

## MEETING RECORD EXCERPT

**NAME OF GROUP:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION and URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, June 18, 2015, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** *Historic Preservation Commission (HPC):* Tim Francis, Jim Hewitt, Jim Johnson, Berwyn Jones, Liz Kuhlman, and Greg Munn; (Jim McKee absent). *Urban Design Committee (UDC):* Emily Casper, Tammy Eagle Bull, JoAnne Kissel, Gil Peace, Michelle Penn, and Michele Tilley; (Tom Huston absent). Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman, Amy Hana Huffman and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Kevin Abourezk from the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

**STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:** Joint Meeting of Historic Preservation Commission & Urban Design Committee

Greg Munn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

**DISCUSS AND ADVISE ON THE SPECIAL PERMIT FOR HEIGHT WAIVER, TDP PHASE THREE AT CANOPY & P STREETS (HUDL HQ BUILDING):**  
**PUBLIC HEARING:** **June 18, 2015**

HPC Members present: Francis, Hewitt, Johnson, Jones and Munn; Kuhlman declared a conflict of interest; McKee absent.

UDC Members present: Casper, Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley; Eagle Bull declared a conflict of interest; Huston absent.

Zimmer began with explanation of the purpose of the joint meeting. This item is on the border of the Haymarket, so as was done in the past, rather than drawing a 300 foot line west of the Haymarket boundary and having HPC advise on areas within the Historic District, and UDC advise on anything beyond, it makes more sense to come together and review the information simultaneously, though it is best if votes are taken separately to reflect each group as an individual entity.

This is a request for a Special Permit which will go to Planning Commission on July 8, 2015. We are asking your advice, which will be incorporated into the Staff Report.

Eagle Bull and Kuhlman noted they have declared a conflict of interest and would abstain from voting since their firms, Encompass Architects and Sinclair Hille Architects, are associated with this project.

Representatives from HUDL and WRK Introduced themselves.

Dan Grasso, Sinclair Hille, came forward to present the concept, preliminary building plans and materials for this project. The site is Block B, which is surrounded by Canopy Street, Olsson Associates, Lincoln Station, and the Green 2 parking garage. The first half block to be developed will include a seven story, approximately 150,000 square foot building. HUDL will occupy most of that and eventually expand to a future north building. The 1st floor will be mainly retail, including some facing Canopy Street, a common lobby space, service entry through the alley, and there is potential for an inner courtyard. The upper floors are all approximately 25,000. Nelnet will occupy the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. There is the option for an exterior patio and green roof, as well as a public art corner. This provides great views down Canopy Street. HUDL will occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and up, and there will be a connection to parking at this level.

John Prauner, HUDL, said that HUDL is in a phase of growth. The company started in 2006 with three founders working out of their dorm rooms; there are now 230 employees and there could be hundreds more in the near future. This building provides an opportunity for the company to remain here in Lincoln and draw from the University graduate pool, and to take advantage of the home environment and low cost of living. HUDL is now a top video sports editing company in the world, on the level of Google and other world-class tech companies.

Jake Hull, HUDL, said that from a recruiting standpoint, factors like the workspace, the local area, and the West Haymarket are contributors in finding and keeping the best people. This is a cutting edge company and the building needs to match. Work is done collaboratively, so the open plan is important.

Grasso went on to describe other unique key features, such as a larger, grandstand styled area for meeting with the entire company, an arcade area, and gathering space on the roof. These types of features speak to the culture at HUDL, which is innovative and fun.

HUDL has said from the start that they want to be good neighbors. Though this is a cutting edge building, the idea is to utilize materials already present in the Haymarket and Railyard areas, including darker brick at the base and zinc panels. A sun and glare study was conducted so that appropriate window features, which include vertical fins and perforated panels, are part of the design, particularly on the south and east sides. Other notable exterior features are the vertical panels, major branding features, and the potential for public art.

Different views have been provided to show what the building with the height waiver will look like from different angles. The grade rises on that street. The 7<sup>th</sup> Floor is set back so visually, it doesn't rise much above the height limit. The block is currently split between the 100 foot and the 75 foot height limits. Eventually, this will be a single building, so the goal is to make it appear that way.

Munn asked the height of the taller area. Grasso replied that it is 90 feet.

Berwyn Jones, HPC, expressed his concern and irritation that height limits are set and that exceptions are always handed out. He does not like the view of the building with that additional height.

Munn asked for explanation about why the height limits are split down the block. Zimmer said this area was formerly I-1 zoning. It was rezoned to accommodate West Haymarket development. B-4 zoning was the broadest option and allows many different height limits going as high as 275 feet. At the west edge, the limit is 100 feet; most of the Haymarket is 75 feet, though most of it is not built to that height. The south half of this particular block is more sensitive than the north. Most commercial development in the B-4 zone has the built-in ability to request a height waiver. The logic behind this is to create a process where the developers must provide a building concept that can be seen, discussed and judged for appropriateness before building can take place, and before it goes before the Planning Commission and the City Council. Jones said that even if the building is nice, it does not change the fact that it is a 75 foot zone, and the building is too tall.

JoAnne Kissel, UDC, noted that if both buildings were being proposed today, the other half would be 100 feet. It seems odd to have that break half way through the block. In relation to the Arena, the building does not seem to stick out. Zimmer said the height difference was a judgment call that provides greater protection to the south half of the block. It is also worth noting that a 75 foot building can have the elevator houses and mechanicals up to an additional 20 feet, by right, in any of these districts, though it must be setback from street frontage. Kissel said the proposed building does not look overly large. Jones disagreed.

Gil Peace, UDC, said that if both halves were built to match, it would look natural. He finds the design appropriate. Jones questioned why the limit exists if it is always waived?

Tim Francis, HPC, said that he likes the design of the building because it adds a real sense of "downtown" to Lincoln. It will help to draw and keep young people here.

Michele Tilley, UDC, noted that there are two different groups with different sets of concerns meeting today. This building fits in, from an Urban Design standpoint. Munn said that from an HPC standpoint, the building would not be visible at all from the P Street view. Jones said it seems a height waiver is requested every time a new building goes up. Munn said that is a good sign that development is happening.

Zimmer added that when these height restrictions were initially discussed, none of the development had occurred yet, so it was a matter of attempting to envision what could take place. Now there is much more experience and information. Deciding to split the block allowed the opportunity for this public process, and to get these various perspectives.

Kissel said she likes the tension between the new urban design next to the old. Grasso mentioned that contrast was discussed internally. The contrast of the glass and metal makes a strong old building, like the station stand out more. That contrast is a design strength. Tilley agreed. The canopy was moved and it was a division line between the old and new. The choice of materials nods to the old buildings and it seems appropriate.

Michelle Penn, UDC, said that as far as breaking rules is concerned, sometimes it is appropriate. There was an equal amount of turmoil with the Olsson Associates building. UDC turned that down, HPC did not. Jones interjected that in the end, the Olsson Associates met the height requirement. Penn went on to say this building uses appropriate materials, and from an urban design standpoint, it faces the street appropriately. That vibrant connection is desirable. People often talk of the intellectual bleed from Nebraska; we want to continue to build on what is part of the urban context to keep our youth here. Even on P Street, it is appropriate to see the buildings peeking over others.

Zimmer said when it comes to height, some things are allowed by right, and there are conditional uses. Special Permits are not amendable. They go through a legislative process. It is an opportunity to say, if there is enough scrutiny, and enough sensitivity in the design, the zoning code will allow for a waiver.

**ACTION:**

**UDC:**

Penn moved approval of the special permit for the height waiver for TDP Phase Three at Canopy and P Streets (HUDL HQ Building), seconded by Tilley and carried 5-0: Casper, Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley voting 'yes'; Eagle Bull abstained; Huston absent.

**HPC:**

Johnson moved approval of the special permit for the height waiver for TDP Phase Three at Canopy and P Streets (HUDL HQ Building), seconded by Francis and carried 4-1: Francis, Hewitt, Johnson and Munn voting 'yes'; Jones voting 'no'; Kuhlman abstained; McKee absent.