



Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA)

Wednesday, June 14, 2006
Regular Meeting

Item G2

South Locust Request

Staff Contact: Chad Nabity

May 1, 2006

City Council
C/O City Administrator, Gary Greer
City of Grand Island
100 East 1st Street
PO Box 1968
Grand Island, NE 68802-1968

Dear Councilmembers:

The Downtown Business Improvement District has developed a plan to redevelop the area currently known as Kaufmann Cummings Park. A detailed rendering of this proposed plan has been distributed to BID #5 Board Members, City Administrator Gary Greer, and Mayor Jay Vavricek. The proposed park would be completed in phases.

Phase 1 - the completion of a “bump out” on the south side of the park.

This would add approximately 8 feet in width to the “square” area and extend the sidewalk area from Wells Fargo Bank to the Quality Sew & Vac Building.

The existing gazebo structure will be removed.

A grassy area with benches available for seating will be utilized for summer programs or presentations.

The BID Board will accept bids for the removal/purchase of the gazebo in May. The Board is hopeful that the City would include budgeting in the 2006-2007 Annual Budget for the creation of the bumpout area on the south side of the Kaufman Cummings Park. Secondly, the BID would like to discuss with City officials the potential for the grassy area to be cared for by the Parks and Recreation Department.

The redevelopment of Kaufmann Cummings Park is the top priority in relation to Downtown’s Four Step Action Plan presented to the City Council in the spring of 2005. Additional priorities are as follows:

Priority #2– The physical environment – streetscape project. In recent weeks, the City has agreed to repair/replace curbs that are in disrepair. This project will also include the replacement of brick inlay where the curb repairs are necessary and the bricks are adjacent to the curb. The BID would suggest that the City and BID work together to also repair the bricks where no curb repair is necessary. Those repairs would be the responsibility of the property owner, but doing all the repairs at one time could be more cost effective than several individual projects.

Priority #3– Parking solutions. In order to successfully market specific buildings in downtown for redevelopment, a parking solution needs to be reached. At this time, the BID would suggest the removal of the Bartenbach Hotel and GI Music buildings in order to make the Masonic Temple more appealing to investors.

While this is a bold request, the realities are the Masonic Temple and Walnut Street Center may not realize redevelopment unless a parking solution is found. Perhaps the removal of the buildings could be contingent upon submittal of an “option to purchase and redevelop” proposal being presented to the City. Knowing the City has an interest in redevelopment of these buildings and would be supportive of CRA’s negotiation/demolition of key strategically located buildings would greatly enhance the marketing potential for these buildings.

Priority #4– Historical building restoration/upper level housing. With the assistance of the CRA Façade Improvement Grants and the participation in the Nebraska Lied Main Street Program, historical building restoration education and assistance will be enhanced. This is an ongoing process as individual property

owners will always make the final decisions on restoration based on investment and capital. Current building codes can be a hindrance to those planning restoration or upper level housing projects. The BID board would welcome the opportunity to discuss how the City and BID could work together to make the redevelopment of downtown buildings possible.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Board Chair, K.C. Hehnke at 384-2881. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cindy K. Johnson
For the Business Improvement Board