

Lincoln City Council Representative Cyndi Lamm
ECCO General Meeting Notes – submitted by M. Belka
November 8, 2018

Ms. Lamm (clamm@lincoln.ne.gov) reminded the group of the NE Citizens' meeting held the 3rd Thursday each month – hopes to see ECCO representative there. She mentioned how great it was to see such a large turnout of ECCO members at last month's Annual Meeting.

Highlights from the discussion:

- **Dead Man's Run study** completed by the Army Corps of Engineers
 - ✓ Cost share w/NRD – hoping to create improvements that will make it possible for 300-400 homes to no longer be in a flood zone.

Q – Is this related to the 33rd & Cornhusker Highway project?

A – Yes and no. It is related – there are some areas of duplication – Dead Man's Run project runs east of 48th Street and south of Adams.

Q – Richard Sutton/Paul Johnson. Comment that drainage actually goes all the way up to Seacrest Field. "Soft solutions" have included pulling stormwater out – "piling up" in Bethany Park and/or Lincoln Lutheran Jr. High areas. Piles up north of East Campus. Corps wanted to use existing open spaces if possible – less expensive than new levies, etc.

A – Cost/benefit ratio. \$5.2M = City; \$5.7M = NRD; remainder = Federal funding
- **33rd & Cornhusker Highway Advisory Committee**
 - ✓ Land-use is a primary issue – don't want to cut out potential development in NE corridor
 - ✓ Very diverse group participating all along – good public participation from the beginning
 - ✓ What are the icons in the area (for instance, grain elevators, etc.). Lamm has recommended that grain elevators be decoratively painted, as in other areas in Lincoln. (For instance Spreetail @ Innovation Campus)
 - ✓ Corridor/expansion study runs from 11th to 56th – there has been a challenge maintaining the medians, for instance, and may need a different design moving forward. Due to sprinklers, hand-weeding was required – no one bid on the job – currently 14 people cleaning up this area.

Q – **Comment** – Member pointed out that NE Nursery & Color Garden wanted to bid – however, due to changes in immigration laws, was not allowed to use the planned crew, so could not bid.

 - ✓ Initial plan options will be available for review 11/20/2018 – available to the public in December.
 - January – community meetings
 - 2-3 years out for definitive decision RE plan

Q – How are they extending Antelope Valley without taking out businesses?

A – The goal is to have as little interruption as possible. Do not want to lose Industrial zoning (for instance John Henry Plumbing & Wolff Electric). Citizens can weigh in December/January.

Q – If 2-3 years away, can something be done to the RR tracks in the meantime?

A – Public Works working closely to perhaps do some millwork/overlay in the meantime.

Q – What about configuring 33rd Street?

A – They have determined the final 3 "preferred alternatives" – again, it is important to provide your input.

Q – Who is paying for the project?

A – RTSD is paying nearly all of the bill + there is Federal funding. The corridor enhancement (11th to 56th) will be paid by the City of Lincoln. There is no official price tag yet – "...It is roughly, 'big.'" We are trying to avoid problems of past projects, for instance being 5' "off" on the 27th & Cornhusker overpass project. A portion had to be redone – especially important, when Federal standards have to be met for funding.
- **"Safe & Successful Kids" project** – School Resource Officer (SRO) project for Lincoln Middle Schools – there are six
 - ✓ New class training – however, all six jobs are being filled by seasoned officers – developing evaluation tool
 - ✓ Officers completed training in record time – putting SROs in place ahead of schedule
 - ✓ Learning de-escalation techniques, specialized training – establishing CE re-certification requirements
 - ✓ 16 applicants
- **Veterans' Parade – "Salutes" – overview**
 - ✓ Started @ football game time on Saturday a week prior to Veterans' Day weekend
 - ✓ Considering moving to Sunday, so high school bands can also perform
 - ✓ Fortunately, moved to Capitol – originally was to be at Mahoney Par

Q – Who organizes it?

A – US Marine Corps. Several branches of the service combining for strategic planning – no "political" entries allowed – they want to keep the focus on veterans.

Q – Some confusion – is the parade about Veterans' (Armistice) Day? This is usually a remembrance of fallen veterans/heroes? The parade seems to be more of a celebration of those who served.

 - ✓ Might be better attended, if it were not on a football Saturday; if it were on Sunday instead; and/or if it were held during warmer weather. If not necessarily tied to Veterans' Day, might be good to consider change of timing.
 - ✓ For HS bands to be included, would need to be during the school year.
 - ✓ More vets (and others) might attend, if it were not so cold out – especially an issue for older, frailer vets.

A – Good feedback – would be good to contact Councilman Christensen, as he has been coordinating.

Q – Does the City promote it?

A – Yes, it is sanctioned by the City – closing off streets is allowed, and law enforcement for the parade is provided by the City. However, it is a military parade, not a City event.
- **Chicken site comments** – related to waste water flow

Q – What is the process for handling the chicken waste?

A – There is a process where it is made into a “sawdust” like by-product, that can be repurposed – actual waste is minimal. It is a good idea to tour the site to get an idea of how this is handled. County Board is dealing with this – not a City Council issue.

- **If you want to serve on a City Committee/Board** – City is winding down a bit – this is a good time to let the right people know, if you are interested in an appointment.

- **Cyndi Lamm’s Mayoral Bid – Q & A Highlights**

Q – What are your 3 top issues?

A – *Roads* – take care of/maintain what we have

Property Tax relief – taxes should grow no faster than the City is growing – we need to have sustainable growth

Restoring trust in government – citizens need to know what we are doing – transparency needed

Q – You have had several proposals in the past for tax savings, which didn’t amount to a large amount. Perhaps when aggregated, the savings may be more.

A – We’ve had to hold off on reducing taxes, as the City has expanded – money is needed to sustain growth. Programs have not been cut – we must keep growth in line.

Q – Former Mayor Johanns had a great deal of additional money during a “boom” building time – but the “bust” comes, when the new infrastructure has to be maintained. During the “cutting” phase – that’s when damage is done.

A – 4% average growth is where we are – often this number is an “unknown. Again, Lamm maintained that there had been no cuts – the residents, through their hard work and hard-earned money, have built the City. Retirees cannot afford to live in the City they’ve built, at current taxation level. We should not be giving large raises to people in the City Administration (cited a 14% increase); We need to grow the “right” things – historically, average growth has been 4%. New growth has to pay for itself. Example: Citizens Transportation Coalition – a comparative analysis to other cities that have raised sales tax for roads – are we really going to use it that way? Need to find ways to “fill the gaps” before asking residents to pay additional taxes.

Q – What about “Impact Fees” approach from the past? Developers fought them – but ultimately, they were in play. They haven’t been increased for years, and have not kept up with the growth. Can this tool be used, to have those who add to the growth/cost, pay for it?

A – This is another tool – it should definitely be considered.

Q – Comment – A wheel tax seems more fair – sales tax doesn’t seem fair.

Q – What about City/County integration to avoid duplication of resources – and working together more to share? Both grow, with urban development

A – Planning Commission deals with this – Police, recreation, etc. There is integrated planning for Health, etc.

Additional Discussion Points

- Cyndi Lamm brought up the need for attracting more affordable, single-family housing

Q – What about the Telegraph District?

A – There are more rentals planned, than single-family housing. There are some who have a “stranglehold” on property being held – there need to be policies put into place that make more affordable parcels available – and also attractive to developers.

Q – Comment – Fallbrook was one area mentioned that has a very nice approach overall – businesses where people work, who live there; shopping; restaurants; school – it appears to be a successful “employment district” and overall community with a good mix.

- Cyndi mentioned that LPS (Lincoln Public Schools) has a great track record for buying property “early” – long before it is needed. They sometimes don’t use that tract; but are able to sell it for the property they want, when they need it. This level of vision and foresight has served them well, in building new schools.

✓ It shouldn’t take 2+ years to get something approved, once proposed

- New Stormwater Bond Issue

Q – Comment – The City needs to get w/the legislature to enact a Stormwater Use fee. Those on fixed incomes are forced to pay higher property taxes due to problems caused by those who are allowed to “pave the countryside”. This is done all over the country – not just in Nebraska. Lobbyists have supported this – for instance, when it comes to “big box” stores; large parochial school complexes – people who cause the issues, should pay for it. Studies should determine the cost in advance. Comment made regarding permeable surfaces (instead of impermeable, for instance concrete). Enacting taxes for this, would help to put the cost where it belongs – not spread it out to others to pay for these practices that benefit a few.

A – Mayor is trying to work with the City Council on this. Is your NE legislative representative (Adam Morfeld) working on this?

Q – Comment – The City has supported this in the past – Adam has been very busy getting the Medicaid bill passed. May have time to devote to this now. Incidentally, is an ECCO resident and former Board member.

Q – Comment – Gateway Shopping Center, for instance, is dropping a huge amount of water into Dead Man’s Run. Permeable surfaces, recycling tires into road-building (already being done in AZ). Comment – really cuts down on road noise as well in Phoenix – unintended positive consequence, in repurposing tires in this way. Tires are also a huge pollutant – very hard to get rid of/break down – repurposing makes more sense. Roofing tiles were another example mentioned. Technology continues in this area – we need to support it.

Q – Planning Commission needs to consider new design standards for parking lots – for instance the parking lot on the west side of UNL College of Law on East Campus – biofilters provided by shade trees – this is becoming a new design standard – not just trees along the edges – we could do a better job of this.

Q – Comment – The Mayor’s Roundtable has discussed using these standards for the entire City – example @ 33rd & O – former gas station/convenience store now a Godfather’s Pizza – moving beyond “green space” to shielding better, and reconfiguring parking, so that trees are IN lots – not just “screening” lots.

Q – Comment – Developing a “green roof” requirement – would be a great ballot initiative. This helps to address “heat islands”, and how to irrigate these areas. Helps to control storm water – a big part of our discussion this evening. Much cheaper than building large storm sewers!! For instance Applebee’s is being accommodated by removing a lane downtown – why not include a requirement/negotiation for using a “green roof” – quid pro quo – in making these types of accommodations? Why not improve the City at the same time? Note: Cyndi pointed out, this is a “skinnyscraper” project.