

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTH PLATTE PLANNING COMMISSION HELD ON THE 23<sup>rd</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER 2021 IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lee Davies, Jeff Bain, Don Weber, Emily Wurl, Marilyn McGahan, Angie Forbes, David Fudge, Tristen Winder, Nelson Jett

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Judy Clark, Planning Administrator; Michelle Bain, Recording Secretary

Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof, by posting in at least three places in the City as follows: North Platte Public Library, Lincoln County Courthouse, and City Hall offices.

Notice of the meeting was given to the Chairman and all members of the Planning Commission. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the Chairman and members of the Commission.

All proceedings thereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

Chair McGahan called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and stated a current copy of the open meetings act of Nebraska is posted at the back of the Council Chambers.

2. Weber moved and Winder seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held October 26, 2021. Voting Aye: Winder, Weber, McGahan, Forbes, Fudge, Wurl, Jett, Davies, Bain. Voting Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

3. Public Hearing Discuss and consider action on a resolution regarding the City of North Platte Redevelopment Plan for the Sustainable Beef, LLC Redevelopment Project on property described as A tract of land in the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter and in part of Government Lots 1 and 2, Section 11, Township 13, North, Range 30 West of the 6th P.M., Lincoln County, Nebraska more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the North Quarter Corner of Section 11, Township 13 North, Range 30 West of the 6th P.M., Lincoln County, Nebraska; thence S 89°38'48" E (an assumed bearing) on the north line of said Section 11, a distance of 2550.86 feet to the west line of an existing conservation easement; thence S 00°59'01" W on the west line of said conservation easement, a distance of 1390.62 feet; thence N 89°21'54" W on the north line of said conservation easement, a distance of 1481.51 feet to the east line of a 23.13 acre tract as shown on a survey by B. Edwards dated 4/8/2003; thence N 02°39'48" W on said east line, a distance of 25.40 feet to the Northeast Corner of said tract; thence N 88°03'36" W on the north line of said tract, a distance of 962.32 feet to the Northwest Corner of said tract; thence N 89°15'00" W, a distance of 100.00 feet to the west line of Government Lot 2 in said Section 11, also being the easterly Newberry Road right-of-way; thence N 00°45'00" E on the west line of said Government Lot 2 and easterly Newberry Road right-of-way, a distance of 1330.58 feet to the Point of Beginning; said described tract contains 80.06 acres, more or less, and includes 1.93 acres, more or less, of county roadway.

Chair McGahan opened the public hearing.

Judy explained that the City Planning Commission's responsibility in the Redevelopment process is to take public comment on whether the real estate described is in conformance with the City of North Platte Comprehensive Plan and if the project meets or will meet subdivision and zoning regulations, and is an overall fit for development of the city. The following statements should be considered and confirmed.

- This property as presented is located in an area that has been declared blighted and substandard.
- The property is in conformance with the current City of North Platte Comprehensive Plan.
- The project meets or will meet subdivision and zoning regulations.
- That development of this property to its full potential is in the best interest of the City of North Platte and the entire region.

Judy further explained that in September 2020, the North Platte City Council approved an amendment to the City of North Platte Comprehensive Plan 2011 Future Land Use Plan Map amending the map from Quasi-

Public to Industrial and approved rezoning the property from I-1 Light Industrial District to I-2 Heavy Industrial District. The area involved in the Sustainable Beef, LLC Redevelopment project was determined to be blighted and substandard in April 2021 by the North Platte City Council. The principal purpose of a comprehensive plan is to provide basic policies to guide the many activities of the city. It is used to help determine investment priorities and guide public and private development. At the same time, a comprehensive plan must be flexible in order to address changing conditions and respond to new situations that cannot be foreseen at the time of adoption. One goal of the current city Comprehensive Plan is to create a diversified economic base that stimulates local investment and spending, one way of achieving that goal is continuing to build on the prime location of North Platte for manufacturing, logistics and services supporting agri-business. As presented in the Redevelopment Plan, the redeveloper intends to construct and operate a modern beef processing facility capable of handling 400,000 head annually and direct employment is estimated at 875 full time staff. The proposed project targets the City's Comprehensive Plan goal of creating a more diversified economic base and supports agri-business in the city and entire region. Planning staff recommends approval of the City of North Platte Redevelopment Plan for Sustainable Beef, LLC Redevelopment Project and passage of the proposed resolution. The redevelopment plan is in conformance with the North Platte Nebraska Comprehensive Plan 2011 and meets, or will meet current City of North Platte Subdivision and Zoning Regulations and the property is located in an area that has been declared blighted and substandard. This area is appropriate for heavy industrial uses by providing direct access to Hwy 30 and I-80 without disrupting residential or commercial areas of the community. An Industrial agricultural development in this location is a good fit for the area and for the growth and development of the City of North Platte and the entire region.

Chair McGahan asked that anyone wishing to speak would sign up. Once the applicant has spoken, she will allow up to 2 hours for testimony. After that time she will ask commissioners if they have questions and will keep track of questions that might be presented if it has to do with facts that we can ascertain.

Mike Bacon, TIF Lawyer from Gothenburg, was present to represent the applicants. He prepared the Redevelopment Plan at the request of Sustainable Beef. The Redevelopment Plan is an outline of the proposed project to consider whether it conforms with all the pieces that were presented. It will provide for the development for a modern beef packing plant that would handle 1500 cattle per day on approximately 80 acres. The property is owned by the City of North Platte and would be acquired by a 2 step process by the applicant. The site was a former holding pond for the sewer plant that is no longer needed and dried out in 2019. The site will be filled to take it out of the flood plain. It will require \$18 to \$19 million to make this a usable site. There will be significant fill and infrastructure. Golden Road will be paved to the end of the industrial track to specifications set up by the City Engineer. There will be a turning lane off of Newberry to get into the property. Estimates early on range from \$280 million to \$325 million investment to make this project work. The Redevelopment Plan is put in place so tax increment financing can be used. \$21.5 million from new taxes being paid by this project to help pay for infrastructure and site development. They would pay taxes on that and those taxes would go to normal taxing entities. The site fits with Comprehensive Plan and Zoning and it's in a blighted and substandard area. The Redevelopment Authority would then enter into Redevelopment Contract. As part of the plan, Sustainable Beef will pay for public improvements out of TIF dollars. The applicants have a letter from a bank committed to taking the next step. He reviewed the Cost Benefit Analysis provided by Dr. Goss.

David Briggs, CEO, Sustainable Beef, Alliance, Nebraska, was present. He explained that this project has been worked on since October 2020. They came up with slogan, right people, right place, right time. There are a lot of cattle growers in Nebraska. The cattle are fed corn that is grown within 20 miles from where the animals are fed. They plan to process 400,000 fat cattle each year. The cattle committed to their plant they finish over 800,000 head of cattle so it appears they will have a consistent supply of cattle year round. Most of the plants in the Midwest were built in the 60s. Theirs is designed to be much more efficient than the others. They feel their efficiencies will allow them to be competitive with the large packers. Several plants were turned off because of Covid issues. The supply chain is very short. In 2014 to 2016 big packers were in trouble financially and closed their most inefficient plants. This will make \$1 billion economic impact. This technology is more advanced than the plants that were built in the 1960s. Their plant is sized for 1,500 head per day. They will only run one shift and if there is any smell, the prevailing winds are on the correct side.

Jeff Palik, Olsson Associates, was on Zoom and stated he was hired to take care of surrounding roads and grading plan for the development site. The building elevation is just over 5' higher than the centerline of Newberry Road. They are building up from surrounding berms of the existing dike. They met with the City Engineer and Flood Plain Administrator. They are designing the site to make sure parking lots are out of the hundred year flood plain. The plant is designed to have a lot of detention around the site. They will not increase the runoff for this area up to 100 year event. They will work with city engineer to have adequate turning radius on the roads.

Gary Person, President, North Platte Area Chamber and Development Corporation, 502 S. Dewey, was present and stated this has brought national attention to the efforts of this sustainable beef group. Agricultural is a constant. Impact is greater than \$1 billion per year. The city has been stagnant for 40 years. This clearly checks all the boxes for the standard that has been stated.

Steve Hanson, Elsie, Nebraska, was present representing the Nebraska Cattlemen as Vice President. Nebraska Cattleman is grateful to express support. Forward thinking and timely projects like this are needed to address problems and is critical to insure a steady supply of beef to customers. The demand for beef remains at historic levels. This is a strong agricultural community. Potential positive impact will be demonstrated on the number of jobs created. 875 new jobs. Estimated \$1 billion annual economic impact on community. This facility will have minimal negative impact on the community. One personal thought: His son and him farm and ranch about 50 miles away. He has two boys he hopes come back some day. This will help market our beef cattle in a way that is profitable. This is for the future.

Joe Hewgley, 1002 Deerwood Drive, was present and stated they have five different parcels that they own and pay taxes on. One is a small ranch. As a Commissioner, he has had to approach decisions looking at the better good for the community. He is speaking as an individual and served 33 years as member of Lincoln County Development Corporation. There were a number of projects that were close. But that didn't add people or take care of a tax base. This project can add jobs. The best way to reduce taxes is to increase the number of people paying those taxes.

Tanner Pettera, 3821 Sugarberry Ct., was present and stated he is a lifetime resident born in 1980 and the city is smaller now than it was then. He was present on behalf of himself and as president of the North Platte Ambassadors. This may not be the most perfect project. His understanding is when the Walmart Distribution center came, there were issues. He feels this will greatly benefit the entire community by reduced taxes or better jobs.

Mel McNea, 3402 W. F St., was present in support of this project. This plays an important part for this community to grow. This will support local and will have an industry wide impact. The meat packing plant industry has been held hostage by too few processors. Local producers will put more money in the pockets of local farms and ranches. Wholesale price of beef has risen by over 43% since the pandemic started. Cattle producers have only seen 5%. It's time for local cattlemen to not rely on the few packers. Support local ranchers.

Cory Johanson, 3710 Sunset Dr., was present on behalf of himself. He is also on the Chamber Board and Economic Development committee. He sees this as an opportunity to give children the opportunity to come back here to raise families. This will hopefully put some money back in the pockets of producers that support the local community.

Steve Martin, Executive Director, Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska, 5225 S. 16<sup>th</sup> St. in Lincoln Nebraska, was present in support of Sustainable Beef. He stated that looking at communities and small towns in Nebraska, kids need jobs and a place to come back to. Kids from rural Nebraska leave to get an education and they want opportunities. This provides opportunities. This plant, being new, will incorporate technology which may bring kids back to the community.

Chris Bousquet, Lincoln, was present and stated he grew up next to the Tyson Plant in Sioux City. One hidden impact is the impact of the dairy industry. This would impact the meat side of things but would also give

Nebraska the ability to process dairy cows and cull cows that the industry has. The Nebraska State Dairy Association supports this project and looks for an opportunity in the future.

Sophia Klein, 1003 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, was present and stated she has heard great information tonight. Planning Commission is here to decide if this location is the right place. The first three issues it works with. She read a portion of the County Comprehensive plan. The City Comprehensive Plan, on page 14 states that it is inextricably linked to Lincoln County and the other communities in the County. This does not help the entire region. She has been told it's too bad what her family will endure but she needs to take one for the team. They don't want their view out the window obscured. This is asking a lot from her family and residents out there. She wanted to watch her grandchildren grow up out there. She feels they're being asked to give this up for economic impact. No one has been out to visit them or watch a sunset or introduce themselves. They have not had contact from Sustainable Beef. She is told they are breaking ground in the fall. How can they justify the quality of even one person's life. Her grandfather has worked that land all his life. They care about their family's future. She is worried about 875 people going to work with one in and out access road. She asked about putting a price tag on her family. Does this project benefit the entire region? If that answer is no then she thinks they should vote no. They have questions for Golden Road. That road is their only access in and out for emergency purposes. She had questions about the number of vehicles per day and who is responsible if they have issues with the road or lighting on the property.

Chris Bruns, 8515 W. Foothill Rd., was present and stated he is a Lincoln County Commissioner speaking in favor of this project. He does not speak on behalf of the board in any official capacity. In speaking with leadership and local stakeholders, he has been impressed. He believes the four items should easily be confirmed. The first three are clearly yes. Lastly, full potential is in the best interest of the City of North Platte and the entire region. He argues strongly that absolutely it is. Meaningful economic growth and projects like this once in a lifetime opportunity are desperately needed. This project is what the vast majority of people in this region want and what this area desperately needs. Sustainable Beef is the merging of our number one industry in a starving economy. It's a catalyst for the impact this will have on the entire region. There are people from other projects waiting to see how this pans out. This will also positively impact the larger region as well. There is an argument circulating that every entity must be fully onboard as a qualifier. If that were the case nothing would get done as far as economic development. Neighboring villages and counties will reap from this positive impact. In reference to the billion dollar proposed impact to the community he stated one million seconds is 11 ½ days and one billion seconds is 32 years. There will be growing pains. Our community can respond to that and pull together. The community is addressing work force housing. Having a concrete demand will aid in that. We may see increased crime, but not as much as may be perceived. Schools need to respond. He has had conversations with them and they desire to fill the 1,800 empty desks. We hope to see new families that want to provide better for their children. We would like to see our children come back to raise their families. Growing pains will happen but that means we are growing. He encourages them to vote in favor of this.

Leland Poppe, 1202 Custer Court, was present to speak on cattle feeding economic impact. He has worked with customers who see margins decrease, as cattle feeders make or don't make money, it's the cow calf people in our area that take the brunt of that.

Mike Kelly, 719 S. Maloney, was present and stated their family has a ranch north of Sutherland. He is the third generation. They are a cow calf yearling operation that sells cattle to commercial feed yards. They have had cattle processed at Tyson and would welcome to opportunity to work with someone else. He is CEO of Western Nebraska Bank. There are locations other places that would be impacted by this plant. They had unanimous support for this plant at their meeting. He read their resolution from the meeting.

Johnny Klein, 1003 E. 4<sup>th</sup>, was present and stated he knows the cattle market. His biggest concern is protecting the family to the east. He is concerned about the water shed and asked if it will be regulated. Technology is great until it doesn't work. He hopes there will be no blood running by the house. He also has concerns about leaving the berm that is over 40 years old which is a substandard structure.

Steve Wellman, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln Nebraska, Director of Nebraska Department of Agriculture, was present and stated he has seen a lot of development in Lincoln and Omaha and some of the growth that bypassed North Platte. Their goal is to grow Nebraska and to do that, they need to grow agriculture, the biggest economic driver for the state. One of four jobs is supported by the beef industry.

Kirsten Parker, 4001 West Redwood, was present and stated she understands emotional and passionate concern for people close to the project. She has asked questions and utilizing that information she supports this growth. It provides a huge economic impact that will start a domino effect.

Ryan Purdy, 334 W. Weaver Heights, was present and stated most of the beef contracts are from within a 200 mile radius. His role is to provide technical development. Mid Plains Community College is the only institution of higher education within this area. More than 90% of their students are from Nebraska. He was present to support this project and provide educational opportunities to educate the workforce and grow the population.

Stuart Simpson, 1910 William, Executive Director of Finance for North Platte Public Schools, was present and stated North Platte Public Schools embrace the growth. There is room for approximately 1,400 K-12 students before meeting capacity. The District serves 13 different languages and highly focused and motivated educators. There is a family literacy program that serves non-English speaking students.

Greg Wilke, 2220 W. Leota, was present and stated he has had the opportunity to work on several economic development opportunities over the years. He knows most of these people personally and they are the right people and it is the right impact for the group they are putting together as investors. The school systems (K-12 and college) can handle the influx. The group of investors are risking a lot of time and money. David Briggs is well known in the industry. He asked for support of the project.

Dee Fugate, 1671 N. Long School Road, was present and stated she does not feel this is good for the entire region. This will be a huge impact on the people of North Platte. The water table by Golden Road, she has seen it flood – the entire road to Newberry. She showed a picture. She doesn't feel this is a safe place to put the plant. She feels the CS Beef Packing Plant in Idaho is not a good comparison to what they plan to put in North Platte because it is on flat ground with room to expand. She is concerned about where the waste will go and testing for pathogens and dumping them into the South Platte River. The plant in Idaho is located 10 miles from Kuna, Idaho with no traffic issues and lots of room for trucks, cattle, pens. She's concerned about accidents. There is land south of Newberry for sale that could be a workable site.

Mike Groene, 3217 W. 9<sup>th</sup>, was present and stated this project fits North Platte like he has never seen. This is an opportunity to build an industry of high paying jobs. This is an opportunity to bring in another industry into this town. This fixes the labor shortage we have in this community. There will be two-income families. He has never seen a better project that fits TIF in this community. This area is blighted. It's substandard because of the elevation. They have to raise it. With the truck bypass, the interstate, sewage right there, the location is amazing. If they had to start from scratch and build a lagoon or road to it he doesn't think this would be feasible. This is western Nebraska residents coming forward with this. These people will foot the bill for the infrastructure. There is no room for expansion and that's good, it'll hold them to not being overwhelmed. The high pay scale will bring families to town. He would like to see this finalized ASAP. There is money in Lincoln from the American Rescue Plan Act that he would like to pursue. Communities can use the money for water and sewage projects but it has to be shovel ready. Money has to be presented to them by December 31, 2025.

Chair McGahan recessed the meeting for a five minute break.

Chair McGahan reconvened the meeting and asked the City Engineer to come forward. She asked about road improvements and water retention and how the waste enters the sewer system.

Brent Burklund, City Engineer, stated this is on a preliminary basis. There are no design documents, just preliminary high level grading plans. Newberry is a state link and they do traffic counts every 2 years. In 2018 and 2020 they did traffic counts at Philip near the interstate and Hwy. 30. These counts showed roughly 3300

per day. Additional counts at 4<sup>th</sup> and Buffalo show around 8000 cars per day and there are roughly 400 trucks on Newberry per day. There is no final design on Golden Road itself. They have talked to developer who knows what type of traffic they need coming into the facility. They may consider 3 lanes coming into the facility depending on if they make one or two entrances into the plant. As far as wastewater, it averages around 2.3 to 2.5 million gallons per day and the plant is rated for 4 million. Storm water is still in preliminary discussions. The plant will have to retain storm water on site that would be comparable to current water retention. When it rains water will go into storm water detention on site. They are required to have a storm water management plan through the State.

Fudge asked about lighting regulations and the turnaround area if there is blockage problems.

Mr. Burklund explained that in a nutshell lighting regulations talk about how much lighting is allowed to leave the site. LED lights are very directional and in a parking lot they are usually pointing down. Their facility is not to try to draw attention. During the design process the City would look at safety.

Fudge asked about traffic patterns and what the shifts look like. He also asked if there is a plan if they drive past the entrance.

Mr. Briggs explained there will be a single shift. People sanitize and clean the plant so not all of them at the same time. The majority will work approximately 8 to 4. Roughly 100 trucks a day come and go. What hauls in hauls back out. All 875 employees will not be there at one time. They are discussing a secondary drive.

Wurl asked how high will it be filled, will it be higher than Newberry.

Mr. Briggs explained the floor of the plant will be higher than Newberry.

Mr. Palik on Zoom explained the existing berm will mostly stay in place but might be cut down a foot or two. Will be built up from there even more across parking lot areas.

Mr. Briggs stated he believes their workforce lives in Nebraska and they will choose to work at their plant because of good wages and benefits. He believes some will migrate from the other plants in the state.

Winder asked about police department and building into potential population the increase in crime possibility.

Lincoln County Sheriff Kramer was present and stated the Sheriff's department supports the police department when they get backed up. He doesn't see this industry being any different than any other industry (as far as crime).

North Platte Police Chief Reeves was present and stated Chief Hudson spoke at length with the Chief in Lexington and some other areas. None of them reported too much impact. Lexington had an initial growing pain as far as staff increases. Nothing related to crime.

Fudge moved and Jett seconded the motion to close the public hearing. Voting Aye: Winder, Weber, McGahan, Forbes, Fudge, Wurl, Jett, Davies, Bain. Voting Nay: None. Absent: None. Motion carried.

Winder pointed out that he heard about how individuals throughout Nebraska are only a generation or two removed from agriculture. He gave appreciation to everyone who came tonight. It is really inspiring to see this happening in our town by our own Nebraskans. He hears the concerns and is glad to see so much support for this project.

Fudge stated what makes this decision hard is there are always people that will not be 100% happy.

Fudge moved and Winder seconded the motion to approve the resolution recommending approval of the City of North Platte Redevelopment Plan for Sustainable Beef, LLC Redevelopment Project and approval of related

actions. Voting Aye: Winder, Weber, McGahan, Forbes, Fudge, Wurl, Jett, Davies, Bain. Voting Nay: None.  
Absent: None. Motion carried.

4. Old Business. There was no old business to be discussed.
5. New Business. There was no old business to be discussed.
6. Adjourn. Chair McGahan adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Bain  
Recording Secretary