

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Leawood, Kansas, met for a Special Call Meeting, 4800 Town Center Drive, at 6:00 P.M., on Monday, August 6, 2018. Mayor Peggy Dunn presided.

Councilmembers Present: Jim Rawlings, Julie Cain, Andrew Osman, Debra Filla, Mary Larson, James Azeltine, Lisa Harrison and Chuck Sipple

Councilmembers Absent: None

Staff Present: Scott Lambers, City Administrator	Patty Bennett, City Attorney
Richard Coleman, Comm. Dev. Director	Dawn Long, Finance Director
Chief Dave Williams, Fire Department	Chief Troy Rettig, Police Department
Chris Claxton, Parks & Rec. Director	David Ley, Public Works Director
April Bishop, Cultural Arts Coordinator	and City Engineer
Deb Harper, City Clerk	Cindy Jacobus, Assistant City Clerk

Others Present: Alice Hawk, 2841 W. 118th Terrace, Leawood Foundation Chair and Historic Commission
Bruce Martin, 4430 W. 151st Terrace, Historic Commission Chair
Karen Ward Reimer, 10326 Sagamore Lane, Parks & Advisory Board Chair
Drew Alingh, 9629 Lee Boulevard, Public Works Committee
Barbara Holzmark, 3016 W. 84th Street, Historic Commission
James Holzmark, 3016 W. 84th Street
Ellen Brown, 9614 High Drive
Susan Grogan, 9619 Lee Boulevard
Bob Witcher, 9624 Lee Boulevard

**Continued Discussion of Redevelopment Plan
for 96th & Lee Boulevard**

Mayor thanked Ms. Claxton for providing documentation of prior meetings. Attendee introductions with affiliation were made.

Mr. Lambers stated the topic had been discussed many times to ensure a deliberate and comprehensive process was used. The goal of tonight's meeting would be decisions on two items, which he had outlined in email communication sent to the Governing Body, and then have each Governing Body member identify one item for City Staff to further review in regard to improvements at the site. There would likely be the need for another meeting.

The first decision item would be the disposition of the existing fire station. If the Governing Body desires to do something other than remove the existing fire station that would impact other development at the site. This decision is not Staff-driven. The second decision item would be whether a majority of the Governing Body wishes to incorporate a playground, and if so, the footprint size of the playground, not the specific equipment, in comparison to the Brook Beatty or Gezer Park playgrounds.

Once these two decisions are made through open conversation, public comments requesting low intensity and no night activities, no lights, buffering, passive green space and open space as a priority could be discussed.

Mayor Dunn pointed out there had been two previous decisions made in regard to the site. The new fire station would be built on the tract, but be placed closer to the former location of the old Police Station. The existing fire station must remain and continue to provide service, without lapse, until the new fire station is constructed. Old City Hall would remain on the site, but due to new fire station egress, its location would probably have to shift to the north, placed on a concrete slab. The cellular tower will be gone by Fall 2019, opening up some space.

General information from discussion as follows:

1. Brook Beatty Park is approximately 0.5 acre.
2. Old City Hall and the center bay only of the existing fire station are each approximately 1,120 sq. ft., close in size to the Main Conference Room at City Hall and to the open shelter with attached restrooms at I-Lan Park. The center bay of the existing fire station is longer than wide. The Lion's Shelter at City Park is twice this size.
3. Approximately 1.7 acres of open space would be left, with the new fire station and old City Hall remaining at the site.
4. Removal of the cellular tower and use of the temporary Community Garden area will open up some useable space at the site.
5. A Request for Proposal [RFP] for a site plan consultant has been distributed. The consultant will need to know what structures are to be kept on the site, to maximize remaining open space.
6. The City must follow its planning process and ordinances. As part of the planning process, there would be additional public meetings. It is anticipated there would be a Preliminary Plan for the entire site, a Preliminary and Final Plan for the new fire station and a Final Plan for the park.
7. Planning needs to consider required set-backs, buffering and parking spaces required for all buildings on the site.
8. The number of site buildings reduces open space. Once the number of buildings is decided, the best configuration for parking could be determined.
9. More parking would likely be needed if the site contains larger attractions.
10. The "Option A" Site Plan for the new fire station design by DeGasperi & Associates Architecture shows potential parking located in the front, along Lee Boulevard. This layout may potentially save some existing trees.
11. For public safety, the new fire station would be constructed before the remaining site was redeveloped.

12. Design plans for the new fire station include three bays, one of which was planned to house the historic fire truck. The size of the historic fire truck is quite small.
13. The new fire station design would have three bays for apparatus storage, regardless of whether the historic fire truck is located in the new fire station.
14. Visitors are welcomed daily at fire stations to view fire trucks and meet crews. However, for safety and controlled access during times of emergency operation, Chief Williams recommends a fence between the new fire station and park.
15. The new fire station will have a classroom on the second floor with elevator access that would accommodate approximately 30 people. Fire station classrooms are used for public meetings; meeting space in the Justice Center is well-utilized.
16. All utilities are in place at the site, so connections for water, electricity and sewer are not of concern.
17. The two existing public-use restrooms are in bad condition, needing extensive renovation. The restrooms were built in the 1970's when wings were added to the existing fire station.
18. Restrooms at the old City Hall are located in the basement and these would be lost with building movement and placement on a concrete slab.
19. Public restrooms on the site must be ADA-compliant [Americans with Disabilities Act]. Construction of new public-use restrooms has been previously discussed.
20. The existing brick fire station is approximately 60 years old. Incorporating the station's cupola into the new fire station may be an option.
21. The Historic Commission supports keeping old City Hall, relocating on site and placement on concrete slab. There is a great need for a building to display historic artifacts, many of which are kept by residents.
22. Four-dimensional, walk-around artifact display casements need to be securely attached to ensure public safety. These types of casements take up more floor space.
23. Old City Hall operating as a museum would be similar to the historic Oxford School House. Docents would greet and answer questions from visitors. The museum would have set hours, staggered days of operation, and could be open by appointment.
24. The cost of work to update old City Hall for use is unknown.
25. Due to the small size and availability of other multi-purpose indoor locations, Ms. Claxton would not anticipate using space in the old City Hall for Parks programming activities.
26. Financing method is yet to be determined, but likely cash from the General Fund. Bonds could be used for project funding. The project could be funded in phases and included in the City's 2020 Budget. The project total cost is anticipated to be expensive. Some funding has been reserved for initial site improvement activities.

Specific discussion highlights as follows:

Councilmember Filla stated a previous suggestion by Parks & Recreation Department was a motion-activated spray ground and inquired if this would be considered a playground. Mr. Lambers stated in regard to discussion, a spray ground would be an addition. The spray ground could be an alternative to a traditional playground. Spray grounds are typically located on a level surface with water that sprays up, similar to the one at Hallmark in Crown Center. Councilmember Harrison stated the spray ground could be firefighter themed and very small.

Councilmember Filla pointed out there had been a diagram to include a shelter, which is recommended by the Parks & Recreation Department.

Mr. Lambers stated if the existing fire station is removed, this frees up space on the site. If it is desired to keep the bays of the existing fire station, decision would be needed as to whether a park shelter would be part of that or not. A shelter would provide cover space and also public restrooms. Another option would be to replicate rather than restore the bays of the existing fire station. The City chose to restore historic Oxford School House. In a similar situation, the Overland Park decided to replicate. Options could be brought forth to the Governing Body.

Councilmember Filla supported housing the historic fire truck in a bay at the new fire station, keeping but relocating the old City Hall on the site, use of the existing fire station for a shelter, use of the Temporary Community Garden space for a spray ground, and suggested a perimeter path for dog-walking. Placement of the fence might need to be adjusted. She likes the symmetry of two historic buildings and parking out front. She stated citizens want their space rather than a community attraction, and questioned if a dual-purpose space for shelter and meetings might be possible.

Councilmember Cain noted that photographs of site buildings were not available in the meeting documentation. She has walked the site along with various Historic Commission, Parks & Recreation and Public Works Staff members. The overall site seems more spacious than she previously thought. She stated the Historic Commission wanted meeting space in addition to the keeping old City Hall. There are restrooms on the site and she suggested using adjacent natural area as an open shelter/meeting space. This could also be accomplished by using some existing structure on the site such as the original portion, not the wings, of the existing fire station, with the possibility to leave open as a shelter. She stated if the purpose of the old City Hall was a museum it would not be much larger than the Main Conference Room at City Hall, and ADA-compliant restrooms would need to be built on. She stated there is an organization searching metro-wide for a historic fire station site. The City needs to maximize use of what is there and keep the space as green as possible. She proposed using the original portion of the existing fire station, and incorporating a shelter and restrooms. A fire-hydrant theme spray ground had been previously suggested, but she would not support such a limited use or an attraction concept. She does support a playground.

Councilmember Osman stated Brook Beatty is a pocket park and to use the amenities of other City parks his constituents must travel to the middle or south section of the City. He expressed wariness and disappointment in regard to redevelopment planning. He stated if old City Hall is relocated and the existing fire station is kept on the site, available open space would be reduced. Master planning for parking, trees and other structures further decreases the opportunity for a park or community infrastructure. He asks what the site could be rather than what it is, and does not want to limit its use to a small narrow Brook Beatty park because the City is trying to save on plumbing. By keeping structures, use is limited. The site could be a unique attraction for all residents such as a sculpture garden, with the possibility of having artwork-style functional benches. Leawoof Dog Park has visitors from all over. Contractors and architects should advise the City on what should be kept and costs.

Councilmember Harrison recalled there was public support to save green space in regard to Leawood Country Club. North Leawood desperately needs more park space. She appreciates the value of keeping old City Hall for a meeting space, but does not support keeping the existing fire station unless it can be converted to an open shelter with pillars. Shelters need to be open for safety and security. The site is very tight on space. A small restroom for men and one restroom for women located closed to the open shelter should suffice. She suggested the bricks or the cupola from the existing fire station could be salvaged, perhaps using the bricks to construct restrooms, and a firefighter theme park to honor the historic site.

Councilmember Larson appreciated background information provided in the meeting packet. She questioned if the desire for meeting space had been mentioned in the documentation or at the last meeting. She supports preservation of old City Hall, to incorporate an open shelter by using a bay of the existing fire station or through replication, and playground equipment with a firefighter theme. The Governing Body must respect resident desire for green space and a park for children and adults, and residents may not want an attraction near their homes. She stated architects should advise what makes sense in regard to plumbing.

Councilmember Rawlings agreed the public comments received were for a passive green space. The shelter should be similar to the shelter at Gezer Park; it should be open or perhaps with two walls. The City has had a good experience with the Gezer Park shelters and restrooms. He stated the 60-year old bricks of the existing fire station do not have historic value, but the cupola might be saved and incorporated. He would support the demolition of the existing fire station, keeping four corners for an open space or to create a shelter by replication. A concrete pad is already there.

Councilmember Sipple concurred with Councilmember Rawlings. He supports relocation of old City Hall on slab, and to incorporate a shelter and restroom on one corner of the property. The existing fire station does not need to be saved. The site would have one historic building rather than two. This would free up space for parking, buffering and fencing.

Councilmember Azeltine pointed out comments at the public hearing were for passive space, no lighting, bike lanes and pedestrian access and to preserve old City Hall. He supports demolition of the existing fire station because space is at a premium. If needed to maximize space, old City Hall could be relocated off-site, but there had been previous consensus to relocate the building on the site. Green space cannot be over-emphasized and the City would have the ability to modify the site at a future date. Less is more.

Mayor Dunn stated the Governing Body was at a disadvantage because costs are unknown. Councilmember Cain pointed out minimum playground cost is \$100,000 and the interior of old City Hall would need to be redone. Mr. Lambers stated costs estimates could be provided. Relocation of old City Hall on the site would be part of project construction costs. He could provide a list of projects and funding for Governing Body prioritization.

Mayor Dunn noted a consensus on the existing fire station had not been reached. Councilmember Filla stated the Historic Commission had wanted to save the existing fire station. She requested a consultant provide options and costs for repurposing the existing fire station. She noted the center bay of the existing fire station does not have any cracks in the concrete and questioned the need to construct a new steel shelter. Removal of the existing fire station before review by a consultant would prohibit symmetry of matching facades of the old City Hall and existing fire station. Mr. Lambers pointed out a consultant needs instructions as to what is wanted. Mayor Dunn stated a consultant would do as the City requests.

Councilmember Osman stated he held a neutral position. The City has an open canvas and should incorporate unique ideas from outside Kansas City, not those of typical Johnson County projects. There are many museums. A park is art. A park could be a playground, have sculptural benches and chairs which can be climbed upon, have a theme or be passive. When a consultant is hired for an art piece, the consultant searches the country to bring back ideas. The entire site should have a master plan. Relocate the old City Hall, remove the existing fire station and then address the rest of the site.

Councilmember Azeltine reminded the public wanted a minimalistic approach, green space and the historic old City Hall; there had been no mention of a spray ground or the existing fire station. Having restrooms and a brand new shelter would be acceptable.

Councilmember Harrison stated a very old building can have solid construction, but may lose integrity if the walls are chiseled out. If feasible, she would like the four corners, roof and cupola of the existing fire station to be used. Ms. Claxton stated a structural engineer would need to determine if repurposing was possible. In speaking with consultants in regard to RFP, all had said to be able to master plan the site, they would need to know the available space and the City's decision on what to do with the existing fire station.

Councilmember Sipple reiterated keeping the exiting fire station for a shelter means there would be two historic buildings on the site and two buildings reduces the amount of green space. The site should have a basic steel shelter and restrooms, with the possibility of incorporating the restrooms onto old City Hall. Mayor Dunn stated using the center bay of the existing fire station would not be a historic building.

Councilmember Larson stated it is unlikely the exiting fire station could be repurposed, but is open to expert opinion in regard to feasibility to make a fully-informed decision. If forced to choose, she would abandon the existing fire station and build new.

Councilmember Osman reiterated he wanted the entire site master planned; he would remove the existing fire station.

Mayor Dunn stated the Governing Body needs the input of a structural engineer before a decision in regard to the existing fire station could be made. A cost comparison of options is important to her. If the cost to reuse an existing structure for the shelter was \$500,000 rather than \$200,000 to build new, that would impact her decision. Mr. Lambers pointed out regardless of engineer opinion, project decisions would be those wanted by a majority of the Governing Body.

Mayor Dunn noted consensus to include a playground and stated a decision was needed on the size of the playground. Mr. Lambers asked if the playground should have the footprint of the playground at Brook Beatty Park or the playground at Gezer. After the size is decided, then the best location would be determined. He stated he would check the size of park playgrounds. Mayor Dunn stated the playground should be no larger than Gezer without its ancillary items.

Councilmember Filla stated Brook Beatty Park does not have swings due to limited size and the most popular amenity at Franklin Park has a sand pit. Mayor Dunn pointed that a mess is created by water nearby the sand in Franklin Park.

Councilmember Filla inquired if there will be green space. Mr. Lambers stated after decisions are made on the two goals of the Work Session, the amount of remaining acreage would be known. He would prefer to locate the playground away from residents, so the playground may need to encroach into green space.

Councilmember Osman inquired if the Governing Body could review any good ideas brought forth by the consultant that involve adults. Mr. Lambers stated his goal is a footprint of the park.

Councilmember Filla requested the space of the existing fire station not be double-counted if also considered for a shelter.

Due to time constraints, Mr. Lambers requested each Governing Body member email there one desired item. He stated another Work Session would be scheduled.

Mayor Dunn thanked all participants.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 P.M.

Debra Harper, CMC, City Clerk

Cindy Jacobus, Assistant City Clerk