

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, October 15, 2018. Mayor Peggy Dunn presided.

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

Councilmembers Absent: Lisa Harrison

Staff Present: Scott Lambers, City Administrator	Patty Bennett, City Attorney
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	Debra Harper, City Clerk
Dawn Long, Finance Director	Cindy Jacobus, Assistant City Clerk

Others Present: Jeff DeGasperi, 6240 W. 135th Street, Overland Park, DeGasperi Architects
Bruce Martin, 4430 W. 151st Terrace, Historic Commission Chair
Susan Grogan, 9619 Lee Boulevard
Tim Fisher, 9641 Lee Boulevard
Elliott Osman, 3312 W. 86th Street

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

Mayor Dunn thanked attendees and introductions with affiliation were made. She stated the additional detailed information provided by Ms. Claxton and Mr. DeGasperi was helpful and worth the cost to produce. Governing Body members had been invited to tour the site and buildings. Mr. Lambers and she had an informative tour of both the current Fire Station and Old City Hall.

Ms. Claxton distributed paper copies of a memorandum dated October 15, 2018, that she and Mr. Ley had authored titled "Additional Information for the 96th and Lee Work Session Tonight".

Councilmember Sipple acknowledged Elliott, son of Councilmember Osman, for his distinguished recognition of having the most service hours which is stated on the Barstow School marquee. Attendees gave a round of applause for Elliott's outstanding citizenship.

Existing Fire Station

Mr. Lambers stated the first item to be discussed and consensus to be reached would be regarding the current Fire Station. The disposition of the Fire Station impacts other “downstream” decisions. If there is an impasse, then the City would proceed with the plans for the new Fire Station construction. Bids for Fire Station replacement would be issued early next year. The cell tower on the property will be removed in 2019 and the property will become a construction site. He asked any member of the Governing Body having a position on whether to remove or rehab the structure to provide their response at any time during the meeting.

Mayor Dunn read an email sent by Councilmember Harrison, who was unable to attend tonight’s meeting and had asked the email be shared. Councilmember Harrison indicated the current Fire Station’s cupola would look wonderful on the restroom and picnic shelter. She would love to save bricks from the Fire Station and these be used for restroom or shelter construction. There is no need for event meeting space in the area; a sizeable shelter could be used eight months a year.

Councilmember Filla disagreed with opinions of Mayor Dunn and Mr. Lambers that Councilmember Harrison’s comments indicated support of removal of the Fire Station. Councilmember Filla stated that Councilmember Harrison had only provided an “essence” on the topic, but not how to achieve. Councilmember Sipple suggested that Councilmember Harrison could likely be reached by cell phone for confirmation/specifics. He stated that she had previously concurred with comments to remove the Fire Station made by Historic Commission member Charles Lusk.

Councilmember Rawlings favored removal of the Fire Station and construction of a new picnic shelter similar to those in other parks in the City, perhaps incorporating some historical features/items. His opinion was based on cost, use of the site as a park, and good experience with other shelters.

Councilmember Filla stated appreciation for the cost estimate and detailed study. Saving only 25% and removal of 75% of the Fire Station is envisioned for either scenario, and each scenario leaves a comparable amount of green space. Space is not the issue, but to have a shelter of distinction. In her review of the cost estimates for demolition and restrooms, the cost savings for using the Fire Station as a shelter is that much more than tearing down the Fire Station and constructing a new shelter. If the costs of restrooms and demolition are subtracted from the cost to repurpose the Fire Station as a shelter, the cost difference is closer to \$200,000, not four times the cost. If the Fire Station is saved as the shelter, the cupola, brick and overall character of the shelter would be extremely unique. If Old City Hall was relocated next to the repurposed Fire Station, the two buildings would have nice symmetry and this would maximize shared parking and provide economy for restrooms. She stated the City had spent \$300,000 to save the Oxford School House, when in a similar situation Overland Park decided to demolish and rebuild for \$150,000. The City has funds for either decision, so cost is not necessarily a factor. The City did not build the cheapest Justice Center and does not always choose the least expensive option. Mayor Dunn stated the cost for the Oxford School House project was funded by a private/public partnership.

Councilmember Larson stated her opinion to remove the Fire Station, only because of functionality of a rehabbed shelter. She prefers an open design shelter, so parents can monitor children. The new shelter could be constructed in the same design of the Fire Station, and she agrees with Councilmember Harrison's idea of reusing the cupola and preserving the look. To keep open sight lines and avoid potential issues, restrooms should be located at Old City Hall. Mayor Dunn pointed out the restrooms are connected to shelters in other park, with entry from the sides.

Councilmember Cain stated her assumption had been that if the Fire Station was removed, the restrooms would be standalone. She did not think restrooms and the design of Old City Hall would be compatible. She had been present at the Historic Commission meeting and the issue is functionality. Old City Hall has been sitting for 20 years as a storage closet. Mayor Dunn pointed out the discussion topic was the disposition of the Fire Station and asked if Councilmember Cain had an opinion to share on the Fire Station. Councilmember Cain stated her comments would relate to both buildings.

Councilmember Sipple favored removal of the Fire Station and reuse of the cupola and brick, perhaps using the bricks for walkways. He agreed with Councilmember Cain that reuse of bricks would likely involve cost for removal of old mortar.

Councilmember Osman stated it can be difficult to decide what to preserve and what to discard in a historical area. He shared his personal experience of a home remodel that requires some items be discarded to get newer space, while keeping family heirlooms. He stated the site has two areas that are original to the City, and questioned if the historical value is based on building, look or the area. A new Fire Station will be constructed at the site. Decisions are needed to create a canvas for the site and make the rest of the site useable. He considered the \$400,000 cost estimate as just one factor, especially since the City has this amount on art, but there are often unforeseen cost estimate increases and salvage items may be unworkable. The Ironhorse Golf Clubhouse expansion is an example of cost estimate increase. He shared that Prairie Village had recently tried to save the steeple of a church at 68th Street and Roe as a central focal point. After the rest of the site was demolished, the structural condition of the steeple was determined to be unsound and it also had to be demolished. As much as possible, he would keep site signage in a similar font/format, and doors, brick and cupola from removal of the Fire Station. He might be of different opinion if the Fire Station was not located in the middle of the site. An open area may not have history, but would have the aesthetics of what the City wants to achieve in the location.

Councilmember Azeltine stated costs, especially for projects involving older buildings, would likely skyrocket. The Fire Station does not the approach the historical significance of Old City Hall. He would support a large expenditure on the Old City Hall.

Councilmember Cain indicated she would rehab, stating it was unfortunate that removal of the Fire Station seems like it will be the ultimate decision.

Mayor Dunn stated on her tour she had not found the Fire Station flooring to be pristine, as had been stated at previous meetings. Year after year at the annual Budget & Finance Committee Meeting, Fire Chiefs have stated the Fire Station is a money pit requiring continual stop-gap measures to address issues. This is the reason for building a new Fire Station. She likes the idea of building a unique shelter; the shelter on the south side of I-Lan Park resembles a pagoda. The cupola and bricks from the Fire Station might be salvageable, and the bricks might be used to wrap the support columns of a new shelter similar to the use of Jerusalem stone used at Gezer Park. The money required to salvage the center bay of the Fire Station as a shelter could be spent on a beautiful park. She supported removal of the Fire Station.

Mayor Dunn shared that a student had recently spoken and suggested there could be a water spray park. In this regard, there are a number of features that have not been discussed. Councilmember Azeltine pointed out Antioch Park contains a miniature town and perhaps the playground at the park could have a fire station theme. Mayor Dunn stated the miniature town in Antioch Park takes up a large amount of space, which the City's site does not have.

Mayor Dunn stated the consensus reached was the Fire Station should be removed and the architect would be advised.

Old City Hall

Mr. Lambers stated some councilmembers had expressed that Old City Hall should be relocated, no longer supporting the prior consensus that the building remain on the site as close to the new Fire Station as possible to minimize the loss of green space. This needs to be revisited again as this is a significant component for planning and to preclude any future misunderstanding when park plans are presented. The designer/architect needs to know this is a fixed variable.

Councilmember Rawlings stated he had toured the location two or three times. Old City Hall is a beautiful building with historic value, built by the Kroh Brothers in the late 1940s. He would move the building to the west of City Hall behind the temporary art space location. This "downtown campus" location would be great for viewing artifacts and might provide the opportunity for more useable space in current City Hall.

Mayor Dunn agreed with Mr. Lambers there had been prior consensus by the Governing Body that Old City Hall would remain at the site. She stated the Historical Commission had wanted the building to remain somewhere on the site. Mr. Martin stated the Historical Commission goal had been to preserve the structure, the integrity and use of the building to its capabilities, having a museum or multi-purpose facility. He stated relocating the building raises other possibilities such as the addition of a new basement for storage. This could be discussed at the next Historic Commission meeting.

Mayor Dunn inquired if building setbacks could be met if Old City Hall was relocated next to City Hall. Mr. Ley stated he thought there would be enough space. The building would require a crawl space, even if positioned on a slight slope, and location at the top of the hill to the west would be out of the flood plain. After some additional research, Mr. Ley advised relocation at City Hall would require a 100 ft. setback from the right-of-way, which would push the location down the site slope and a walk-out basement needed. The Johnson County Pioneer Library has a 100 ft. setback and first house to the west of City Hall has a setback of 75 ft. He confirmed to Mayor Dunn either a basement or crawl space could be used at 96th and Lee. Mr. Lambers suggested a basement be built for the minimal cost difference. Ms. Bennett stated a basement requires a building have an elevator.

Mr. DeGasperi stated a professional mover with historical masonry building expertise based in St. Louis had been contacted. The building would be moved intact, by raising and installation of stabilizing beams underneath, then placement on a truck. A crawl space or basement, not just a slab on grade, is needed when the beams are removed and the building is placed in position. There is not a significant cost difference between a crawl space or basement walls, which are another five ft. deep. The company contacted does not construct crawl spaces or basement walls.

Mr. Lambers confirmed to Councilmember Rawlings the number of artifacts/size of the collection is unknown. He anticipates a call for items be made when the structure is available, and the Historical Commission and City Staff to review items received. Valuable items would be placed in climate-controlled storage and displayed on a rotating basis, assuming there are more items than space in the Old City Hall. Mayor Dunn stated comments made at prior Governing Body meetings that Old City Hall was not much bigger than the Main Conference Room were in error. She noted during her tour that partitions in the building reduce the openness. Council Meetings had been held in the building, with citizens wishing to speak on a controversial topic standing in a line outside that reach around the block.

Councilmember Larson questioned if residents close to the site would be disappointed if Old City Hall was relocated. Mayor Dunn pointed out that residents near a relocation site would also have opinions.

Mr. Fisher stated people he had spoken with would be disappointed if the building was moved south, but relocation on the current site would be acceptable.

Councilmember Cain expressed concern about staging that would be required, the possibility of having to move Old City Hall more than once at the site, and increased costs. Mr. Lambers stated the decision is location/whether the building should remain on the site. A basement could be poured and the building moved, or a temporary footing used as needed. If the building is to be placed anywhere on the site with a basement and elevator, the park consultant would bring forth options for building/basement location. Councilmember Cain questioned where a basement near the existing Fire Station could be placed. Mr. Ley stated a contractor estimate was \$750 per month to store the building on a trailer. Mr. Lambers stated the existing Fire Station must continue to function during the estimated 18 month to 20 month construction of the new Fire Station. He supports placing the Old City Hall on a trailer as needed and does not want a forced Governing Body decision based on this cost.

Mr. Lambers would anticipate receiving two scenarios from the consultant for location at the current site. Mr. Martin suggested a possible location would be the northeast corner of the property. Mr. Lambers agreed this would likely be one of the location options, as long as setbacks in-line with the residential areas can be met.

Councilmember Filla disagreed with Councilmember Azeltine's comment that Old City Hall has more historical significance than the Fire Station. The Fire Station is older and served as the first City Hall. Mayor Dunn pointed out the Fire Station has undergone five additions. Councilmember Filla stated the City would be ignoring resident desires, dishonoring the history of two buildings, and adding \$75,000 to \$80,000 in cost for a basement and elevator. A building tucked away by the current Community Garden area would not be visible. She would be upset to see a new construction shelter placed close to the historic building. To avoid loss of character and the appearance of a typical subdivision that is occurring with the teardown of old homes/rebuilds in the area, a plan focused on vision/priorities for the site should be developed without constraints.

Mayor Dunn stated site plans would be received, but the consultant needs to know parameters for their work such as removal of the Fire station, Old City Hall, shelter, playground, and restrooms either connected to the shelter or to Old City Hall. Residents had indicated the desire for a passive area. She pointed out this is the third Governing Body Work Session on disposition of the Fire Station. She expressed the opinion the consultant would not bring forth option having Old City Hall sitting back by the Community Garden.

Councilmember Azeltine recalled most speakers at the prior Public Hearing had wanted passive green space and Old City Hall was not discussed. It is important to have any type of destination venue be located in a place more likely to be frequented; this would be less likely on Lee Boulevard. He pointed out the Old City Hall was for the entire City and he is intrigued by the idea of relocation, which would open up space at 96th and Lee. Mayor Dunn pointed out she had opened the Public Hearing by stating the Old City Hall would remain at the site.

Councilmember Sipple stated the location of current City Hall is Leawood's civic center. We moved, life goes on. This area should be acknowledged to the entire community as the City's focal point and downtown with significant investment in the Justice Center, Johnson County Pioneer Library, shopping center, art and possible Community Center. He favors relocating Old City Hall to this area, to serve as a museum, perhaps with a basement for storage. He expressed minor concern for an increased possibility of vandalism if the building remains at its current location, although firefighters would be present.

Councilmember Filla stated she does not want to move Old City Hall. Her previous agreement to keep the building at its present location was based on the history of the buildings. Additional cost would be incurred for a basement that cannot be justified. The basement could not be used for storage unless it was climate-controlled, and a basement would not be required at 96th and Lee. Mr. Lambers stated bids would be requested for both a crawl space and basement/elevator.

Councilmember Osman questioned setbacks needed at the current site. Mr. DeGasperi stated design of the new Fire Station includes 30 ft. setbacks on the south for buffering, which would likely be sufficient for the north and east. From the street, parking and buildings should hold the line with houses on either side, about a 50 ft. setback. Changes may not be possible without impacting other planning.

Councilmember Cain stated her opinion is based on functionality. She likes the idea of a meeting space and restroom in Old City Hall, increasing its functionality. If Old City Hall remains at 96th and Lee, she would be concerned about the building standing alone. She likes the increased safety and visibility, as well as reduction in the number of parking spaces that would be needed at 96th and Lee, if the building was relocated. She would accept relocation of Old City Hall now that the Historic Commission would not be opposed to the move.

Councilmember Larson stated she was persuaded by Mr. Fisher's comments. She expressed concern it had been represented to attendees of the prior Public Hearing that Old City Hall would remain at the site; residents did not have the opportunity to express their opinions in this regard. Mayor Dunn stated at the time the consensus was that Old City Hall would remain at the site. Councilmember Larson wants transparency and level of comfort by resurvey of Ward One residents. She supports functionality and that was her reason for removal of the Fire Station. Old City Hall would function better on Town Center Drive, and relocation would reduce parking needs and increase green space at 96th and Lee.

Councilmember Rawlings stated he was torn between the historic location and the move to Town Center Drive which would be a great location for a museum, having more traffic and better security. If there was multi-purpose room in the building, Staff could more easily control and access the building from current City Hall. Mayor Dunn stated there is likely only room in the building for displays, not yoga classes. The building would likely not be open, but staffed similar to if it remained at Lee Boulevard. Councilmember Rawlings stated he supports relocation of Old City Hall.

Councilmember Osman stated this is a Ward One and Ward Two issue, but Ward boundaries do change. For five years, he understood Old City Hall would remain at the site. He agreed with Councilmember Filla's comments about the change in historic nature of north Leawood. The Kroh Brothers house at 79th and Lee is now an accounting firm. Lee Boulevard is considered the area's "Ward Parkway"; an iconic area. Old City Hall fits this site. He had not considered the possibility of moving, but the suggested relocation would have more foot-traffic and could be used to further promote the City. He would like to keep Old City Hall at the site until residents are heard, the amount of artifact inventory is known and what the relocation would be.

Councilmember Azeltine pointed out that things change. He stated the biggest reasons for no progress that this site is unique and the lack of site plan to show the public. He wants a site plan developed and then public input sought on that plan. He would agree to relocation next to City Hall. Mr. Lambers stated only one site plan, not three, can move through the City's planning process.

Mayor Dunn stated she wanted to hear from the public. She was not convinced relocation would be best. The building placed next to City Hall would be unmanned and secured, with access by appointment or open certain hours.

Mr. Lambers stated the idea is to obtain a consensus, which could be impacted by public input. He confirmed to Councilmember Rawlings that notice of public hearing would be sent to HOA presidents north of I-435 and posted on the City's website; the City does not have news coverage. Mayor Dunn stated the residents of Edgewood would also receive the notice and the public hearing would be open to all Wards. Councilmember Sipple pointed out this would be a City Hall and City-wide museum for all, with investment from all four Wards. Notices should be sent to all HOAs. Councilmember Filla suggested electronic technology be used as a methodology for public comment. Councilmember Sipple stated there would be too much background information to consider electronic resident input.

Mr. Lambers stated a Special Call Governing Body Meeting for public hearing could be scheduled for Monday, November 12, 2018. The City Clerk will poll the Governing Body for their availability.

Mayor Dunn thanked all participants for their attendance and interest in this important project.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:24 P.M.

Debra Harper, CMC, City Clerk

Cindy Jacobus, Assistant City Clerk