

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, November 2, 2020. Mayor Peggy Dunn presided.

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

Councilmembers Present via Zoom: Jim Rawlings and Andrew Osman

Councilmembers Absent: None

Staff Present: Scott Lambers, City Administrator; Patty Bennett, City Attorney; Dawn Long, Finance Director; David Ley, Public Works Director; Chief Colin Fitzgerald, Fire Department; Ross Kurz, Information Services Director; Mark Tepesch, IS Senior Specialist; and Stacie Stromberg, Assistant City Clerk

Staff Present via Zoom: Richard Coleman, Community Development Director

Others Present via Zoom: Jeff DeGasperi, DeGasperi & Associates Architecture

Review Proposed Design of the New Fire Station No. 1

Scott Lambers stated that the purpose of this meeting is to establish parameters for the Council to authorize staff to proceed to the planning stages. He stated there will be opportunities for the public to have input throughout the process. He stated the Council will only be considering the design of the new Fire Station and not the remainder of the property at this time.

Chief Fitzgerald addressed the Governing Body. He stated that he is excited to get the process started and introduced Jeff DeGasperi as the architect on the project. Mr. DeGasperi addressed the Governing Body via Zoom. He stated there are two options in the presentation and that there have been a few primary design changes since meeting a year ago. One of the changes is the procurement of property to the south which allows more room in the design. The other change is the elimination of the second story, which moved the training room to the expanded basement level in the design. An added fourth apparatus bay on the north side of the building is one more primary change.

Mr. DeGasperi began with the site plan on Option 1. He explained an added bay is included in this footprint, as well as the driveway and the building is moved to the south. He stated the old City Hall structure will still need to be moved from its current location in this option, and that near the front drive a large tree will be saved, and the front drive for the apparatus has been narrowed slightly. It is situated between the two residential driveways on the opposite side of the street. The driveway opening on the south side of the building for staff would align with the neighbor's driveway across the street.

Mr. DeGasperi explained that Option 2 allows keeping the old City Hall structure in its current location and saves another large tree nearby. The driveway for staff to the south is designed to bend slightly to keep from aligning with the neighbor's driveway across the street, and also to save another large tree at the property line. He stated the apparatus driveway could be narrowed even further on either side so that the opening goes in between the two neighbor driveways across the street. He stated there is screening on the south property line along the driveway. He stated the east side was reduced considerably by approximately 10-12 feet.

Mr. DeGasperi explained the building elevations show the same materials on the exterior, except for changing to a fiber cement board that is more durable for the upper portions of the building. They have removed the 2nd story in the design and lowered the building height to approximately 18 feet high on that portion of the building. There is an additional 4th bay and no mechanical equipment on the roof.

On the main floor plan, there are now 9 dorm rooms and a separate officer's office. There is an individual stairway that has an entrance to the lower level directly into the training room. Also on the lower level, there are locker rooms and restrooms located in the center of the building. The restrooms are designated to be storm shelters. The lower level can be accessed by stairways or elevator.

Mayor Dunn stated it is a beautiful design and thanked Mr. DeGasperi for the redesign. She asked where the mechanical units are located. He stated they are located on the ground level on the south side behind some screening, similar to a standard residential structure. Mayor Dunn asked if the training room offers a public bathroom for the public. He stated that the locker room would serve as the public restroom.

Councilmember Cain asked if the public will access the training room through the front doors and internal stairs. Mr. DeGasperi stated because of the few parking spaces in front of the building and more parking in the back, visitors can be escorted to the training room through either the front or the back entrances. Councilmember Cain stated she liked the single-story plan. She asked if there was a basement in the original design. He stated there was, but it only included an exercise room, locker room, and some mechanical equipment. With the training room in the basement there will be added light wells and windows. She asked how much closer the building is to the house on the south. He stated in Option 1, about 20-30 feet and in Option 2, approximately 40-50 feet, directly on the property line.

David Ley, Public Works Director, addressed the Governing Body. He stated in Option 1, there is approximately a 130-foot buffer between the south driveway and south property line. In Option 2, there is a 20 foot separation between the opening of the Fire Station driveway and the property owner's driveway to the south. In Option 2, the building itself would move 25 feet to the south.

Councilmember Filla stated she likes the design and the light wells for the lower level. She stated that she would like to see a perspective of the trees in Options 1 and 2. She stated that shared parking appears to be more than what is needed for nine staff members and wondered if it can be shared and if the footprint changed the square footage of the building. Mr. DeGasperi stated the parking lot in the back of the building is large enough to accommodate shift changes to occur, but it could be utilized for other reasons. He stated that in discussions with Chief Fitzgerald there were concerns for safety with foot traffic across the backlot. He stated that Option 2 was designed to help save large trees on the

property. He explained as far as the footprint size, it is the same whether or not it is a two-story or one-story building.

Chief Fitzgerald stated the parking accommodates one crew now, but this plan is designed to be a 50-year building and as call volumes continue to increase in the northeast, there is potential to add a second crew. Also, when the City does organize large events, there will more staff needed at that location to man the reserve apparatus. Chief Fitzgerald stated he would not want staff parking on the street. He stated they are not opposed to shared parking, but in a residential setting they have designed buffers to help minimize noise and have a protective barrier. He added there will be a large generator and dumpster located at the back of the building. Mayor Dunn mentioned if the public were using the training room, they would be using the back parking lot. Chief Fitzgerald agreed that this will be the Fire Department's largest training room in the City, so it will be used for CPR training, public education, and HOA meetings.

Councilmember Filla stated she would like to see the seven parking spaces on the north side of the lot to be shared. Mr. DeGasperi stated it could be opened up for that option, but would need some steps added because of the grade difference. Mayor Dunn reminded the Council that it would need to be ADA accessible. Mr. DeGasperi stated the difference between the upper lot to the lower lot to the north is approximately 8 feet or more. Councilmember Filla replied that her concern is fencing off the lot and not allowing overflow for those people using the green space.

Councilmember Harrison asked if Option 1 does not have anything built on what she calls "Susie's lot" and if it has become a buffer area in the design. Mr. Ley stated that is correct. Councilmember Harrison asked to confirm if the email from Mrs. Geller is that she prefers Option 1. Mr. Ley confirmed yes. She asked if the fire trucks returning from a call would enter the bays from the back of the building or backing in from the front of the building. Chief Fitzgerald stated it could be either, but the best choice is to pull through from the back. She stated her concern for fire personnel having to make a sharp turn with a fire truck into the back parking lot in Option 1.

Councilmember Sipple asked if the square footage is the same for the one and two-story plans. Mr. DeGasperi stated overall it is almost the same for either plan. Chief Fitzgerald stated that staff had to compromise very little in the change for a one-story plan. He explained moving the training room to the basement would still require a member of staff to accompany guests into the building. Councilmember Sipple asked about any potential underground rock. Mr. DeGasperi stated they have done a geological study and found no bedrock for the excavation or anticipate any problems. Councilmember Sipple asked what the preference is for the Chief between the two options. He stated he preferred Option 2 because of the curve of the driveway to the back of the building, but that staff can make either option work. Councilmember Sipple mentioned a trash truck will use the same drive to access the dumpster.

Councilmember Larson asked how many letters were mailed to the residents and what date were they sent. Mr. Ley stated one letter was sent in early October. He stated he has heard from Mrs. Geller several times via email. Mr. Ley stated 14 letters were sent out to everyone surrounding the property and on the opposite side of Lee Blvd.

Mayor Dunn stated that after speaking to Mr. Ley earlier in the day, he mentioned a hybrid option may be available. He stated that if the Council preferred keeping the old City Hall in its present location, the Fire Station building could be moved to a similar Option 1.

Councilmember Azeltine asked if there was any consideration of designing the driveway to be on the north side instead of the south side of the building. Mr. DeGasperi stated they did consider many different orientations of the building when they were in the planning stages with former Fire Chief Williams. He stated the design is to keep the quieter portions of the building to the south and that the L-shape of the building is more conducive to their activities and for the protection of the neighbors. Councilmember Azeltine asked how wide the opening across the driveway is at the back parking lot in Option 2 and how many bays are on the building. Mr. DeGasperi stated it is approximately 26 feet wide and that there are 4 bays in which the trucks can drive straight through.

Councilmember Filla asked if the driveway is one-way. Chief Fitzgerald stated it is two-way. She stated that although the Council was told tonight's meeting was not to consider the remainder of the property, she would like a charrette in consideration of a hybrid plan. She stated she believes having an entire site plan would be helpful before making a design decision. Scott Lambers, City Administrator, stated the Fire Station design was made a priority by the Council and currently there is an impasse on what to do with the old City Hall building. Mayor Dunn stated the Planning Commission is planning on hearing this item in February or March through the planning process. She stated there have been several work sessions already on the Fire Station building. Councilmember Filla agreed that the Fire Station design is a top priority but asked when and how the remainder of the site plan will be discussed. Mayor Dunn stated there are currently deed restrictions on what some Councilmembers are calling "Susie's lot" which may take many more months to work out. She stated she does not believe the Council should stall on the Fire Station building for that reason.

Councilmember Cain stated the design firm that was chosen for the Fire Station's master plan is on hold. She stated the 4th apparatus bay was added so that the antique fire truck could be housed there. Chief Fitzgerald confirmed that was the original idea of the 4th bay. She asked if there is a wrought iron fence in the design. Chief Fitzgerald stated he believes there will be a retaining wall with a fence but was unsure of the material choice.

Mayor Dunn stated that a design firm for the Master Plan was hired to help the Council consider options for the overall site. She stated the reason for the pause in the Fire Station plan was because of the deed restrictions. Mr. Lambers stated the Master Plan would not be the next step, but the deed restrictions are.

Mayor Dunn stated since there is no hybrid option to discuss for this meeting, she suggested the next work session topics could be for both the Fire Station and the Economic Development Policies. Councilmember Filla asked if colored stakes could be put in the ground for Option 1 for the driveway and ask how much it would change in a hybrid plan. Mr. Ley stated he needed to talk to Mr. DeGasperi on how close the two buildings would be, but if the Fire Station only moved a few feet, it would not change the site very much. He stated the Council could make a recommendation for staff to continue working with the property owner for the driveway changes.

Mr. DeGasperi stated the Fire Station building on Option 2 is as close as they can get to the old City Hall currently. He stated the driveway would then need to come out straight and one of the large trees would need to be removed. The driveway would also then align with the neighbor's house across the street. Mr. Lambers remarked that fire equipment and trucks typically become larger throughout history and believes the driveway in Option 2 relates better for future use. Mayor Dunn stated she likes the look of the curve.

Councilmember Harrison stated if the old City Hall could stay in its current location in Option 2, she would agree. Mr. Ley stated that in speaking with the architects that it was determined it could stay at its current location with Option 2. Mayor Dunn stated Option 2 is also more considerate of the neighbors on the west side of Lee Blvd.

Mr. Lambers stated he would like the consensus to move forward with a preliminary and final plan at the same time to shorten the process. Mayor Dunn asked if there is a consensus for Mr. Lambers' recommendation on Option 2. The Council agreed. Mayor Dunn thanked Mr. DeGasperi for his design work and choice of materials.

Councilmember Filla stated she is in favor of Option 2, but still wants staff to consider co-use of the lots on the north side of the parking area. She mentioned the limestone on the design can sometimes "weep" leaving black marks. Mr. DeGasperi mentioned the limestone is quarried in St. Mary, Kansas, and has been used on several buildings in this area and seems to hold up very well in the long term.

Councilmember Cain stated the color of the brick on the presentation appears to be very orange. Mr. DeGasperi agreed the brick does look orange in the renderings but stated in actuality the brick is redder and he will have samples for the Planning Commission.

Mayor Dunn stated there will be a public hearing at the Planning Commission and citizen comments at the City Council meeting. The public is invited in the process. Mr. DeGasperi stated they are ready to submit to the Planning Commission at any time. Mayor Dunn thanked staff for their involvement and listening to the neighbors' concerns on the two-story design.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

/s/ Stacie Stromberg
Assistant City Clerk