

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Leawood, Kansas, met for a Special Call Meeting at City Hall, 4800 Town Center Drive, at 6:00 P.M., on Monday, August 2, 2010. Mayor Peggy Dunn presided.

Councilmembers present: Mike Gill, Julie Cain, Andrew Osman, Gary Bussing, Lou Rasmussen, James Azeltine, Debra Filla,

Councilmembers absent: Jim Rawlings

Staff present: Scott Lambers, City Administrator
Chief Ben Florance, Fire Department
Chief John Meier, Police Department
Captain Dale Finger, Police Department
Richard Coleman, Comm. Dev. Director
April Bishop, Cultural Arts Coordinator
Patty Bennett, City Attorney
Joe Johnson, Public Works Director
Chris Claxton, P&R Director
Deb Harper, City Clerk
Pam Gregory, Assistant City Clerk

Others Present: James Galle, Vice President, Hoefler Wysocki Architects
Ken Henton, Principal, Hoefler Wysocki Architects
Loren Stanton, Sun Publications

Future use of current Police Facility and Former City Hall building

Mayor Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:10 P.M. Introductions were made by those present.

Opening Remarks

City Administrator Scott Lambers stated one of the City Council's goals earlier this year was to begin working on a re-use plan for the municipal complex, located at 96th and Lee Boulevard. This meeting is intended to gather ideas for potential uses for this site. The Council is not bound to anything by a prior Council. The site is limited by its size of 2.85 acres and its use, being surrounded by residences. They need to ensure the use is compatible to the neighborhood.

Consolidated Fire District No. 2 [CFD #2] is insufficient for future needs and they are seeking an alternative site to expand their ability to serve the south and west. They are planning to do a study to consider alternative sites and it could be possible to joint venture with them.

Discussion

Fire Chief Ben Florance clarified that CFD #2 is contracted with Overland Park; however, it is a Prairie Village, Mission and Mission Hills consolidated Fire District.

Ken Henton, Principal for Hoefer, Wysocki Architects, stated the existing site plan, located at 9617 Lee Boulevard, consists of the following facilities:

Detective Mobile Unit	One-Story	5,000 Sq. Ft.
Fire Station	One-Story	7,500 Sq. Ft.
Old City Hall	Two-Story	2,500 Sq. Ft.
Police Headquarters	Two-Story	13,000 Sq. Ft.

Councilmember Osman confirmed with Mr. Lambers that none of the buildings were designated as historic. Mayor Dunn clarified there is a Leawood Historic District; however, nothing is on the historic registry. Cultural Arts Coordinator April Bishop stated the old City Hall building is noted in the registry as “honorary.” It is not designated that the building must remain “as is.”

Mayor Dunn noted the Historic Commission was interested in utilizing the old City Hall building as a museum and they had been discussing this for several years. Although it could be difficult, there is nothing that would preclude moving this building to another site, if deemed appropriate and desired by the Governing Body.

Councilmember Rasmussen asked how many square feet would be needed if they rebuilt the fire station. Mr. Lambers stated first they needed to determine if they should rebuild or relocate. For planning purposes, if the facility remains on site, they should have a study done to determine the square footage.

Police Chief John Meier clarified he did not want any police facilities to remain at this site.

Councilmember Filla confirmed with Parks and Recreation Director Chris Claxton that the Lodge at Ironwoods Park was approximately 7,800 square feet. Since this is such a popular venue, she thought they could consider a second lodge as an option for this site.

Mayor Dunn confirmed with City Clerk Deb Harper that both the fire station and old City Hall building have the “honorary” Leawood historic designation.

Councilmember Rasmussen thought the old City Hall building had asbestos and plumbing problems, as well as issues with the foundation. It would be costly to rehab and it is not ADA compliant. He thought they could consider selling the property for residential development.

Councilmember Filla stated there have been several requests for additional park space, playgrounds, and a place for people to walk their dogs.

Councilmember Rasmussen asked if any residents had been informed of this meeting. Mr. Lambers stated this was intended for the City Council to express their interests and then staff will return with a list of items for consideration. The Council can then decide when they would like to have a preliminary public meeting.

Mr. Lambers thought they should remove the cell tower since it isn't needed for City use and the site has limited space. Councilmember Rasmussen thought they should check into the cell towers revenue producing capabilities before removing it and consider building a park around it. Mr. Lambers noted they had always thought if the City vacated its needs for the tower, the residents would prefer to have it removed.

Mayor Dunn confirmed with Chief Meier that the Police Department has a weather radio on the tower and he thought there were cell carriers on the tower as well.

Councilmember Osman concurred with Ms. Filla regarding people wanting park space and playgrounds. He proposed that they also consider an outdoor art gallery with garden sculptures or a "train theme" park that could bring visitors to Leawood. He also thought they should consider a post office or sub-station.

Councilmember Gill was in favor of utilizing the space for a park, whether it is themed or not. He wanted to survey area residents and homes associations for their comments. He recommended that they evaluate area cell phone coverage before removing the tower to disconnect service.

Councilmember Rasmussen thought the Fire Department could utilize the two upper lots and leave the remaining ground for parks purposes, assuming the old City Hall building would be removed.

Councilmember Filla thought they could place some information online for public comment. She recommended that they consider an educational opportunity for schools that would incorporate agriculture, such as water gardens and flowers.

Chief Florance clarified they wanted to move Fire Station No. 1 to the east of Roe and they were currently doing a Request for Proposal [RFP] to determine a viable site. If they are able to relocate, they will need a minimum of 15,000 square feet.

Councilmember Osman thought a fire/police museum could be another option for the site since their open house is always so successful. He also indicated the Leawood Chamber of Commerce was looking to relocate and thought they could transition to this location when it is ready.

Chief Florance stated they currently have issues with wiring, plumbing, roof leaks, etc., with Fire Station No. 1 because of its age. Councilmember Azeltine felt public safety should be paramount when making their decision. He recommended that they also include City volunteer groups in the survey for comments.

Chief Florance confirmed they would conduct the review process for a co-location over the next few months.

Mr. Lambers indicated there was money in the budget for roof repairs of Fire Station No. 1; however, if they decide to eliminate the building, they wouldn't be investing any more into it. In order to comply with ADA standards, the old City Hall building would need several updates, including a new foundation.

Councilmember Filla confirmed with Mr. Lambers they were anticipating moving into the new Justice Center by the end of 2012.

Mr. Lambers thought if the Council wanted them to explore options with CFD #2; they could have Chief Florance meet with an architect on a preliminary plan to replace the existing fire station and determine the square footage. If they do not co-locate, they may want to consider enough square footage to house an aerial unit in the future. Mayor Dunn clarified this was only a potential site to consolidate; however, it would not be determined until the study was completed.

Councilmember Bussing confirmed with Chief Florance that if they co-locate, two fire departments would share one facility.

Councilmember Osman thought they could work in conjunction with non-profit organizations for donations to save money. He recommended that they consider commercial uses for the site as well.

Mayor Dunn thought the option of a fire/police museum would be too costly to operate and maintain.

Councilmember Bussing asked how much they planned to spend on this site. Mr. Lambers indicated this would be dictated by its use. Mr. Bussing wanted to determine a use to fit within a limited expenditure. Mr. Lambers thought once they have considered some options, they could get cost estimates before proceeding.

Councilmember Azeltine indicated his first priorities were for fire station safety and handling the cell tower issues. Mayor Dunn concurred and thought they should get a report from Chief Florance of what the fire response times would be from that site.

Chief Florance thought by co-locating, they could consolidate resources and would have cost savings in the facility. Currently, CFD #2 and Overland Park both respond to Leawood fires and Leawood responds to theirs.

Mr. Lambers noted another option could be for Leawood to contract with CFD #2 for them to provide services.

Chief Florance confirmed CFD #2 wanted to begin construction in 2013.

Councilmember Gill was not in favor of outsourcing Leawood's fire protection. Mayor Dunn stated CFD #2 does an excellent job; however, she thought residents would prefer to continue with the services they've come to expect from Leawood.

Mayor Dunn confirmed with Chief Meier and the City Council that they did not want any police facilities to occupy this site.

Councilmember Bussing thought it could be more cost effective if they built a replica City Hall instead of preserving the old building or trying to move it. Mr. Lambers indicated they restored the old schoolhouse for \$300,000 and received some federal funding, which reduced the City's cost. Federal funds may be available for this project as well. He thought if they moved it to a higher traffic area, it would receive better utilization.

Councilmember Filla requested that they consider the Justice Center site as an option for the old City Hall building.

Councilmember Azeltine felt it was extremely important to preserve it and was open to moving it, if feasible. Mr. Lambers stated they would need a professional analysis done to ensure the building could handle being moved.

In conclusion, Mr. Lambers stated they would work with CFD #2 on a contract for the study and bring it before the Council for approval. If the budget allows, an analysis will be done to determine whether the City Hall building can withstand being moved. They will also plan to meet with the cell tower carriers to evaluate the impact of removing the tower. After this, a work session can be scheduled with Hofer Wysocki Architects to discuss the different use options. Mr. Lambers preferred to wait and do the survey with the residents, homes associations, and volunteer groups after this was all completed in order to avoid any expectations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 P.M.

Pam Gregory, Recording Deputy City Clerk