

## MINUTES

### **PRE-COUNCIL MEETING**

Monday, December 1, 2008

10:00 a.m.

Conference Room #113

## **West Haymarket Update**

**Members present:** Jon Camp, Doug Emery, Robin Eschliman, Dan Marvin, John Spatz and Ken Svoboda

**Others present:** John Hendry of the Law Department; Dallas McGee of the Urban Development Department; Kent Morgan and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department; media and other interested parties.

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The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Kent Morgan began a PowerPoint presentation and stated that the purpose of today's meeting is to inform the Council where we are in the process, look to the future and answer any questions they have. He reminded the Council that this project is a work in progress. This project involves many different components. He noted that in general the West Haymarket core area encompasses the area south of O Street to Haymarket Park and northward to Cornhusker Highway. The West Haymarket Action Team (WHAT) was created by the City and 2015 Vision to guide this process.

Dallas McGee reviewed the redevelopment process. Currently staff is in discussions with the developer to refine the plan. The first step was to conduct a blight and substandard study. The redevelopment plan was adopted in October 2007. Invitations for redevelopment proposals were issued in November 2007. Two proposals were received. The proposal selected was by Lincoln Traction Partners (LTP) which is comprised of Woodbury Group and WRK. Their proposal consisted of an arena, two hotels, UNL practice space, and retail, office and residential space.

Morgan continued with the history of the project and noted that WHAT looked at site options in the spring of this year. Three site layouts, known as red, white and blue were developed. The Mayors' Institute on City Design also reviewed the project and developed option yellow. In this option, they established a location for the Breslow Ice Center, created super blocks and developed canopy streets. An open house was held at Memorial Stadium in September of this year. Brinkman Richters is doing the public outreach and received a great deal of input at this open house. These four options were taken to WHAT in October and they recommended the yellow option.

Morgan stated that four areas must be reviewed to ready the core site including railroads, traffic circulation, parking and wetlands. The railroads are primarily owned by Burlington Northern. Burlington Northern is proposing to relocate some tracks and add new ones and is very pleased

with the proposed layout. Staff has also met with Amtrak staff to develop a new station and to look at additional passenger service.

The roadway philosophy is to minimize the traffic impacts on the Haymarket. Arena Drive to the west is a major roadway, and staff is exploring options to utilize M and N Streets while not disrupting existing businesses. The University is very happy with the design.

Staff has also been looking at daily parking and event parking needs. Deck and surface parking will be provided.

Camp asked what this will do to the existing Haymarket as many Haymarket businesses have expressed that concern. Morgan responded that staff is assessing the needs. They do not want to do anything to negatively affect the Haymarket. They also intend to replace any parking that is removed.

With respect to the wetlands, Morgan noted that nothing has been identified that would prevent the City from moving forward with the project.

McGee noted that staff is meeting with LTP to clarify their proposal. They looked closely at the arena location and the Breslow Ice Center. LTP has further refined their proposal and is now proposing one hotel, which will not be connected to the arena. The Breslow Ice Center is proposed to be between O and P Streets. They are proposing 100,000 square feet of retail, 100,000 square feet of office space and 100 residential units. They need to create another 1000 parking stalls. They are also trying to determine the appropriate amount of connectivity with the Haymarket as pedestrian traffic is very important. They are also looking at what kind of tax increment financing (TIF) will be used. They are working on putting together a redevelopment agreement contingent upon voter approval.

Morgan stated that the proposal for the arena includes 16,000 seats, practice space for UNL basketball, a 500 stall parking garage and retail space.

Morgan explained that ISG is another component in this process. ISG is a subordinate company of IMG and brings together private financiers for investments. IMG just signed a contract with UNL for marketing rights. Staff will continue working with ISG over the next month.

Morgan continued by explaining several factors associated with the West Haymarket site. The Breslow Ice Center will have two sheets of ice and will have public access. UNL hockey and junior hockey would take place there. Community space will be located southeast of the arena and will be used for gatherings and festival space. Staff is also working with the District Energy Corp (DEC) to create a mini generation plant that could save 30-40% on operating expenses. Staff is also proposing to upgrade facilities for youth sports near Oak Lake. Staff will have an integrated development plan and a financing plan in the next few weeks. They are also conducting an economic impact study. Morgan noted that staff will further brief the City Council early next year, and the Council will vote on whether to put this issue on the May ballot.

Marvin stated that there is a lot of detail and financial information that needs to be provided, and he questioned staff if they would be able to provide that information to them within the next few weeks. Morgan responded that the information will be finalized in the next few weeks. He cautioned that the only caveat is that we must wait for the submittal of the ISG proposal before we can finalize the proposal to be sent to the Council.

Camp asked who is financing the arena project. Morgan replied that depends on what happens with ISG. Otherwise, it would be City financed. Camp then asked if the site layout is defined. Morgan stated that option yellow is currently being further refined.

Svoboda stated that there are issues to overcome with public perception of the Qwest Center and the Antelope Valley project and whether the public will be accepting of this project. Morgan stated that ultimately it is up to the Council to determine if they feel the public will accept this project.

Camp urged staff to get financial information to the Council as soon as possible so they have time to review all the information. Morgan stated that decision would be up to the Mayor.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Abendroth  
Planning Department

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