached garage in the whole neighborhood. Blase doesn't believe so. There are not a lot of attached garages in the area, but there are some. Boyd added that there was just not a lot of options for this lot.

Peace agrees with Huston that making this easier for other folks to build on a small lot is a great idea. He would encourage that to go forward. This is a great project. He would encourage more of this. He offered his congratulations. This is a great project. If this is funded by the City and going to become an example, he wants it to be excellent. Right now there is a nice plan and a nice model. He has a couple of things he wants to address. He would encourage a rethinking of the site to get the driveway to work off the alley. To have a curb cut and a fairly deep right-of-way, a garage in the back would be better. McLaughlin replied that they are maxed out on all the setbacks. Originally there was a two stall garage facing north. That was too close to the lot line. They made the design into a single garage. The problem is a matter of moving things around. We need to make sure we have enough room for access.

Peace would encourage the applicant to find a way to come off the alley. Alleys are a great asset. He would encourage them to use it. There is an offset roof pitch. If there is any way to get a gable with uniform pitches front and back to match others in the neighborhood, it would be desirable. He would encourage them to look at a design of 8/12 or 10/12 pitch. Houses to the south are really tall. This starts to feel compressed. The windows feel a little small. They are typically taller and more vertical.

Penn inquired if this funding is from a grant. Boyd replied it is a loan from HUD. Penn stated that the insulated panels being used for this house are a premium project. She wouldn't discourage it totally, but she would encourage the applicant to weigh where the money goes. Sometimes you have to weigh the economics. Boyd explained that they felt since this was a smaller envelope, there was some savings in terms of the construction costs. With the benefit of the roof line and cathedral ceilings, we felt that the structural panels were justified.

Penn would encourage more of the Queen Anne style in the house. Boyd stated that we wanted to reuse elements from the house. Penn is saying this could go a little farther with the Queen Anne style. Double hung windows can be hard to egress through. Keep tweaking the design. She wants it to be as excellent as it can be.

Eagle Bull believes the design can be pushed further with the window selection. She encouraged the applicant to take a harder look at newer windows. They could go with larger windows. She suggested they add to the Queen Anne style. She also commented that they might want to take a look at the bathroom on the second floor.

ACTION:

Huston moved approval, upon examination of the design of the roof pitch, alley access and windows, seconded by Tilley.

Tilley stated this will be a vast improvement to what was there before.

Motion for approval carried 7-0: Casper, Eagle Bull, Huston, Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'.

UPCOMING ITEMS

Groshong-Hageman stated that there are designs for the Hudl building. Staff is hoping to do a joint meeting with Historic Preservation Commission at their next meeting on June 18, 2015.

Ed Zimmer noted that the schedule for that building is very accelerated and optimistic.

Peace questioned if this is in a historic district. Our committee reviews urban design items. The points of view can vary greatly between the two bodies, since they are charged with totally different missions. Zimmer noted that the project will be near-to but not in Haymarket, hence the request that both design board review it. He doesn't think it is essential that the comments blend. That is why there are two different bodies. He believes this needs both bodies to review and give their input.

Kissel remembers in the past, there have been two completely different sets of opinion on a project. Historic Preservation Commission has criteria for reviewing if something is suitable to be located near a historic district. This committee reviews if the design is suitable. We are voting on two different sets of criteria. She would like to see each body have a separate vote, even though it will be a joint meeting. Tilley agreed. She thinks that would be a good idea.

Zimmer will confirm as soon as a date is certain. He noted that an item for the July, 2015 agenda will be election of a Chair and Vice-Chair. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.