

MEETING RECORD

Advanced public notice of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website.

NAME OF GROUP: NEBRASKA CAPITOL ENVIRONS COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Friday, September 27, 2024, 8:30 a.m., City Council Chambers, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Eileen Bergt, Ann Post, Andrea Gebhart, Kile Johnson, David Quade, Delonte Johnson and Heidi Cuca.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Collin Christopher, Paul Barnes, Ben Callahan and Juan Carrasco of the Planning Department; JJ Yost of the Parks Department; Matt Hansen from the State; Heather Loughman with Community Action; Greg Newport, Bob Ripley, Jeff Keidel and other interested citizens were present.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission Meeting

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

K. Johnson then called for the approval of the minutes of the regular meeting held July 26, 2024.

Motion for approval made by Quade by Seconded by Gebhart.

Minutes approved as corrected 6-0: Bergt, Post, Quade, Gebhart, K. Johnson, and Cuca voting "yes": D. Johnson abstained.

DISCUSS AND ADVISE: 1445 E STREET

September 27, 2024

Members present: Bergt, Post, Quade, Gebhart, K. Johnson, Cuca & D. Johnson.

Collin Christopher, Planning Department, 555 S 10th Street, Lincoln, NE came forward and stated that the application in front of the commission today is a little different than what is typically reviewed by the commission. Christopher mentioned that today's presentation is regarding a zoning action that will then be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council. Christopher mentioned that in their code they have a suggestion for the commission to review zoning actions to ensure that those actions are in conformance with the "protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of the Capitol Environs District." Christopher added that this isn't a certificate like normal but more of a recommendation that will then go on to Planning Commission. The notes and minutes of the commission will then be included in the packet so that they understand what was discussed at this meeting. Christopher then mentioned that Ben Callahan from the Planning Department who is the Development Review Planner for this area is present, along with the applicant. Christopher then stated that the reason for this meeting centers around Community Action's desire to use the residential structure at 1445 E Street as a home for the services provided by The Gathering Place. Christopher mentioned that they have two guidelines or standards that are worth considering for an application like this. Guideline 16.1 which talks about 1445 E Street as a historic structure that contributes to the historical character and urban design richness of the Mall. The guideline is more about preservation than use, which is something the commission will have to consider when the applicant comes forward in the future with any façade or site improvements. The standard that is very relevant is Design Standard 16 which says that "Goodhue Blvd should be improved as an attractive residential area, with public improvements that offer a variety of great Capital views while reinforcing a residential environment." Christopher mentioned that the standard is subjective, but it is the responsibility of the commission to make sure that the application is in line with keeping Goodhue Blvd as an attractive residential area. Christopher then mentioned that the commission reviewed the South of Downtown Redevelopment and Strategic Plan in 2020 that was ultimately approved. One of the recommendations of that plan was creating a South of Downtown PUD which was also reviewed by the commission before it was sent on to Planning Commission and City Council. The plan really spoke to creating a scenario where the residents and property owners had more flexibility in how they could use their property, really looking at added uses that typically wouldn't be allowed in a primarily residential district. Christopher added that the approach that they decided to take was a tiered approach, meaning that the properties closer to Lincoln Mall had the most allowances. The South end of the area, which is primarily residential, allowed for the least amount of flexibility of uses. The area in the middle, which is where the property up for discussion sits, allowed for smaller scale uses like a small coffee shop or a small commercial service that wouldn't detract from the neighborhood. Christopher mentioned that they had set some standards within the PUD to encourage reuse of existing residential structures and also allowing people

that live in a home that also want to operate a business within the home by giving them flexibility on how they can do that. Christopher mentioned that Neighborhood Support Services category was considered in the creation of the PUD, but it was determined at the time that this use category can vary quite a bit from application to application, and it didn't make sense to just allow it outright. Christopher added that they wanted to maintain the special permit process so that when one of these came forward, the neighborhood got a chance to weigh in. Christopher mentioned that this was not included in the PUD as an allowable use so it must go through the standard amendment process. Christopher then invited Ben Callahan to come forward and explain the developmental review side of this proposal.

K Johnson wanted to clarify that the applicant will have to come before the commission again and at that time that would be the issuance of the certificate of appropriateness.

Christopher stated that if the applicant were to simply get a special permit for this use and they didn't make any changes or improvements to the site as well as any external changes to the building they would not have to come forward. Christopher mentioned that he believes the applicant is planning on making some changes. So at the point when they are ready, they would have to come forward to receive a certificate of appropriateness prior to getting a building permit.

K Johnson also asked if its correct that the applicant is asking for a vote at the conclusion of this hearing.

Christopher stated that they are asking for a vote, though it is not a typical certificate vote. It is simply a recommendation to the Planning Commission.

K Johnson stated that the question is whether the proposed zoning action is in conformance with the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of the Capitol Environs District. Christopher confirmed that this is correct.

Ben Callahan, Planning Department, 555 S 10th Street, Lincoln, NE came forward and stated that as Christopher mentioned, this area does fall withing the South of Downtown Planned Unit Development which was approved in 2021. Callahan stated that currently the organization is operating across the street to the north at 1448 E Street, known as The Gathering Place. The Gathering Place has been under a special permit for neighborhood support services since 1982. Operations at The Gathering Place started before there was a requirement for a special permit within the residential district, which has now changed. A special permit was then added, and it is now how they are legally operating today. Callahan mentioned that as part of their

process, instead of adding a special permit on top of a PUD they would amend the PUD. Callahan stated that going forward the applicant is requesting a full amendment to the PUD that would look at adding a subarea one and a subarea two that would just be a new property on the South Side of E Street. Subarea two in the PUD would add a new sheet detailing the allowed neighborhood support service use with their site plan which will go forward onto Planning Commission and then ultimately City Council. Callahan mentioned that this PUD was generally created to provide more flexibility for redevelopment, but that neighborhood support services is a very broad use which has been used in different ways around the city. Callahan stated that the allowed uses include human, social, educational, counseling, health, and other support services provided primarily for support for people residing in the adjacent residential areas. Callahan mentioned that one thing they look at for other neighborhood support services around the city is if the services provided for the residents of the adjacent neighborhoods are generally classified as local, walkable and accessible for the residents in the neighborhood. Callahan added the services shouldn't be viewed as a city-wide or regional organization. Callahan added that the Planning Department has been working with the applicant and they have now been delayed twice in going to Planning Commission. The purpose for the two delays is to ensure proper outreach to the neighborhood.

Post wanted to clarify that The Gathering Place that is across the street is providing neighborhood support services. Callahan affirmed that this is correct, and that The Gathering Place will be relocating to 1445 E Street. Callahan stated that the special permit the applicant currently holds will be rescinded and the right for this use will be transferred to the new location.

K Johnson asked if the applicant would discontinue the use of the current property.

Callahan stated that as a condition of approval, the current neighborhood support service in the North side will be rescinded. The applicant would still own the property but the neighborhood support use in the property would not be allowed because it would be moving to the new location.

Bergt asked what the age of the 1445 E Street House is.

Callahan stated that there has been some research done in their office to determine the age of the structure and they have concluded that the house is well over 100 years.

Heather Loughman, CEO of Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties, 210 O Street, came forward and stated that their mission is to work with the community in fearless pursuit of anti-poverty solutions so that everyone

has the opportunity to live well. Their program centers across four areas of impact including early childhood education, homelessness prevention, financial and family well-being, and hunger relief and healthy food access. Loughman stated that on an annual basis over 17,000 people are served each year. Loughman stated that she and Greg Newport are here to talk about a plan for supporting the future of one of their programs which is The Gathering Place. The Gathering place serves evening meals to anyone on a nightly basis who is experiencing hunger. Loughman stated that meals are prepared in-house and are served by volunteers on a nightly basis. Loughman then stated that The Gathering Place was originally founded by six community-minded individuals in 1982 and became a program of Community Action in 1997. Loughman added that throughout its 42 years, operations have occurred in a historic home at the intersection of Goodhue Blvd and E Street. Loughman stated that within its home environment, The Gathering Place has always been much more than a meal program; it is a place to belong, establish and grow friendships, and it is a place of hope that has been a stabilizing force in the neighborhood. Loughman stated that as one of their guests put it recently, its everybody's house. Loughman continued by adding that in recent years, need for the meal services provided at The Gathering Place has grown significantly. In 2022 the monthly average of meals served was 2,900. Loughman added that in 2024 that average has increased to 4,500. Loughman added that this means that the need for meals in the neighborhood they serve is greater than ever. Loughman continued by stating that the neighborhood in which The Gathering Place is situated is categorized by indicators of greater need compared to the city as a whole. Loughman stated that 55% of residents live at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines, or about \$62,000 a year for a family of four. Loughman added that 96% of housing units are renter occupied, and the average household income is over \$50,000 less than the city average as a whole. Loughman mentioned that these factors impact residents' ability to live a long healthy life. The Gathering Place is situated in the only tract in Lincoln where average life expectancy is between 55 and 60 years, which is 20 – 25 years less than Lancaster County as a whole. Loughman added that people accessing The Gathering Place live within the neighborhood and rely on them for meals, and often the meal that they receive there is the only meal they have that day. Loughman added that a sampling of guest's data shows that 74% live within one to twelve blocks of The Gathering Place and the same number walk to get there. Among those who use different methods of transportation, most ride their bike or use the public transportation system and most of their guests are renters in the neighborhood. Loughman then added that the space within their existing building is not conducive for meeting the growing needs in the neighborhood and the proposal to relocate The Gathering Place programming to the 1445 E Street home, which is right across the street and about double the square footage of the current building, would maintain critical access to food in this high needs neighborhood while ensuring that the facility is more equipped to prepare and

serve healthy nourishing meals for Lincolnites who need them the most. Loughman mentioned that maintaining the residential aesthetic of the home would be a cornerstone of their proposed plan and their approach would be centered on not only improving the property but restoring it to its original glory. Loughman stated that it would be in alignment with the design standards for Goodhue Blvd and maintaining the residential look. Loughman invited Greg Newport to come forward, which is someone who they have been working with as an architectural consultant.

Greg Newport, 1954 A Street came forward and stated that when he was first asked to look at the property at 1445 E Street and get an idea for what it might take to rehabilitate the structure for what the applicant would like to use it for, he has overly optimistic regarding the cost. Newport stated that as they delved further into the condition of the structure, finishes, and the exterior envelope of the building it became apparent to Newport that it was going to be a substantial cost to rehabilitate the structure. Newport stated that as they looked further into what needed to be replaced and repaired in terms of making sure that the structure was brought back to its original condition as much as possible, the cost grew further. Newport stated that the current cost estimate to rehabilitate the structure is anywhere between \$1.4 and \$1.7 million. Newport added that as they get further into the process of the design, they can determine whether the cost will be an acceptable number. Newport added that the structure of the building would not be in good shape in 5 to 15 years from now as it is significantly deteriorating. Newport added that the building looks good in pictures, but as you look closer you can observe that the asbestos siding should be removed. Newport also stated that they do not know what the condition of the building underneath is, but their intention is to bring it back to its original siding finish. Newport added that the windows need to be repaired. The exterior brick of the building is in moderate condition and there has been some settling. Newport added that over the years there is a significant amount of reconditioning that needs to occur. Newport stated that he looked at the foundation of the building in the basement and found significant deterioration as well and it is their intention to replace the foundation while keeping in mind what is original to the building to keep its appearance. Newport added that the 30 to 40 pigeons in the attic will be dislodged in the process and there are some hazardous materials that are to be removed that are currently in the structure. Newport mentioned that they need to replace all the utilities as it is all original electrical and plumbing. There is asbestos in the basement and the boiler and piping need to be removed and replaced with modern systems. Newport stated that the exterior trim is in a good state but there is still a lot of reconstruction of the trim that needs to occur. Newport also mentioned that they might have to replace the roofing though they haven't had it inspected by a roofing company yet. Newport stated that very little of the interior of the building would have to be reconfigured for its intended use. Newport mentioned that they anticipate that

there is lead on the paint system which means they must analyze and treat it. Newport added that the kitchen will be redone to install a more commercial kitchen to replace the current one. Newport mentioned that the basement needs replacement of stairs, foundation, and flooring. Newport also stated that if this home was to be bought and reconditioned by a private entity so to be used as a single-family home the costs would soon become very overwhelming. Newport mentioned that it would take a lot of money to rehabilitate the home and make it livable in a sense of health and safety. Newport then displayed a floor plan for how they plan to use the interior. There are 5 parking spaces that are anticipated and an accessible ramp of the east side of the house that will stay within the setback area with the intention of keeping it close in nature and character to the existing brick and stone materials. There will be a new driveway in the back of the building for services, though they only anticipate two trucks a week to deliver food and haul away garbage. Newport stated that the impact of traffic will be very minimal regarding vehicles. The front of the property will not be used for anything other than greenscape.

K Johnson wanted to confirm that the current use of the house is a single-family residence. Newport confirmed that it is. K Johnson also asked if there is an intent to put up fencing like it shows across the street at their current property. Loughman stated that they are likely to put up a fence in alignment with any requirements that are applicable. K Johnson asked which side serves as the primary facade. Newport mentioned that the primary façade is along E Street.

Gebhart asked to revisit how many residents they're currently serving, their need to move, and how much more space is needed.

Loughman mentioned that the primary space needed is just a larger kitchen facility to have the equipment that is necessary to prepare the volume of meals that they are serving as well as more space for folks to dine in with them and have a place to gather. Loughman added that The Gathering place is completely privately funded, and they have a lot of support from the community. Loughman mentioned that often they will receive donations like personal hygiene products, winter coats, and warm items. Loughman added that currently they do not have the space to store the items to efficiently give them to the people who need them. Loughman mentioned that having more space would support storage for the items that the community needs.

K Johnson asked if moving to the larger location would cause an increase in traffic in the neighborhood.

Loughman stated that she doesn't anticipate an increase in traffic because the services would be a duplicate of what is already being done now.

K Johnson asked how the trucks load and unload deliveries.

Loughman stated that they currently have a small driveway and the street right in front of The Gathering Place is the place being used sometimes but ultimately the team picks up their own deliveries from their primary food source. Loughman mentioned they mainly go to The Food Bank of Lincoln in a van to get the ingredients they need to prepare the meals. The ingredients are then stored in the basement of the current building.

K Johnson asked how that would differ in the new location across the street and if they have a similar driveway or an unloading area.

Loughman mentioned that the driveway across the street is more conducive for unloading. Newport mentioned that it is a circular drive through the property. Newport stated that there is a driveway on the west side of the property, which is shared now, but it is on the 1445 property line. Newport added that they intend to redo the driveway and recondition it so that it is more of a one-way in one-way out situation when you travel around the backside of the house.

Loughman added that they are likely to use the basement for cold storage. Loughman mentioned that there is an entrance to the basement from the back of the house for easy access when they're unloading the van or truck. There is another entryway right off the kitchen area which would be used for unloading as well.

Bergt stated that there is already a curb cut on Goodhue Blvd.

Newport clarified that there are two curb cuts on the property, one on Goodhue Blvd and one on E Street.

K Johnson asked if the driveway on E Street leads to the alley.

Newport stated that the intention is to come in off Goodhue Blvd and then out off of E Street. This could be reversed, but either way it would be a one-way entrance and exit.

Bergt stated that the age of the house on 1445 E Street is significant to the neighborhood, and it was originally built as a single-family house. Bergt mentioned that she has concerns changing the house because as much as the applicant says they're not going to change anything in the façade of the house she doesn't believe them because she sees changes happen all the time. Bergt mentioned that there are

a lot of things happening at The Gathering Place and it's almost like you can't see the house very much because there are so many things outside like fans, poles, and furniture. Bergt stated that because the house at 1445 E Street has a larger yard, she feels like this would happen at that location too. Bergt added that maybe the current owner doesn't have the capability to fix the house but reiterates that the house is of significant historic importance in the neighborhood. Bergt mentioned that she is concerned that the applicant wants to install a commercial style kitchen in the house. Bergt also expressed that the Near South Neighborhood is concerned about the house. Bergt asked Loughman if they have talked to the neighborhood association.

Loughman stated that they had the opportunity to meet with the neighborhood association on September 9th. Loughman mentioned that some feedback they received included implementing solutions for the trash that is created in the neighborhood and perhaps a result of The Gathering Place. Loughman stated that there are trashcans placed outside so that people can properly dispose of trash. They have a group of volunteers that come in on a nightly basis to clean up and make sure there isn't any trash lying on the ground before they leave for the day. They are looking for solutions regarding surveillance and monitoring for the building like installing a ring doorbell. Loughman does understand that actions do speak louder than words and pointed out that they have done nothing to alter the 1448 E Street home. Loughman added that there is a fence there and chairs outside if people would like to dine outside but if you walk into the building the original aspects of the house are still there. Loughman mentioned that one of the opportunities they have is the ability to reinvest in 1445 E Street to make it shine as an original historic home. Loughman added that they love the fact that their current home is historic and that means something to their guests as well.

Newport stated that they plan on doing everything that would normally get cut out in a budget crunch. The Gathering Place is financially committed to doing things correctly. Newport added that the commission will have another opportunity to see the design documents. Newport stated that they are making sure The Gathering Place has enough money to get things done correctly.

K Johnson asked how long the property has been on the market and what the recent listing price for the property is. Loughman stated that the property has been on and off the market for roughly two years and the price for it is \$265,900. K Johnson asked if the house wasn't selling for single family. Loughman confirmed that the house was not selling. It is 4,100 square feet so the cost per square foot is rather low.

Newport suggested that the house has been seen by people with realtors and they don't last very long while doing a walk through due to the realization that it is going to take a lot of money to bring the house to a standard living condition.

K Johnson asked if the house is laid out in a way that it was or could be divided into separate living units.

Newport stated that he believes the house was previously divided into apartments though he is not sure how many apartments there were.

D Johnson asked what the desired timeline is to start and finish this project.

Loughman stated that their first step is to get through the city processes and then they would close on purchasing the home.

Newport offered that he anticipates a 1.5-year renovation timeline due to the detail that must go into the home and wanting to make sure things are getting done correctly. The windows of the house need to be repaired to their original condition and that within itself takes so much detail and time. Newport also stated that they want to make sure that the correct people are hired and that they can do it in a timely manner which is something that they have to research.

Loughman said they will embark on a campaign to support the project and renovation and begin at minimum of 50% on the way to their fundraising goal. The Gathering Place is very well supported, and they have many donors who have indicated willingness to support the project, some already willing to donate \$200,000.

Gebhart asked for more detail regarding the hours of operation of The Gathering Place and when people are in the building.

Loughman stated that they serve meals from 5 to 6 in the evening currently and volunteers usually get there around 4:30pm and 4:45pm and leave shortly after the meal service has concluded.

Gebhart then asked if there is anyone in the building during the day to do prepping of the meals and such.

Loughman stated that they do have staff who have their primary office set up at The Gathering Place. She said that they have a small team consisting of the administrator and operations manager who operate from within The Gathering Place.

Bergt asked what the plan for the current Gathering Place is.

Loughman stated that they would like to talk to the community and engage with stakeholders in the neighborhood as well as partnering organizations and residents to find out what current needs are and how the house can be used to support those needs. Loughman added that they have had an initial conversation with NeighborWorks to potentially convert the current Gathering Place into housing. Loughman mentioned that they would like the house to contribute in a positive way to the neighborhood.

Newport stated that they have just now committed to putting in about \$42,000 into the basement of the current house to get some repair work done due to some water damages.

Cuca asked about the significant uptick in meals in May. Cuca mentioned that the chart presented shows more meals needed in that month and asked what that was attributed to.

Loughman stated that it is hard to tell what exactly the cause was. There are factors in play like difficulty keeping up with the cost of living and the cost of going to the grocery store which is hitting people's wallets more than before. Toward the end of any given month things get tight for folks and they see an uptick in the need for meals.

Newport stated that in discussions with the Near South Neighborhood Association they have asked for input to better understand what the needs of the neighborhood are. Newport added that they will have discussions with the developer of the new affordable housing project (Center Terrace) on the 13th.

K Johnson asked Loughman if there has been research done for other buildings that could better suit what they are trying to accomplish.

Loughman stated that they have done a scan of the neighborhood since it is important to them to maintain their service in it based on the level of need that exists. There are limited options in terms of relocating and the house they are interested in just so happens to be across the street and offers a larger more appropriate size to suit their needs.

K Johnson wanted to confirm that 74% of people that go to The Gathering Place are within a mile of the place.

Loughman reiterated that yes, people going to The Gathering Place are within one to twelve blocks from the place.

K Johnson then asked if there was anyone in favor, opposition, or neutral capacity that wanted to come forward and speak.

Bob Ripley, resident of the City of Lincoln, 3022 William Street, came forward and stated that he applauds the applicant for what they do and is glad to know that The Gathering Place is responding to the needs within the community and to this neighborhood. Ripley then suggested that this is a great project but the wrong location because to Ripley, it seems as though The Gathering Place's services are expanding as opposed to reducing by moving into the new facility with parking visible along the backside with trucks coming in and out. Ripley stated that the new property has better access for deliveries to go in and out and feels as though they will use it for that very purpose. Ripley feels like it would not support the commission's stated goal of supporting a residential area. Ripley offered that any property along Goodhue Boulevard should be treated as architecturally historical. Ripley mentioned that the future changes proposed could be alterations to the interior which will change the character of the house since it is residential at this time. Ripley stated that adding a commercial kitchen is not a small investment as well as other costs with improving the property as the condition of it is not ideal. Ripley stated that his recommendation is to look more diligently at other properties that aren't within a specific district that have been designated important to the city for other reasons. Ripley stated that the proposed plan for The Gathering Place does not work to provide an improved attractive residential area in Goodhue Blvd though he understands that it would work towards preserving the building. Ripley added that comments have been made about the existing facility not looking residential when it serves so many people. Ripley believes that this is a green light for any other organization to come in and ask for a waiver of the Design Standards and Guidelines and the residential district requirement for that property. Ripley summarized by asking that this application isn't approved because he feels that it is problematic, and the mission of the Environs Commission is to oversee a district and to preserve it and he finds this application inconsistent with the design guidelines, standards, and mission.

Jeff Keidel, member of the Near South Neighborhood Association, came forward and read a letter that was sent to the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission by the President of the association, Vish Reddi. (Please see attached letter)

D Johnson mentioned that in Keidel's opening and closing statements, it was mentioned that the Neighborhood Association is in support of the functions of Community Action and that there are alternative locations within the neighborhood.

D Johnson then asked if information to those alternative locations has been provided to Community Action or if they can speak further on those items.

Keidel said that during their meetings with The Gathering Place there have been several suggestions that have come up. Keidel stated that there is currently a food distribution program at multiple churches throughout the neighborhood like at the church at the corner of 13th and F Street. Keidel said that they spoke with the applicant during their September meeting and the applicant didn't seem to have investigated any specific locations aside from the one that is being proposed. Keidel believes that there are far more appropriate locations, but the applicant has not come to them for assistance with that.

K Johnson asked Keidel if he knows if the churches mentioned currently have food programs.

Jeff suggested that the church on F Street does have a food net distribution, as does the church on 17th and A Street. Keidel mentioned that there are a variety of churches that do food distribution, though they do not offer hot meals for people in need like The Gathering Place does.

K Johnson asked Keidel if he or anyone within their organization has reached out to the churches to see if they are able to provide hot meals for individuals in need. Keidel said that they have not reached out to the churches, and he cannot say if anyone in the organization has for certain.

Bergt stated that they are sure there is a need for hot food in the neighborhood. Bergt then suggested 13th street, as there are many opportunities for other buildings that can be used, and it is only two blocks away from the current Gathering Place. Bergt agrees that the services provided by The Gathering Place are great but doesn't feel like the house on 1445 E Street is the right location for it.

Gebhart asked the applicant if moving is necessary or just an opportunity for The Gathering Place or both. Gebhart asked that if this plan were not to go forward if The Gathering Place would still consider relocating elsewhere in the neighborhood.

Loughman stated that they would have to conduct analysis about how they can keep up the volume of need for hot meals. Loughman added that their current kitchen is about 100 square feet, and it has a range and dishwasher that they can't fully use. There is minimal facility space to prepare the volume of meals that the neighborhood needs. Loughman stated that the churches around the neighborhood have been long-time supporters of The Gathering Place. The churches volunteer at The

Gathering Place to serve the meals and to help respond to the needs that exist. Loughman stated that if it weren't for The Gathering Place located where it is they wouldn't be able to help the way that they do. Loughman added that she 100% understands the viewpoint of the opposition and what matters the most to them is having a place based on strategy that keeps the integrity, history, and legacy of The Gathering Place clearly in the neighborhood.

Gebhart added that the applicant mentioned that they have done very minimal residential changes to the current house. Gebhart is wondering if there has been a study conducted to upgrade their current kitchen and making it larger and more of an open concept. Gebhart asked if the applicant has looked into improvements in the current house and if they are feasible.

Newport stated that it isn't feasible in the current facility that the applicant has. Newport then added that another need is for table space. They are maxed out as far as how many people can dine inside which means people are then taken outside to eat and that is not ideal. Newport stated that the new facility would help alleviate some of the pressure of not being able to eat within the facility. Newport stated that a lot of the people that go to The Gathering Place take box meals home because they live in the neighborhood but ideally having an in-dining space would be best and that's why a larger facility is needed. Newport added that there is no way that the current kitchen can be expanded.

Loughman stated that their late Director, Michael Ryan, would measure the heat index of the kitchen because it was so confined in there and it would get extremely hot when preparing meals and running the dishwasher at the same time.

Newport stated that there isn't space on site to build any ancillary facilities. Newport added that they need more space for storage and in the new facility they won't need that. Newport stated that he is a preservation-oriented person, and he would love to see the facility be preserved or rehabilitated to a point of original condition which is his purpose in being involved in this project. Newport also stated that the structure of the house in 1445 E Street will not last and he can guarantee that it would be too cumbersome for somebody to come in and do the things that they are proposing doing to the home. The house will retain its residential nature on the outside including its aesthetics, appeal, and what was originally intended. Newport stated that there are many other homes along the corridor that need to be rehabilitated but aren't because there isn't a market for that in this neighborhood. Newport believes that rehabilitating the house at 1445 E Street will help increase the momentum to rehabilitate other houses.

Post stated that based on the numbers that the applicant has presented, it is intuitive that it's a critical part of their mission to be in the neighborhood to serve the residents. Post then asked the applicant to expand on what that means more directly.

Loughman stated that when the six founders established The Gathering Place in 1982, their vision was to place a service in the community to create a space for community. Loughman stated that they chose the current house because there was an identified need for that neighborhood as there is still a need today. Loughman added that when they are considering expanding programming – though what they are proposing isn't an expansion rather a relocation – their focus is on where they must place their anti-poverty services so that they are able to meet the needs of people where they are at. Loughman added that the data shows that this part of town is where the need is and most of the guests that go to The Gathering Place live within the neighborhood and are tenants within the neighborhood. Loughman stated that they are very passionate about what they do because it is responsive to the needs of people.

Quade mentioned that there might be locations that are more commercially suitable for The Gathering Place. Quade then asked how important it is for the programs to be provided in a residential context as opposed to a commercial facility.

Loughman stated that the essence, integrity, and legacy of The Gathering Place has always been to operate from a home. Loughman mentioned that there have been guests who have stated that they love to visit a home in the neighborhood and have a meal with others which reminds them of their childhood and happier times. Loughman stated that they are set on keeping the integrity of The Gathering Place as a home environment because though there isn't quantifiable data to show it matters, it does matter to the guests.

K Johnson asked if the applicant has talked to the church on 17th and F Street and what was the outcome of the meeting.

Loughman mentioned that they have talked to all their partners in the neighborhood and their faith-based organizations. Loughman mentioned that faith-based organizations have volunteered monthly and in every conversation that they've had the relocation seems like the ideal solution and they look forward to continuing to support The Gathering Place.

K Johnson asked the applicant if they have considered transferring the process of hot meals over to the church's facilities opposed to at the current Gathering Place or across the street.

Loughman stated that they are not looking at transferring the service because of the structure that has existed in the neighborhood for the past 42 years. Loughman mentioned that the churches don't have the capacity to provide the level of service that is needed. Loughman then mentioned that these faith-based organizations refer folks to The Gathering Place as a way of meeting the need.

Newport stated that the churches don't have the capacity for indoor dining without sacrificing some of their space.

K Johnson mentioned takeout meals and asked if they can satisfy the volume increase by simply giving those meals out. K Johnson also asked if there are some people that get those takeout meals and will stay and eat with their neighbors.

Loughman stated that the grab and go model was something that The Gathering Place implemented during the 2020 shutdown. Loughman added that they understood the increase in need for meals as they could not invite guests into the building during that time, so they started to serve the meals in a compostable container. Newport stated that the grab and go model has reduced barriers even further because some people would rather eat at home, and they have maintained that model to this day. Loughman mentioned that their guests have the option to dine in or take their food to-go if they do not have the chance to stand in line with a tray and sit down to eat.

Cuca asked if there have been any exterior renovations to the existing facility to accommodate curb appeal.

Newport stated that there have not been any exterior renovations at the 1445 E Street house. He reiterated that are animals living in the attic because of a broken window. Newport added that there are broken gutters that have fallen and not been replaced, and it is a similar situation with other houses on Goodhue Blvd. Newport added that he believes the landlords don't care for the properties and he doesn't see it getting any better unless they are willing to reinvest.

D Johnson mentioned that he is neutral regarding the application. He is in full support of the mission and what The Gathering Place does for the community. D Johnson added that he would like to see more information on other locations and a partnership with the neighborhood association. D Johnson wants to know more about why the house on 1445 E Street was chosen over other locations and more detail as to why this is the best option for the applicant. D Johnson added that it seems like everyone is on board when it comes to the services that are needed in the neighborhood, so it all comes down to what location is best for that.

Loughman stated that they are currently working on some follow-up correspondence to the neighborhood association with a broader analysis of why the house at 1445 E Street is important for their mission.

Bergt stated that the Near South Neighborhood Association is important in the area, and they work hard to make sure the houses are up to date. Bergt added that for the neighborhood association to be opposed to this application has her concerned because the house in 1445 E Street is one of the oldest houses in the neighborhood. Bergt mentioned that the applicant should look at other properties in the neighborhood and other houses that are not as old and could handle their services better and not impact the neighborhood or the Capitol Environs District.

Post stated that she is strongly in support of this application as they have talked about the use of the property and how it could change the character of the neighborhood at this facility. Post stated that there should be very little change moving the facility across the street since the applicant is already operating at their current facility and there should be very little change from use. Post added that the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission are the ones to review the change in zone and how that affects the neighborhood. Post continued by stating that what the Capitol Environs Commission reviews is aesthetics and at this point the applicant has stated that they are not going to change the aesthetics of the house on 1445 E Street at all. Post stated that if the applicant is to change any of the aesthetics of the building they are to come back. Post stated that she understands some changes of the house would be for ADA accessibility purposes and feels like the aesthetic of the house should not be locked in place if it excludes people. Post continued by stating that the organization provides services in a census tract in need and where they are is exactly where they are needed. Being located in a house is part of the history and character of The Gathering Place, and it is appreciated by their guests to be in this setting. Post stated that for all those reasons she fully supports the application and will support approval of it.

Quade stated that due to the reasons stated by Post he also supports the application.

D Johnson mentioned that he is neutral but considering the fact that the applicant must come back for any changes that are proposed, he would lean toward voting yes.

Post stated that there was a comment made mentioning that that this application sets a precedent for other applicants to come forward and ask to get a special permit to allow commercial uses or other types of uses in the neighborhood. Post mentioned that the PUD was specifically approved to allow applicants to come forward and ask for flexibility. Post added that while it is certainly the case that that requires those

applicants to come forward to present their facts and circumstances, that's why this board is here – to be able to hear the facts and circumstances of every single application. Post said that she invites other people to come forward to help weigh in on their applications as they are all unique and all should be examined on their merits.

K Johnson stated that they have an obligation to look at an application and not just rubber stamp it. He stated that he is in support of this application. K Johnson added that they have a duty towards residents and preservation, and he sees this house as potentially disappearing if it isn't renovated. K Johnson added that the house has been on the market for over a year, and it has had no interest from people who would want it for a residential purpose. K Johnson stated that 93% of residents are renters living in the neighborhood. The proposal in front of them represents an opportunity to preserve a wonderful asset on Goodhue Blvd and he is going to vote yes.

Gebhard asked Christopher if a resident or ordinary person wanted to buy this property, would they have to come before the commission for any external modifications to the building. Christopher confirmed that they would. The code requires that any site or exterior improvements requiring a building permit first get approval from the commission. He mentioned there are also other types of improvements that don't require a permit but still require the commission's approval because they are addressed in the design standards. As an example, Christopher said that a roof replacement where they are going from a slate roof to an asphalt shingle roof would require a review – even though it wouldn't require a permit – because that kind of modification affects the character and potentially the maintenance of the structure.

Gebhart stated that she is leaning towards supporting the application as she thinks it is a fantastic mission and opportunity to preserve a historic home. Gebhart's biggest concern would be installing a commercial kitchen since it is something difficult to undo. Gebhart believes that it is reassuring knowing that the money for the renovation work is there and the applicant is not cutting corners. They have already committed to the neighborhood and plan on continuing the commitment for years to come.

K Johnson called for a vote, asking if the proposed zoning action is in conformance with the "protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of the Capitol Environs District."

6-1: D. Johnson, Post, Quade, Gebhart, K. Johnson, and Cuca voting "yes": Bergt voting "no".

Discuss & Advise: *Staff Report & Miscellaneous*

Christopher stated that looking forward, they have an October 25th meeting scheduled. Parks and Recreation Department is working on a proposal related to street trees on Goodhue Blvd. Christopher also stated that November is typically their joint meeting with the Capitol Commission. The State schedules that meeting, so there isn't a date for that yet but it's typically around the third Tuesday of November. As soon as they have a proposed date, they'll send that out to the commission.

Matt Hansen interjected and let the commission know that the joint meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12th at 10:00 a.m.

Christopher added that every November, instead of doing the regular meeting at the County-City Building, they have a joint meeting with the Capitol Commission at the State Capitol and it's a two-part meeting. The first part is a meeting with the Capitol Commission, where city staff presents the NCEC annual report and Capitol staff present their annual report. From there they break up and the commission holds their regular meeting in a separate hearing room at the Capitol.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by K Johnson at 10:13 a.m.