

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** June 2, 2020, County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE.

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Mark Canney, Emily Deeker, Tom Huston, Gill Peace and Michelle Penn; Amber Brannigan and Tammy Eagle Bull absent.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Stacey Hageman and Paul Barnes of the Planning Dept.; Ernie Castillo and Dallas McGee of Urban Development Dept.; Ben Kunz, Cristy Joy, Nate Buss and Matt Olberding of Lincoln Journal Star; Abigail Littrell of City Attorney's Office and Hallie Salem of Urban Development Dept. appeared online via © Zoom Video Communications; Mark Matthews, Daniel Siedhoff, Ed Gaussein, John Badami and Chris Matthews appeared online via © Zoom Video Communications.

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

Penn then called for a motion approving the minutes of the regular meetings held March 3, 2020 and April 7, 2020. Motion for approval made by Huston, seconded by Peace and carried 5-0: Canney, Deeker, Huston, Peace and Penn voting 'yes'; Brannigan and Eagle Bull absent.

### **GORILLA FLATS REDEVELOPMENT:**

Members present: Canney, Deeker, Huston, Peace and Penn; Brannigan and Eagle Bull absent.

Ben Kunz stated that the existing house has already been torn down. There is existing commercial with a vacant lot next to it. He showed the overall site plan. They will be paving the alley in the back and doing some new landscaping in the front. There will be the existing retail with 2 story apartments on either side. There will be a central amenity courtyard in the middle. They will install new landscaping on R Street. They will be removing the existing curb cuts and illegal parking areas, finish the curb and re-establishing parking. The front view shows existing refurbished commercial, and two-story apartments on either side, set back from the commercial by ten feet. Front porches extend into the front yard by eight feet. This is all allowed by the PUD (Planned Unit Development). The brick will be painted white to make it easier to match to the existing space for retail. The rear is proposed for more of a stucco fiber cement panel, mixed in with some wood accents. The recessed area is more of a board and batten style, fiber cement. Parking will be in the back. There will possibly be a standing seam metal roof on the front only, the rest they are looking at a composite shingle. There will be cast in place planters in front of the porch. The side view shows the rhythm of the design. The roof will be

composite shingles and wood accents. He showed the final material board. A neighborhood meeting was held in association with Neighborworks and other neighbors. A letter of support was sent from the 18 townhomes on 25<sup>th</sup> and Q Street, Antelope Village Townhome Owners Association.

Peace was curious about the setbacks. He would like to see what they are. It looks like the buildings on either side are set back further than the existing building. He questioned if the PUD dictates that you have to be set back another ten feet. Kunz responded that the setback for the existing retail is zero. The PUD shrinks it to a ten-foot setback for residential. The PUD already exists across the street. Peace thinks this is appropriate. He would support even a couple more feet. He likes using the porches to make the residential not feel like the business.

Huston asked if there is any activity in the alley behind this. Kunz replied yes, it needs refreshed. The church also takes access off the alley. He is unsure about the other businesses. Huston inquired how many dwelling units are proposed. Kunz responded twelve. Peace asked if this is allowed by the PUD. Kunz replied yes.

Canney asked if they will be rented or owned. Kunz stated they will be market rate rental, with two reserved for possible voucher programs.

Penn noted there was a concern from the neighborhood association with regard to parking. She asked if there will be assigned parking. Kunz replied yes, there will be parking provided with assigned stalls.

Peace likes the project. He thinks it is great, and great for this area. He usually has a couple of recommendations, but he thinks in this case, it looks really good as proposed.

Canney agreed. He would ask the applicant to coordinate street tree requirements with Parks & Recreation. Kunz replied yes.

Penn's only concern would be where the brick is being painted. She implored the applicant to use a good quality product. Painted brick can sometimes have issues. Kunz stated they will be using a high quality, highly permeable paint. Penn thinks this looks very modern. She likes it. She hopes the applicant can obtain financing.

Huston thinks this is a great project. We need more housing along R Street and this is a great addition.

**ACTION:**

Huston moved approval, seconded by Peace and carried 5-0: Canney, Deeker, Huston, Peace and Penn voting 'yes'; Brannigan and Eagle Bull absent.

Peace asked about the timing of this. Kunz replied that they hope to break ground this fall and complete next summer.

Huston wished them good luck on renting the commercial space.

**BLOCK 65 REDEVELOPMENT:**

Members present: Canney, Deeker, Huston, Peace and Penn; Brannigan and Eagle Bull absent.

Mark Matthews appeared via Zoom. Matthews stated they have been working on this project since late last year. They developed Latitude on Block 68 several years ago. They have been consistently looking for other opportunities in the Lincoln area marketplace. They think it is a gem of a place that they resonate with. This will be adjacent to the Sharp Building. It is approximately a 300,000 square foot building. Construction will be concrete and 15 stories. They decided to incorporate the majority of parking needs within the confines of the lot they are advocating to purchase from the City of Lincoln. They believe the highest and best use of this location is urban, market rate, condo quality apartments for downtown Lincoln. They are intent on bringing the condo experience, without the yoke of ownership. They believe this will resonate with young professionals, desirous of living in downtown Lincoln away from the Haymarket district. They are proposing to build a few studios, mostly one and two bedroom units, with really high quality amenities such as a coffee bar, fitness center, expansive lobby and door men. They want this to be high quality space. There are five levels on the corner that have balconies. They think this site lends itself to this concept. They love that it is adjacent to the Capitol Environs, but not the restrictions relative to height and density. They think this will be an impressive structure because it offers adjacency to all the urban environment offers, without being in the middle of it. They are very excited about this opportunity.

Daniel Siedhoff appeared via Zoom. Siedhoff stated they are looking at response to a 3/4 block that the city owns. Argent's approach is to bring a vibrant living opportunity to downtown. They were inspired by the quality of architecture in this corridor. They understand the relationship with this northeast corner and the bike lane. Maximizing the use of this block is key to this project. This is proposed for a 15-story mixed use building. There will be internalized parking on floors one through three. The fourth floor and above is residential. There will be an amenities deck on top. They are talking about how to integrate traffic, and how to best access the garage. The way they thought about their building is how do they become a great neighbor to the Sharp Building. In their composition of the building, they started to embrace the rigidity and ask how they can create a modern fashion. They have a sort of lifestyle inspiration that they believe drives the message. He presented renderings that showcase what he believes embraces that concept. They don't want to take away from the Sharp Building. He believes the design is very rigid. They have texture in the recesses in the window openings that mimic the Sharp Building, but in a modern approach. He believes you can see the relationships as key to the success of their project. They are conceptually cladding in 30-foot by 10-foot panels they would make with a local precast contractor. Both gray and beige material shown are meant to be precast, just different colors. Perhaps the recessed panel could be different. They are stepping down the corners to give opportunities to the residents within. At the main corner, they create a dramatic moment where they draw the interior out. They are playing on the lower level large store fronts. They want the amenities to activate the street corner. The east facade is where they create an entry for the internalized garage. There is an entry sequence off 14<sup>th</sup> Street into the building. The site plan shows the relationship to the bike lane on the north. The first level has access to parking off street. It is a standard parking garage.

Huston inquired about the materials. Siedhoff replied that the two facades are proposed for a unitized precast curtain wall. They are large concrete panels. The back side on the south face will be a unitized EIFS system, with balconies hanging over that space. The residential will have quality windows, they don't know which product yet. With height and winds, they know they will need a quality product.

Penn inquired about retail on the first floor. Huston believes the question is about compliance with Downtown Design Standards. Hageman stated that the question is the usable floor area along N Street. Orienting more towards 14<sup>th</sup> St. is the question. Matthews stated they can certainly look at N Street. They want to be open to activating. N Street will be a storefront kind of look. There is the possibility of putting some small retail, and they will be serving residents as well as the general public. They discovered at the Latitude building, there was 25,000 square feet of retail on N Street and 14,000 square feet was actually leased. He believes there are other ways of activating the streetscape. They want to put a good portion of amenities at ground floor space. They are open, but as developers, they often think what is going on in the market. They can't dictate the market, only react to it. He doesn't think that putting in large retail on N Street is good for urban design.

Siedhoff stated that because of durability of structure, there are any number of uses that could be brought forward in the future. Our residential lobby space, modern residential at this level becomes a hospitality style offering. A coffee lounge, business class amenities, those things activate the street level.

Huston agreed. The Downtown Design Standards originally envisioned retail. He is supportive of the waiver. He questioned the exterior and if the standards approve the concrete curtain wall panels. He acknowledged that the standards apply to 20 feet and below, but typically with TIF (Tax Increment Financing), the City is insistent on a higher finish for the upper floors.

Canney inquired if there will be a wood frame structure above, or steel beam. Siedhoff stated it will be a tension structure. This allows them to use a heavier, more durable system.

Peace asked what stage the drawings are at. Siedhoff responded they are in the early part of design. Peace would offer a strong suggestion. He thinks it would be a shame to have those eight or ten parking stalls along the N Street side. He would be really in favor of adjusting the first floor for more spaces. He would leave the lobby for something that really activates the N Street side. He understands why they wouldn't be interested in retail, but he would like to see some first-floor amenities. He thinks it would be a shame to have half of the N Street facade with parking directly behind it. You are showing a canopy and cover at the entrance. The model looks like it wasn't being done anywhere else. He would highly recommend some eyebrow space to shield someone who wants to look in the building. His food for thought, currently the second and third floors are just repeating the windows that are above. He assumes the applicant would use frosted or spandrel glass. There is always this thought of trying to trick people into thinking it is glass. He is not convinced you have to do the same windows that are above. Siedhoff doesn't intend to put glazing into those punches. It would be an open-air screen, something they could design such as a laser cut panel.

Peace has more food for thought. Matthews talked about high quality space, five levels on the corner that have balconies. Those five levels will be really sought after. Have you thought about expanding that up or down a few floors? He thinks they could have an opportunity to do more balconies and it would look good. This is a fantastic project. He is excited for this and believes it will be great for Lincoln. Matthews stated that they will certainly look at more balconies. The outdoor space is great. He believes the main lobby needs to be on 14<sup>th</sup> St. because. They need a dedicated space and a lobby for deliveries. They can't do that on N Street due to the bike trail. Having N Street activated is very important to them.

Huston noted that eventually 13<sup>th</sup> St. and 14<sup>th</sup> St. could be two-way. He doesn't see that as a problem with the site plan. Siedhoff and Matthews think that could be a big positive.

Deeker inquired if TIF funding will be used for the streetscape. She questioned if this will be back for review on the streetscape. Matthews replied yes. Deeker would echo Peace's comments. She believes a canopy would accentuate the streetscape.

Deeker wondered what will happens in the space between this development and the Sharp building. Siedhoff stated that as far as they understand, there is an easement between the two properties of about 15 feet. There are already existing windows on the east face of the Sharp building. Deeker is looking at it from a safety standpoint. This could turn into a long dark canyon. She noted that how it will be maintained needs to be kept in mind. Siedhoff agrees. Deeker thinks this is a great project.

Penn wanted to know about the gray material shown on the plan. Siedhoff responded that will be architectural pre-cast. Penn thinks it looks lovely. He has a question on the level four floorplan roof amenity deck. It looks to be under the parking garage. Is this a future city garage? Siedhoff noted their plan is assuming 800 stalls and their deck would be at a certain level. It wouldn't affect any of their shadow studies. He would love to master plan with the City what that would look like.

Penn stated her question is related to parking on the first floor and north elevation. It looked like the first bays would end up with louvers. Siedhoff responded that those are to bring the store front through, much like Argent did at the Latitude building. Penn would want to make sure this would happen. The architecture looks stunning. She thinks about some other projects we have seen louvers on. She encouraged the applicant to not scrimp on product, so there is no rusting. She thinks this looks great and is glad to see some materials other than metal panel.

Penn would like the retail on the first floor addressed. Huston noted there are the Downtown Design Standards. Hageman stated that Design Standards require the first floor on N Street to have usable floor area between parking and the sidewalk. There should be something other than parking. It could be amenities or a lobby space. There is the entire N Street frontage to consider. The streetscape will be back for further review.

Peace would like to approve this, but he really thinks it is conditional on seeing if they can get rid of the parking on N Street. He would conceptually approve of the design. He would like to see more information on the proposed Design Standard waiver.

Huston believes if they would activate the first-floor space, he doesn't see a reason to come back for further review.

Huston would vote for approval, subject to review of the landscape screening and contingent on activation of the first-floor space.

Matthews doesn't see this as a huge issue.

Penn likes this the way it is. Peace doesn't think anything he is recommending is changing the composition of this. Canney thinks it is fair to consider the street level. Huston suggested they activate this space.

Matthews wondered about the bike share program. Perhaps that set back space would be a great space for a bike share station.

Hageman commented that this is advisory on the TIF, but Urban Design Committee is the appeals board on waivers to Design Standards. That decision would be final.

Hallie Salem stated the conversation about the interior space has just begun. It isn't finished yet. If the group is contemplating a waiver of the design standards because TIF is involved, she doesn't know if they are granting a waiver. She agrees it would be best to come back with further detail about the street frontage, bike share or something else. At this point, it is early enough in the conversation that she is willing to let go of the use on the first floor.

Peace would move to take spaces away from the street front. Penn doesn't think that is necessary. Peace doesn't believe it changes the composition of the building. The renderings wouldn't change in any way, with the exception of the west side along the first floor would be glass or louvers. Penn thinks it hinders the developer from having eight spaces. Peace believes that taking away eight parking space and putting back four with reconfiguration, is worth having glass and something visible along N Street. The point would be an urban building having part of a social context something other than views into a parking stall along a major bike path and major hub. He doesn't want to set a precedent that if you have a building along a thoroughfare, you have parking in front of the retail space. Penn doesn't want to hinder the developer.

Matthews knows that any developer wants the flexibility to react to market changes that happen over time. The majority of store front is now parking. Parking stalls will be \$100.00 plus for a parking space. He appreciates all the comments. They want the flexibility to have a structure that can respond to market conditions. They are designing a building with a long useful life. They are going to do what is best for the project. They ultimately want to have a very strong, standard breaking project. He thinks the best prescription for healthy retail in an urban environment is having retail so it is activated 24/7.

**ACTION:**

Huston moved approval subject to review of the streetscape and waiver of Downtown Design Standards for N Street frontage in the event it does not get activated, seconded by Peace and carried 5-0: Canney, Deeker, Huston, Peace and Penn voting 'yes'; Brannigan and Eagle Bull absent.

**ANTELOPE TOWER REDEVELOPMENT:**

Members present: Canney, Deeker, Peace and Penn; Huston declaring a conflict of interest; Brannigan and Eagle Bull absent.

Cristy Joy appeared with Nate Buss from Olsson Associates. Cristy Joy stated that they are excited to show the west facade along Antelope Valley Parkway. There will be screening by the bikes and landscaping. Behind the landscaping will be the air conditioner condensers. They only support the first floor at this location. She showed the landscape plants that will be utilized. They have tried to design it so there is slow grow and fast grow plants, so they can manage the streetscape. Some electrical and mechanical will be screened with landscaping. There will be a main entry to the housing.

Penn believes it looks like the grading has been done, and the drop in elevation isn't as drastic as thought. Joy agreed and noted that the grading towards K Street will have a few more steps. They have created large patio areas, four locations for entry locations. Nate Buss added that we will make all the entrances ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible. Joy pointed out that the K Street side has ramps.

Huston believes that the Downtown Design Standards indicate these type of mechanical units should be screened from the pedestrian way. Joy said their goal is to design to the Downtown Design Standards.

Deeker would suggest mixing grasses and evergreens in front of the bike parking. She would use grasses on bike parking and evergreens for more year-round screening of air condensers.

Penn thinks this looks good.

**ACTION:**

Penn moved approval, seconded by Deeker and carried 4-0: Canney, Deeker, Peace and Penn voting 'yes'; Huston declaring a conflict of interest; Brannigan and Eagle Bull absent.

**STAFF REPORT:**

- Hageman stated that the committee previously reviewed the Eagle Garage design concepts. The applicant only received one bid which was very high over the estimates. They also had some structural issues which cost \$900,000.00. This forced them to do a new design. It is similar on both sides. They are still using panels, just not as extensively as before. There will still be the orange elements. She believes there was more color variation before.
- Hageman informed the committee that she approved an administrative waiver to the Neighborhood Design Standards. The residence on 2525 R St. was previously reviewed by Urban Design Committee. It was going to look much more modern with a flat roof. This project isn't happening and now there is another architect. She showed the new design. Based on previous waivers to Neighborhood Design Standards, she felt it was appropriate to approve this.

Huston agreed. It seems like the right decision to him.

- Penn stated that the Mayor's Art Awards has been postponed. Hageman is not aware of another date yet. Canney noted perhaps it could be held this fall.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.