MINUTES
URBAN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
3:00 P.M. – THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2011
3rd FLOOR – JESSE LOWE ROOM
OMAHA DOUGLAS CIVIC CENTER - 1819 FARNAM STREET

CERTIFICATION OF PUBLICATION:
Urban Design Review Board Administrator certifies publication in the Daily Record, the official newspaper of the City of Omaha, on Monday, April 11, 2011, notice re: Urban Design Review Board meeting, Thursday, April 21, 2011.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike McMeekin, Chair
Dave Ciaccio, Vice Chair
Timothy Holland
Robert Peters
Rachel Jacobson
Jay Noddle
Anna Nubel, Non Voting Ex-Officio Member

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Gerald Torczon
Larry Jobeun, Alternate

STAFF PRESENT: Chad Weaver, Assistant Planning Director
Jed Moulton, Urban Design Manager
Mike Leonard, UDRB Administrator
Debbie Hightower, Recording Secretary

Mr. McMeekin, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m., introduced the Urban Design Review Board members as well as the Planning Department staff, and explained the UDRB’s public hearing and administrative meeting procedures.

PUBLIC MEETING

Public Case for Discussion & Approval:
None

Approval of Proposed Best Practice:

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<tr>
<th>City of Omaha</th>
<th>REQUEST:</th>
<th>Street Lighting Standards for UD districts</th>
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<td>LOCATION:</td>
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Jed Moulton, Urban Design Manager, presented the request. Mr. Moulton gave a brief outline and indicated that the department would like to come to some clarity on what a preferred method of street lighting would be in term of frequency of fixtures, fixture space, type of fixtures, and policy on specialty fixtures that would occur in the right-of-ways. Paralleling the effort is a performance contract with Public Works to access the whole municipal lighting policies and practices to better understand the cost and performance. It has been concluded that there is more lighting than needed and could save the city money. The best practice refers to nationally accepted standard of the American National Standard and Illuminating Engineering Society of North America ANSI/IESNA RP-8-00 lighting guide. This applies to urban design areas only with criteria based on light levels where pedestrian activity occurs and also at crossings and intersections where pedestrians are mixed with cars. The standard would suggest that continuous lighting is not necessary and only needed at crossings or intersections. The basic design criteria were set and photometric studies were completed for fixture arrangement. The layout would meet the design criteria. The department recommends approval subject to: 1) verifying and confirming all photometric that were utilized; and if different fixtures are used, then a recalculation would be required; and 2) fully research all fixtures available for the Urban Design districts. Additional work and research is needed on the different styles of fixtures within the city.
Ms. Jacobson questioned the removal of older lighting where areas are over lit. Mr. Moulton stated that ideally the performance contract might suggest that the city own the fixtures. He stated that 90% of the money spent on lights is for the maintenance and a lease with OPPD over 20 years. Once the lease is expired, the fixtures can be replaced. Mr. Moulton agreed to work with OPPD for lighting standards. The design criteria have been set based on performance but he indicated it would be a work in progress.

Chris Faulk, Public Works Department, indicated that he handles the street lighting issues in conjunction with Urban Planning. As the current arrangement stands, there are older streetlights that need to be replaced. Mr. Moulton stated that the issue is unresolved and there are only a few fixtures to choose from such as the “acorn” fixture.

Chad Weaver, Assistant Planning Director, suggested a layover to review a specific plan.

Mr. Peters moved to LAYOVER. Laid over to allow time for consideration of the Best Practice for Street Lighting in Urban Design areas contingent upon further investigation, discussion and identification of portfolio of light fixtures for this type of application. Ms. Jacobson seconded the motion which carried 5-0.

**DISCUSSION ITEM:**

Green Streets Master Plan

Jed Moulton, Urban Design Manager, stated that a Green Streets Master Plan was adopted approximately five years ago. The staff is reviewing many street projects, for the board, with the majority along Green Streets. The department is working to achieve three objectives: 1) clarity on policy with regard to base minimum for landscaping; 2) financing methods; and 3) the determination of a long-term maintenance funding for a plan. Based on the current policy, all three objectives require an unprecedented amount of landscaping. The challenge is coming up with a proven method with a guaranteed outcome of plantings without consistent and constant replacement of plantings. The impact of the implementation cannot sustain without a plan and funding. The proposal would be to engage a task force on how to proceed with on-street projects to ensure the correct details with a standard medium (i.e. mounding, soil conditions). The current projects need to move ahead with the use of horticulturists and/or advisors while other large-scale landscaping activities are accessed and investigated. Three departments would fund the research on the projects.

Kirk Pfeffer, Public Works Department, indicated there is no guarantee that the Federal Highway Administration will buy into the Green Streets plan, therefore funding availability for Public Works is also a serious concern. There is no definitive arrangement within the City of Omaha as to the maintenance of the Green Streets but there are many components that need to be worked out. It does not make sense to plant trees if no one is able to take care of them. The Federal Highway Administration has guidelines but has not agreed with all the details associated with the Green Streets Plan.

Ms. Jacobson suggested that the City Volunteer Coordinator take an opportunity to establish a plan or engage citizens to initiate the maintenance of Green Streets. Mr. Holland suggested that a philanthropy group conduct a study to determine where the futures dollars are best spent.

Mr. Pfeffer stated that Public Works is on board with trying to fund initiatives as well as the hiring of an intern. He stated that he recognizes the need for staff to discuss the concerns.

Mr. Moulton recommended that the physical characteristics of the roadways be correct but questions if the general contractor should take care of the plantings. He stated the department is looking for feedback and whether to proceed without doing an evaluation or assessment or collection of data or research. He suggested completing some prototype installations.
Request for Administrative Disposition:

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>UD-10-015 City of Omaha Public Works</td>
<td>144th Street from West Dodge Road to Franklin Street</td>
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Jed Moulton, Urban Design Manager, stated that the department has mapped out a point-by-point response with regard to the items from the last disposition and are seeking approval from the board to move forward.

At the Urban Design Review Board meeting held on April 21, 2011, Kyle Anderson, Project Manager, Felsburg, Holt & Ullevig, presented the project. Mr. Anderson stated that due to funding issues, the project has been split into two phases so the city can obligate the share of federal funds for the upcoming fiscal year. A brief description was provided of each key Urban Design elements and how they apply for each particular phase. Phase I will address the following: 1) The hockey puck bronze street lighting standards will be provided on 144th Street at intersections only. 2) Landscaping will be incorporated into the Phase II plans or can be built into an additional Phase III plan. 3) The city has committed to placing four benches along the first phase of the project. The trash receptacles will be an ongoing maintenance issue. 4) There is currently no bus route provided along 144th Street but with the design of the street it would be very easy to provide future transit. 5) There are no railings, fences or retaining walls for Phase I. 6) Utility screening will be monitored during the first phase but because of the distance of right-of-way on 144th Street there will be an opportunity for screening. 7) Traffic signals will have the bronze finish. 8) There has been communication with the neighborhoods. The west side of 144th Street has many volunteer trees that will be removed. The intent is to salvage as many plantings as possible. 9) Island nodes will be tan in color.

Mr. Peters questioned the level of landscaping. Mr. Anderson stated the initial landscaping would be turf in the medians. Kirk Pfeffer, Public Works Department stated that the department is committed to come up with a plan that will work and will continue to work with the Federal Highway Administration to pay 80% for the Green Streets plan. The FHA will commit to pay for replacement of trees that are removed as part of the project but have not committed to any additional plantings. There is no warranty program under the Federal Highway Administration plan for maintenance.

Mr. Peters asked how to resolve the internal issues that are important to the long-term success of the project. Mr. McMeekin suggested that there could be a condition that when Phase II comes before the board there will be a recommendation for resolution to the issues. Mr. Anderson added that the environmental assessment process, along with the public and board comments, are incorporated into the document therefore the comments and responses are listed as environmental commitments in the environmental document. The Federal Highway Administration has the ability to ensure that the documents are satisfied therefore if the board and the Urban Design group are satisfied then the commitment has been satisfied.

Mr. Pfeffer stated that there is a set amount of dollars that the City of Omaha receives every year, which is allocated to a variety of projects. If this project comes under estimate, that money could be available for federally eligible projects.

Mr. Moulton stated that the current policy is to create a landscape plan for every city project and provide the planting that meets the objectives. He suggested that the money used to plant trees and landscaping be reallocated to the program of reevaluation.

Mr. Holland moved to APPROVE. Approval of administrative disposition subject to: 1) Best Practices Study completed by the multiple departments which would apply to the project under Phase II; and 2) Resolution of the maintenance issues associated with the streetscape elements (i.e. public sidewalks, trees, trash receptacles, benches, etc.). Mr. Ciaccio seconded the motion which carried 4-0 with Ms.
2. UD-11-004  
City of Omaha Public Works  
REQUEST: CSO South Omaha Industrial Area Force Main and Gravity Sewer OPW51957  
LOCATION: 13th and “Y” Street

Jed Moulton, Urban Design Manager, stated that the department has considered this project to be a test case and would like to consider getting the physical characteristics needed for plantings.

Mr. McMeekin questioned if there is any ability to increase the setback on the sidewalk.

Mr. Ciaccio moved to APPROVE the administrative disposition. Mr. Peters seconded the motion which carried 4-0 with Ms. Jacobson absent.

3. UD-11-005  
City of Omaha Public Works  
REQUEST: 10th Street NCE District Speed Bump  
LOCATION: 7th and Pierce Street

Jed Moulton, Urban Design Manager, stated that the request is a physical infrastructure in a NCE District and needs to be presented and reviewed for administrative disposition.

Mr. Ciaccio moved to APPROVE the administrative disposition. Mr. Holland seconded the motion which carried 4-0 with Ms. Jacobson absent.

4. UD-11-006  
City of Omaha Public Works  
REQUEST: CSO Aksarben Village Neighborhood Sewer Separation OPW51151  
LOCATION: 63rd and Center Street

Jed Moulton, Urban Design Manager, stated that the request is a CSO project on a bike route and a Green Street. Public Works has worked with Carlos Morales, Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator to determine a street section and incorporated bike lanes. The department requests administrative review to provide the physical infrastructure to allow trees and other plantings.

Mr. Peters questioned if the existing trees would remain. He stated he would like to see greater detail with regard to the detention ponds within Elmwood Park.

Mr. Peters moved to APPROVE the administrative disposition with board approval to: 1) validate that the trees will not be removed; and 2) that the land forms and grading will not significantly distinguish the area in way of land forms for the portion of Elmwood Park. Mr. Holland seconded the motion.

Rick Cunningham, Planning Department Director, asked that the board allow the staff landscaper and architects to review the project and approve administratively.

Mr. Peters withdrew his motion.

Mr. Peters moved to APPROVE the administrative disposition. Mr. Ciaccio seconded the motion which carried 3-0 with Mr. McMeekin abstaining and Ms. Jacobson absent.

5. UD-11-007  
City of Omaha Parks, Recreation & Public Property  
REQUEST: ZNETH II (Zero Net Energy Test House Two) - Hummel Park  
LOCATION: 11808 John J. Pershing Drive

Mike Leonard, UDRB Administrator, City Planning, indicated that the project needs to step up the design/architectural features and questioned the passive energy efficiency. Pat Slaven indicated the trees limit the design but she agreed there needs to be a design improvement.

Mr. Holland requested that the floor plan be reviewed. The floor plan is not energy efficient with over 10% circulation for a two-bedroom unit. Mr. Leonard agreed that the space should not be wasted.
Mr. Ciaccio asked if it was possible to move the building further to the west.

Mr. Holland moved to APPROVE the administrative disposition. Mr. Ciaccio seconded the motion which carried 4-0 with Ms. Jacobson absent.

**Proposed Ordinance Change:**

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<th>City of Omaha</th>
<th>REQUEST:</th>
<th>Green Parking perimeter landscaping</th>
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Jed Moulton, Urban Design Manager, stated that the current Green Parking provisions in the Urban Design Code require 15 feet perimeter landscaping with screening or berming to a height of 3 feet. It has been a challenge to achieve the required amount of landscaping to constrained and downtown areas with small lots. This may result in a high degree of waivers for the Zoning Board. The department is trying to meet the screening requirements and architectural detail that works to meet the Urban Design code and looking for variations or opportunities to reduce or change that in exchange for a masonry or screen wall. The department is recommending approval but do not need to prove constraining sights in ACI-1 area which could be granted as an option for all sites meeting the square footage requirement. ACI-2 areas would need approval and review from the Urban Design Review Board to be granted the use of an exception to the landscaping.

Mr. Ciaccio requested a tighter spacing to perhaps 35 feet between trees. Mr. Holland stated he would support a 30 foot spacing given the fact that there will be some mortality rate. Mr. Ciaccio indicated that he was also concerned about the height of the walls and also the use of manufactured berms in ACI-1.

Mr. Peters stated there are considerable revisions and recommended that the policy be redrafted to be more specific.

Mr. Holland moved to LAYOVER. Mr. Peters seconded the motion which carried 4-0 with Ms. Jacobson absent.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEM:**

Mr. Holland moved to APPROVE the meeting minutes of March 17, 2011. Mr. Peters seconded the motion which carried 4-0 with Ms. Jacobson absent.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

It was the consensus of the Board to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 pm.

Debbie Hightower, Planning Department
Recording Secretary