

MEETING RECORD

Advanced public notice of the Urban Design Committee meeting was posted on the County-City bulletin board and the Planning Department's website.

NAME OF GROUP: URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Tuesday, April 2, 2024, 3:00 p.m., County-City Building, City Council Chambers, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Canney, Emily Deeker, Jill Grasso, Frank Ordia and Michelle Penn; Tom Huston and Gil Peace absent.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Arvind Gopalakrishnan and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Department; Ernie Castillo with Urban Development Department; Aaron Burd; Erin Bright with Olsson; Sändra Washington; and other interested parties.

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 meeting held February 6, 2024. Motion for approval made by Canney, seconded by Grasso and carried 5-0: Canney, Deeker, Grasso, Ordia and Penn voting 'yes'; Huston and Peace absent.

TOWNHOMES AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF 26TH AND U STREET:

April 2, 2024

Members present: Canney, Deeker, Grasso, Ordia and Penn; Huston and Peace absent.

Arvind Gopalakrishnan stated that the proposal is for two, two-story buildings, each with four townhome units. The buildings are proposed to be oriented east/west. The garages are oriented to the center of the lot. Each townhome has an attached rear garage. The applicant is requesting Tax Increment Financing (TIF) assistance. The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed this on March 21, 2024.

Penn inquired if the recommendations made by Historic Preservation Commission are reflected in the new plans. Gopalakrishnan responded no, not yet.

Grasso asked if the applicant anticipated making any updates to the plan. She wondered if they have thought about paint colors or railings. Aaron Burd stated that one comment from the Historic Preservation Commission was primarily regarding having grills in the windows. That will be adjusted. It hasn't been shown on the renderings yet. There were larger windows on the sides. It was suggested we go with more narrow windows, which would be more in line with the time period of the neighborhood. Lincoln Electric System (LES) informed us that you can't have glass within ten feet of a transformer. They removed the

transoms on the bottom elevations on the west and east. He didn't understand the Historic Preservation Commission comments on the railings. They didn't seem to have a preference, but he understands that some styles will look more modern than others. They also suggested screening the air conditioner units.

Ordia stated that in looking at the renderings, the doors seem to be in different places. Burd knows the plans have changed numerous times. Some things might not be updated on the drawings yet.

Canney asked if the applicant had played around with the porch columns at all. He wondered how that was decided. Burd noted they are not shown exactly where they will be built. Canney would like to see more of a historical appearance. Ordia thinks if they were placed in regular intervals, it would look better. Grasso believes that part of it is the roofline extending past the porch line. Perhaps you bring the roof overhang in to match the column line. She believes the appearance would look more consistent. Maybe instead of a cedar post, you do something more decorative. She prompted the applicant to look at the length of the overhang.

There was a discussion about the applicant doing round Tuscan columns. The committee members expressed a desire for delineation of separate porches. They pointed out an example of a porch that is indicative of the neighborhood.

Burd was agreeable to the proposed changes.

Ordia sees more than one image in the materials. There are images on page 10, 22 and 23 of the agenda which seem to conflict with each other. He asked for clarification of the doors.

Grasso believes the column placement as shown looks okay, but when the overhang is changed, this could change. Burd will see about incorporating a hip and adding a colonial column.

Penn asked if the applicant had considered using different widths of Hardie board. Perhaps smaller boards could be used above and larger ones below. Burd stated the homes they built eight months ago were the same concept. He believes that you can't tell the difference between the widths of the siding.

Grasso noted that sometimes it is just a matter of breaking it up. She suggested the applicant drive around the neighborhood and look at the materials and how it was used. They want this to blend in and not look like a 2024 build. If done right, you can't tell the difference. Sometimes it is just a matter of finessing the inspiration.

Burd noted that this exact plan was approved by Urban Design Committee just a few months ago. Grasso stated they are always trying to make things better. Not everything should look the same. Things need to be site specific. This is in a historic district. She believes committee members are trying to give it some site specificity and bring it up a notch.

Burd will look into board and batten, finessing the elevation to break it up, different columns and individual porches. Grasso agreed. She encouraged him to look at other elements of the neighborhood.

Penn added that she is unsure about the craftsman door on the front. If you are going for that style, the whole building should reflect that. This doesn't scream craftsman style. She thinks window style, mullions, front porches and railings would add to that. She believes the design needs the influence of what it should look like. She thinks that is what Historic Preservation Commission was trying to say. There is not a defined style to this.

Canney asked who will manage the property. Burd stated they will. Canney asked if the applicant knew where the 'U' Street property line is. Burd believes it is north of the sidewalk. Canney noted it would be helpful to know where the line is, in relation to the planting boxes. Burd stated the gardens are in the common area, public right-of-way. Canney asked if they will be assigned to the units. Burd stated the garden beds were to help with the neighbors that are building south of this project. It will help with their vision of edible landscaping. They implemented garden beds. Lincoln Transportation and Utilities (LTU) signed off on this. This is where everyone agreed to put these. Canney understands they are not assigned per unit, they are for the whole complex. Burd replied yes.

There was a discussion regarding setback requirements.

Penn summarized that the committee would like to see the applicant review the front porch, investigate window mullions, Hardie board, the style of Hardie board, potential railing on the front porches and a potential front step for the units.

Burd asked about a preferred railing style. Historic Preservation Commission didn't seem to care. Grasso noted that if other things are done, some things might not be needed. It is hard to approve something without seeing it. It is also hard to give a laundry list of things. This is all a package. The committee is asking the developer/designer to come in with a cohesive package. It needs to be cognizant of the neighborhood.

Penn stated that they don't want to see a combination of different styles.

Grasso stated that if the craftsman door is kept, the column should be a craftsman column.

There was a discussion of different styles.

Burd thinks the siding should be broken up, along with breaking up the roof. Grasso stated that giving a sense of entry will help greatly. Burd asked about the window styles. Grasso doesn't know about grills in the particular windows being shown.

Penn noted this committee gives advice, but we aren't here to design it. She suggested someone should be hired to give some ideas on how to design the front. The back doesn't concern her as much. The applicant might do well to hire someone for a few hours and get some sketches.

Canney stated they are not trying to recreate a historic house. They are looking for something that compliments what is in the neighborhood. A few key items will suffice. He believes that the columns and porches need addressed. He doesn't personally think the windows need changed. They are a simple

aesthetic. He encouraged the applicant to enhance the front based off elements existing in the neighborhood

Grasso stated the committee has given a laundry list of suggestions. She encouraged the applicant to play with the design and see what looks good. She agreed with Penn about hiring someone for a few hours to give some front façade ideas. It will be something you can utilize in the future.

Burd will break up the porches, look at different columns, will vary the siding with eight inch and four inch, and will stay away from window grills. He will sit down and make some revisions after this meeting.

Ernie Castillo stated that their timeline is for submitting at the end of this month to go to Planning Commission. He believes they can come back for the May meeting of Urban Design Committee and show changes.

Penn would support the applicant coming back in May.

ACTION:

Penn moved to continue public hearing in May and give the applicant time to incorporate the committee's suggestions, seconded by Canney and carried 5-0: Canney, Deeker, Grasso, Ordia and Penn voting 'yes'; Huston and Peace absent.

LINCOLN YOUTH COMPLEX – BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL COMPLEX AT N 1ST ST AND CORNHUSKER HWY:

Erin Bright has been working on this project for about two years now. He is not sure how much familiarity this group has with this site. It has been pretty consistent with the refinement of today. The site is located at N. 1st St. and Cornhusker Highway, just north of Oak Lake. They will be bringing in seven softball fields, as well as a field for the junior Saltdogs program. There are five youth and softball/baseball fields. They will be used primarily for players, age 14 and under. The east end is the championship end. Nebraska Wesleyan will use some fields for their baseball and softball games. There is a Homer's Heroes field with full accessibility for youth with disabilities. He pointed out the location of the concession buildings. He also showed the location of the maintenance building. He pointed out where the fencing would be along the perimeter of the complex. He pointed out on the championship field, there are bleachers with a press box. He showed an area that is proposed for some shade structures. He pointed out where a playground area west of the concession could potentially be. He noted each field will be synthetic turf. That is very important, especially for tournaments. Each field will have athletic field lighting. They are working with LTU for left turn improvements into the site. He showed the proposed traffic circulation pattern. He noted that the initial concept is for a monument sign off 1st Street. This is still in development. The intent is for stone facing, a charcoal gray wall panel and a stone product. Landscaping is not fully developed yet. Outside of the perimeter fence, that is non irrigated and will be planted with turf and drought tolerant plantings. He pointed out the irrigated planting areas. That may be turf as well. There may be some areas with more development on the landscaping that hasn't been developed yet. He pointed out there is not any proposed landscaping within the parking island areas. The site is somewhat challenging. This is a former landfill site. They have gone to great lengths to build the elevation up. This is also in the floodplain.

They left the parking at the existing elevation. Within the parking lot area, they have avoided trees and plantings due to requirements of the project for waste management and strict guidelines for uncovering soil. The parking lot was a trade-off area to preserve some floodplain storage in the area. They are trying to avoid as much disturbance to the soil as possible.

Sandra Washington is on the board of the Lincoln Youth Complex.

Canney commented that he is familiar with this site. He questioned if there are any drought tolerant plants or other plans that could be brought in to help with carbon sequestration. Are there any ways to mitigate the flood plain? Can soil be brought in? Bright stated they tried to minimize where they could. There is a drainage area that runs from the south side of Cornhusker Hwy. that follows the property line to the east. He thinks there are options for planting within that area. Canney stated if there are other ways to be proactive, he would encourage that. Lincoln is underserved with youth sports complexes. He understands the applicant can't do bioswales or anything, but if there are any other ways, he thinks that would be positive. He believes this is City land and was a former park or dog run. He hates seeing the City get into these predicaments. You invite someone in to do big improvements, but in the past when there is a change, such as the Lincoln Zoo expansion or the Woods Park tennis complex potential expansion, there can be issues. He wishes there were some way to figure out that these partnerships don't run into civil discourse. He believes it is important to understand. He suggested that perhaps showing some shade sails or structures to get out of the heat would be important. He fully endorses this project.

Ordia loves this idea. Regarding the structure for the concession stand, he questioned if any consideration was given for concrete masonry or brick. Bright can't speak fully to all the details. It depends on the budget. He does know that at one point, there were larger footprints for the concession buildings and they were brick. They became a hybrid for a metal building wrapped with some brick. This was something that was refined during the design process.

Canney suggested if you could tie in architectural elements with the signing for continuity, it would be good.

Washington stated there is a palette of colors that goes along with this. This is just an initial presentation. She likes the idea of finding a balance for carbon sequestration.

Penn had a question on trees. She understood the applicant say they were not placing trees in the parking lot. She questioned if no trees was due to the fact that this site is on top of an old landfill. Bright stated that is what primarily has been decided. There are many requirements if they were to place trees on this site. The bottom must be lined and the root ball would need to be wrapped due to the landfill site.

Washington doesn't think that is a very sustainable situation with the entire root ball contained. They were cautioned against using trees.

Penn believes that shade structures will be crucial if there are no trees. She was surprised to see there is only one way in and one way out. Will there be a stacking issue? Bright stated that Olsson did a traffic study. That was reviewed with LTU. What they are showing here in terms of access, he believes this meets

LTU expectations. They had talked about what two entrance points would look like. The site is a little restrictive due to the bridge over Oak Creek. The southbound left turn lane is at least 250 feet long.

Washington stated that tournaments would be scheduled for a few days a week. There aren't usually tournaments during the week. We would most likely have someone out there on Saturday mornings to direct traffic.

Canney inquired if there will be enough area for emergency vehicles to access. Bright replied yes. The site has been laid out for buses as well. He pointed out the circulation path.

Deeker noted ambulance access to the interior space. She wondered if that had been considered. Washington stated the gates are not planned with an overhead bar. Height won't be a problem. Deeker would like to see ambulance access all the way to the field. She believes it is something to consider. Washington will make sure Lincoln Fire and Rescue (LFR) concerns are met.

Bright pointed out LTU access for maintenance. Perhaps that could be used.

Canney questioned if the applicant had any experience with misters for use on a hot day. Bright hadn't considered that yet.

Grasso would suggest more shade structures as well. Awnings off the concessions would be welcome as well.

Bright stated that the championship bleachers are open to the air. There is a press box behind. There should be good air circulation.

Grasso stated that it is a lot to not have any trees in the parking lot. Perhaps there are some spots for benches or something to be incorporated. She is thinking about a drop-off spot or something for those that don't need to park. Bright thinks that is a good point. That can be developed with the final landscape plan. They have tried to layout different opportunities for drop-off.

Canney questioned if there will be any need for bus parking. Bright pointed out the drop-off area. They could also identify prior to an event, an area that could be cordoned off or parking off site.

Washington noted that Wesleyan is talking about always having staggered play. Youth teams don't always have the money to buy a bus.

Penn wondered about water. She asked if this will be on City water. Bright responded yes. Washington added it will have full City utilities.

Canney inquired if there are any solar opportunities. Washington hadn't thought about that. There could potentially be on the buildings.

Washington will be back to Urban Design Committee in May. Their goal is for opening next April 1, 2025. They are moving forward. Foundations are being drilled now. She appreciates all the comments. They will look at plantings and shade, misters, talk to LFR, and speak with Lincoln Police Department (LPD) about traffic

The committee members thanked everyone for the information.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.