

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: December 1, 2015, 3:00 p.m., Bill Luxford Studio, Room 113, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Zimmer and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Jeff Day, Jacob Doyle, Marcellus Kiprutd, Nick May, Sean Cuffey, Kathryn Horn, Peter Hind, Alec Eastman, Salem Tupalovic, Travis Barrett, Carolina Preciado, Anna O’Neill, Meghan Janoufek, Ryon Plager and Micah Davis from the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL); Shawn Ryba and Mike Renken of NeighborWorks Lincoln; Scott Hofeling of Hofeling Enterprises and Kevin Abourezk of the Lincoln Journal Star.

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 the regular meeting held November 3, 2015. Motion for approval made by Eagle Bull, seconded by Peace and carried 7-0: Casper, Eagle Bull, Huston, Kissel, Peace, Penn and Tilley voting ‘yes’.

APPEAL OF NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING AT S. 8TH STREET BY NEIGHBORWORKS LINCOLN

Shawn Ryba stated that this is a lot to the north on 8th St. There was a shelled out house that had been broken into. It was razed a few years ago. NeighborWorks works on infill housing and encourages home ownership. This was an opportunity for them to work with the neighborhood, UNL and the city.

Jeff Day, Director of Architecture at UNL appeared. He teaches a studio and there was an opportunity for students to work on a real project. Often times the students are engaged in the construction. He was excited when Shawn Ryba approached him to think of a new concept for single-family housing. UNL approached this with the idea of using shipping containers as the primary component. This lot is on S. 8th St., north from South St. He presented a rendering. The design is two shipping containers with a space between them. Two forty foot containers would be used for the main house. There is one twenty foot container that could be used for storage. He presented the site plan. The house sits on the setback. It has an entrance from the street. Parking is accessed from the east, off the alley. They will be planting a tree and doing some

landscaping. The north container has a bathroom and bedrooms. The south container has a kitchen, bathroom and bedroom, with stairs going down into an unfinished basement. One of the advantages is that the containers don't have to be modified significantly. The container has an inherent structural quality to it. Small windows would be cut in the bedrooms and one in the kitchen. They minimized the openings in the containers to maintain the integrity of the containers, but have the open concept in the middle between the two. The roof proposed is a low sloped hip roof. There is a slight peak. There is an array of roof lines in the neighborhood. There appears to be quite a few porches in the neighborhood. This house would have a porch as well. Most houses are single story. South Street is very mixed use. They are saying the nature of the container and its proportions lend itself to something different with the geometry, but keeping it in line with the one story houses on the street. The carport will be structured so if someone wants to convert it to a garage in the future, the structure will already be there.

Kissel questioned if the neighborhood design standards speaks to these kinds of materials. Ed Zimmer replied no. This is here for review due to the roof line.

Huston wondered about the price of shipping containers. Day replied that they are fairly inexpensive. They will be painting the containers and making some modifications. The roof will be probably be a membrane.

Kissel inquired about the projected life span of a shipping container. Day replied they are made from steel, so this will last a very long time. A roof load will be much more than a house. The containers are designed to be stacked nine tall, fully loaded. They will be anchored to the concrete foundation. The inside will be spray foam insulation to meet the 2012 energy code. The containers are only eight feet wide, so you lose space very quickly when you start adding insulation and walls.

Peace is curious if the rear courtyard could be made bigger. Perhaps the detached garage in back can be slid a little closer to the alley. Zimmer noted that the proposed plan isn't making much use of the back yard space. Day stated that we have looked at different arrangements. Perhaps we should reconsider the configuration.

Zimmer wondered if they could make the accessory building part of the main building by attachment. Day stated that it is proposed to be attached with a trellis that could be detached.

Zimmer questioned if there is a cost constraint. Ryba replied that this was an effort to look at making things cheaper for infill housing. At this point, they can't tell you if it will in fact be cheaper. They want to build it to figure out the final cost. He doesn't know exactly. His best guess would be that this will cost about the same price as conventional construction.

Day noted that we are trying to minimize the number of holes being cut into the containers for insulation and cost both.

Huston thinks this is a really cool idea.

Kissel wants to see how this plays as a prototype. This is an unusual position to be reviewing basically the roof. Zimmer stated that it is the roof that brings this to Urban Design Committee for review. The committee can either approve or deny, in its entirety. If the applicant had chosen a steeper roof or hip roof, it wouldn't have come here for review.

Penn inquired how a homeowner will purchase this. Will it be a refinance through NeighborWorks? Ryba replied yes. Typically, they sell buyers of to 80 percent median income. This will be approved for a first mortgage with a lender. Their program has the buyer go through 9 hours of comprehensive home buyer education and then will be eligible for down payment assistance that is typically forgiven in five to ten years.

Huston would want to make sure lenders have appraisers that know how to deal with a house of this type. Penn is interested in the modular idea, but wonders about the value as well. Her brother built a modular type house and the appraisal deducted money for that fact.

Ryba works very closely with US Bank. He will approach them and get some answers. In the past, they have gotten appraisals based on construction design. These are all good points. Day added that one reason an appraiser sometimes downgrades a modular home is that there is a misunderstanding that the home is just a trailer. He believes they can explain the process to them. This will be fully anchored to the foundation.

Eagle Bull thinks it is a cool looking house. The houses in this neighborhood have a certain feel. Zimmer added that this neighborhood doesn't have a historic designation.

Huston believes this could be setting a precedent. We need to look at every avenue for affordable housing. Zimmer believes this has some relation to a house approved by Urban Design Committee a few years ago on R Street that was a cubic design. It hasn't been yet. He has heard that appraisal/finance was an obstacle. Ryba added that part of the inspiration for this was the 9 South Chagrill, which abuts the house site on the alley. That restaurant is a cool structure and this would complement their design. This location lends itself to a fun idea.

Kissel thinks this is a nice neighborhood. She has some concerns about this design fitting into the neighborhood, as well. Zimmer stated that the committee can look more broadly at context than

he can. This meets orientation on the lot, it has a porch and the building height varies widely in this neighborhood. The roof standard is more precise.

Penn inquired about the roof pitch. Day replied it will be a flat membrane roof. Zimmer stated that this comes for review due to the roof being proposed. The question is, does this meet the broad intent of the design standards.

ACTION:

Huston moved approval of the proposed design, for this specific site, seconded by Casper.

Zimmer believes the applicant held a meeting for the neighbors. Day stated that two people attended the meeting. Ryba stated that they sent numerous letters to owners, renters and businesses in the neighborhood.

Tilley inquired about the process for NeighborWorks. She questioned if they are working with a potential owner now. Ryba replied that at least 25 people go through homeownership education every month. These are typically sold before they are built.

Tilley questioned if someone has an interest in a modern house. She is wondering if people will be drawn to this design, or not. Mike Renken replied that he personally likes a more traditional house, but that is a matter of finding the right person for this one. When you educate 100 people a year, you are bound to find the right person. They can't guarantee it will sell, but finding the right people will be the determining factor. Out of those 100 people, he believes someone will be interested.

Tilley wants to talk about the house we have been struggling with the last few months. Is there a relationship here? Kissel explained that this committee had a similar proposal for a tiny house on a nonstandard lot. Their challenge was how to make it affordable. They came up with something that was nonstandard. Whoever does a tiny house or container house first, needs to do it right and the Committee needs to approve it right, because it will be a great sustainable model.

Tilley is excited to approve this. She thinks it is very different from the rest of the neighborhood. As a body, we need to be thoughtful how we move forward. It appears the neighbors are okay with it.

Penn stated that with the grill adjacent, this is a different type of location. The other house was in the middle of a neighborhood full of cottages. This is adjacent to something that is more modern and industrial. The context is the difference with this.

Peace likes this design. It is very interesting. Containers will be interesting to see. The other thing about these kinds of houses, the challenge with a flat roof house is, it can look tiny. Anything you can do to increase the height will help. Floating the foundation up, it would feel a lot more contextual. If you do a flat roof, be thoughtful about not doing a white roof. Day was thinking perhaps a light gray color.

Eagle Bull thinks those are great ideas.

Zimmer is hearing that the committee believes this property should be considered in a broader context than a strict reading of the neighborhood design standards since it shares its property line with 9 South Chargrill, the design quality will differentiate one building from another and this will be a worthwhile addition to the city. The overall design quality is a benefit as well. The committee concurred.

Tilley would like to see the applicant explore the idea of making the courtyard bigger. There would be more private space to enjoy.

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

LARRY ENERSEN URBAN DESIGN AWARD CONSIDERATION (REPORT FROM AWARD JURY)

Zimmer met on November 20, 2015 with Gordon Scholz and Michele Tilley as Co-Chairs. They discussed some ideas for a potential tour. They looked at the P Street, Tower Square and Farmers Mutual amongst others. Laging suggested we look at Lincoln Mall itself and thought about Farmers Mutual, improvements on the President and Ambassador buildings, as well as many other improvements that have been done to the mall. It is hard to think of a more transformed space than Lincoln Mall from 10 St. to 14th St. They believe it is worthy of the award. Zimmer will work on a historical write up of Lincoln Mall from the start of the improvements to now.

Huston thinks that is great.

Kissel loves the idea as well. She likes the fact that visually it holds its own. The fact that we could do projects that also have a strong outdoor component is great, it works.

Tilley stated it was clear after driving around and looking at some projects. Zimmer stated there was a lot of transformation to the mall over the years. It was the idea of the founders of Lincoln to have a wide boulevard concept.

ACTION: Tilley moved to honor Lincoln Mall as the recipient of the Larry Enersen Urban Design Award for 2015. Zimmer will write up the nomination and bring back to this committee for review.

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

Staff Report:

- Joint Meetings

Zimmer stated that we will likely need joint meetings with the Historic Preservation Commission in January and February of 2016. The first item will be the Telegraph District. Designs on the first two buildings should be ready. The second item will be the redevelopment project on 9th St. and O St. He anticipates preliminary materials for the January meeting and maybe February, 2016 as well.

- Bus Stop

Penn wondered what is happening with the downtown bus stop that StarTran showed the committee. Zimmer believes that some things that were proposed are being carried out. StarTran's focus is very much on a transit center. They want an off street, multi-service center.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.