

Session 14-10 a Regular Meeting of the Public Safety Building Review Committee was called to order by Chair Ken Castner at 5:45 p.m. on September 24, 2014 at the City Hall Conference Room Upstairs located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMITTEE MEMBERS ROBL, PAINTER, CASTNER AND WYTHE

STAFF: DAN NELSEN, PROJECT MANAGER
CAREY MEYER, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
RENEE KRAUSE, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

TELEPHONIC: STANTEC - SARA WILSON-DOYLE AND DALE SMYTHE

ABSENT: COMMITTEE MEMBER RALPH CRANE (EXCUSED)

AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was approved by consensus of the committee.

APPROVAL OF SYNOPSIS

A. Synopsis for August 26, 2014 Regular Meeting

Chair Castner called for a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

ROBL/PAINTER – SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

The minutes were approved by consensus of the committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA *(3 minute time Limit – Only items on the agenda not for Public Hearing may be commented on)*

Chair Castner invited the audience to speak and to please sign in and that they have roughly three minutes to speak.

Deb Lowney, city resident, commented on the use of the HERC site for the project. She focused her comments on the loss of a recreational center and emphasized that the committee should focus on the existing location and makes it work. The overall price tag for the project is scary. She opined that recreation is being pitted against Public safety and it should not be. She brought up the Needs Assessment in progress too.

Ms. Wythe arrived at 5:51 p.m.

Jeanne Parker city resident commented on the removal and cost of the asbestos; it is contained now but becomes expensive and dangerous, if that comes, she will be screaming to be extremely careful; Council is focused on being fiscally sound and expending funds on core services and “Taj Mahal” public facilities are not being fiscally sound; she supported the comments of Ms. Lowney regarding use and examination of the existing site and the HERC site.

Carol Shuler, city resident, work with Special Olympics which have used the HERC site, commented on keeping the existing uses at the HERC and finding a different site for Fire and Police Services; she doesn't believe that they have to decide between a new public safety building or having a recreation site, there should be another solution that works for both; she supported those services getting what they needed but not at the expense of the one recreational facility they have.

Brian Ormond, works with Special Olympics, commented on considering repurposing the existing fire hall for a gym but the need is now not in 5 years. There should be conversation on other uses for the existing buildings.

Ruth Mitchell, not a resident, coaches bocce ball for Special Olympics, they use the field at the HERC site, commented on the uses of the Skate Board Park and the field and stated the future is the children. The children need to have a place to go that is safe. She believes it is a good area and a safe environment.

Chair Castner advised the audience that they will be able to comment at the end of the meeting and they will be later speaking about setting a public hearing on the Site Selection and he believed that Council will also hold a public hearing when they receive the recommendation.

VISITORS

There were no visitors scheduled.

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORT/BOROUGH REPORT

A. Design Team Reports

Chair Castner asked Dale Smythe to provide the status report for the committee.

Mr. Smythe provided a synopsis of the progress completed by the design team noting the following:

- Three tasks included in the scope of work
 - Task A – Fire and Police Station Building Programming included were
 - Info gathering
 - Space standards
 - needs projection
 - Adjacencies diagrams
 - Site selection criteria
 - draft presentation
 - Open House (Meeting 2)
 - Task B – Site Selection and Concept Design
 - Little done
 - gathered information on three original sites
 - Size and GIS data
 - Task B – Public Involvement
 - One major public meeting
 - Two more meetings left

B. Staff Status Reports

Chair Castner invited Mr. Meyer to provide a status update for the committee.

Mr. Meyer noted that staff has been supporting the design team activities. He stated that in review of the schedule and contract when first starting this project; meeting #2 they were to be providing a public input on several sites evaluated on a decisional matrix and then the following meeting the recommended site. He noted that at this time they have the information on the building size, and the longer that they withhold from making a decision impacts costs.

Chair Castner offered a summary of committee actions for the audience. Some points made were as follows:

- breaking down the project into three departments
- The space required is accurate in regards to the space needed to take them 50 years into the future
- What the design will look like is to be decided
- The required space needed requires over 4 acres
- The HERC parcel is the only parcel that large
- City Council was asked to address leasing which they are not interested in doing

Ms. Wythe commented in fairness to the review and the process as initiated explained that in going after funding the city must have a matching contribution and what the city could bring was a location. She went on to explain that Council discussed the sites and ultimately they were excluded for a variety of reasons.

Ms. Wythe explained that Council reviewed it last year with a broad brush overview but stepped back to allow the recommendation to come from the committee, assured that the committee would evaluate the proposed sites. The committee is doing that and the Council is waiting the recommendation of the committee. The fact that the footprint is the size of that property is not surprising.

Ms. Wythe also noted that every new or different facility built in Homer has had the moniker of "Taj Mahal" attributed to it except to the people who live and work in those facilities. The High School was called a "Taj Mahal" but was inadequate when it opened its door for the number of students that went there.

Ms. Wythe provided comments on the responsibility of council to the community regarding the functionality of the building, the fiscal responsibility, the pros and cons of leasing compared to bonding the project to build the facility; the city will be providing fire and police services for the duration of the city; recreation is important to the city and council is aware of the importance and need, they expended \$40,000 for the Needs Assessment, they are not ignoring that conversation, they are reviewing that over a much longer period, she is doing personal legwork outside of council to provide that but that does not mean they should ignore that the city cannot provide adequate jail services or fire services now. Prudent fiscal management means we move forward until we cannot move forward anymore.

Ms. Wythe mentioned the property dedicated to recreation in the town center; every day they wait to get a new police and fire facility will cost more and having the HERC site brought into this as a roadblock is not the answer.

Chair Castner stated that Ms. Wythe made it very clear that the top five priorities for Council will be the top five priorities until completed and there were no recreation items on that list, referring to the Capital Improvement Projects for the city. Ms. Wythe responded that was a true statement and went on to explain that they do not have the financial aspects of the HERC building from keeping it open with no budget, occupying the building without Fire Marshall approval and having to expend funds to bring it up to code plus all the other lack of financial where-with-all regarding recreation and the HERC.

Chair Castner and Ms. Wythe offered more comments regarding the project and the HERC building.

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no items for Public Hearing.

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Media Tour of Existing Facilities & Lessons Learned – Ralph Crane & Chiefs Painter & Robl

Chair Castner brought the item to the floor for discussion. There was no report provided due to Mr. Crane was the only member in attendance and he did not provided a written report.

Mr. Meyer was interested in hearing how this tour went with the media he has heard that it was well received. There was only one representative from the Homer News at the Fire Department.

B. First Open House – overview on the success and what can be done better or differently including the items presented and results from questionnaire.

1. Open House Posters
2. Input Forms and Sign-in Sheets

Chair Castner brought the item to the floor for discussion. He thought the event was well attended by Homer standards. He also mentioned a comment/request of separate entries for police and fire.

Chief Painter explained that it was an issue that had been discussed and agreed upon to have separate entrances.

Ms. Wythe felt it was well attended that there were several good discussions and many on recreation too.

Chair Castner commented on the comments and input received and thanked those in the audience who attended and provided comment.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Review of Council Actions Taken Since the Last Committee Meeting

Chair Castner noted that the Clerk's office researched and found no previous actions from council other than that done at a worksession.

It was noted that council approved Resolution 14-100 regarding Leasing a Building for the facility at the meeting on Monday, September 22, 2014. They were not going to approve leasing any facilities.

Ms. Wythe noted that the Council discussed the resolution before the Borough regarding deed restrictions on that property but no action was taken on that.

B. Site Criteria and Selection:

1. Committee Recommendation and Approval of Scheduling a Public Hearing on Site Selection
2. Site Selection Decisional Matrix and how costs will be dealt with within the matrix.

Chair Castner wanted to focus discussion on the HERC Site since there was no other 4 plus acres city owned parcel to consider. He asked the committee if there was consensus for discussion.

There was no response from the committee members.

Mr. Smythe commented on the methods used to create the matrix to evaluate the three original sites and how it can be applied by the committee.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Meyer highlighted the potential to expand the existing parcel by purchasing the Borough Maintenance property and pushing the extension of Lake Street to the east side of the parcel but it would only bring it to a little over 3 acres. He also noted that there was an additional .6 acres that could be used for storage but this still only brings up the total to 3.6 acres which does not meet the requirement needed of 4.2 or more acres.

This site still presents dealing with existing buildings and having to operate services while constructing a new facility.

If the city follows the Transportation Plan they will have the expense of extending Lake Street anyway so it would be better to do it sooner rather than later was his opinion.

There was a brief discussion on vacating right of ways, homes exiting onto Heath Street, and it only increasing the site incrementally.

Chair Castner said he would entertain discussing this site after discussing the HERC site. Ms. Wythe agreed they could discuss the site but extending Lake Street would only add years and years to the project. Chair Castner then directed the committee to evaluating the HERC using the matrix provided by Stantec.

Chair Castner noted that under Parcel ownership it receives all the points referring to the matrix.

It is over 4 acres – 5 points

Well above the flood zone – 5 points

Well above the Tsunami Zone – 5 points

Structural Soils – comments were structures currently on the site -5 points

- Homer soils

- No soil testing or site investigation conducted

Gravity loading well-draining soils – 2 points

No Wetlands – the area does have wetlands but area that could be mitigated with bridging referred to Woodard Creek coming through the site, spoke with the design team at an earlier meeting and agreed that it could be solved however Mr. Smythe stated that he is not a civil engineer. – 2 points

This area has a deep swale shown on the drawings

Natural Gas is along the Sterling Highway and there is a line into the cul de sac of Woodside Avenue

There is wetland drainage and there will be a cost – Chair was amenable to ding it whatever the committee felt appropriate

No subsoil rock outcroppings – 2 points

Ms. Wythe asked what points the Chair was giving for natural gas and utilities. Chair was not providing any points. Ms. Wythe commented that providing points would offset the points taken away for the wetlands.

Ms. Wilson-Doyle explained to the committee that they could use the key at the bottom of the page to rate the site.

Chair Castner commented that the form only listed positive aspects of the site. He believed that conflicting uses and the cost to make it construction ready should be added to the form.

Mr. Smythe commented on how to grade the site and Chair Castner did not know which section to apply it to.

A discussion was entertained on where to fit those items in and it was agreed that it would be a zero. Chair Castner wanted to note that they reviewed all aspects if questioned. He also wanted to show the persons being displaced and the costs.

Mr. Smythe commented that the form was intended to compare several sites. He can add those criteria to this form but that wasn't what it was intended for.

Chair Castner acknowledged that but also stated that they did not have any comparable sites. He wanted to make clear all the positive attributes but here are the negatives and when you have conflicting uses you need to highlight them and council can make their decisions.

Ms. Wythe brought up the security issues and she wanted to double check the zoning. Since this is as close to the High School and will be adjacent to a middle school.

Comment on the concern expressed by the public regarding release of inmates from the jail are escorted to the door and then released however if they have been charged with a more serious crime or any felonies they are then taken to another facility. The Homer Jail does not directly release felons into the community. All other research conducted by the design team has shown placement next to a middle school favorable.

Chair Castner stated he would entertain a motion to select the HERC site as the site with the mitigations as the committee as identified: policy in relationship to the proximity to the middle school, concern over wetlands, the existing uses of the buildings for public works and recreation and the cost of mitigating the site to bring it to constructability.

Ms. Wythe inquired about the objective to recommend a site today and Chair Castner responded that he wanted to review the site and then hold a public hearing regarding the site then submit the recommendation to Council.

WYTHE/ROBL - MOVE TO PREPARE A MEMORANDUM OF RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL IDENTIFYING THE HERC SITE WITH THE IDENTIFIED PLUS AND NEGATIVE FACTORS LISTED WITHIN THE MEMO SO THAT THE MEMORANDUM WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE FOR FULL REVIEW OF THE CONTENT OF THE MEMORANDUM.

There was discussion on the content and availability of the memorandum.

VOTE. YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

Chair Castner confirmed that the Clerk will draft the memo and present to the committee prior to release and distribution.

Chair Castner opined that he felt they just addressed the second item listed of the matrix.

C. Scheduling the Next Meeting Date and Agenda Deliverables

Chair Castner then introduced the next item to the floor for discussion.

There was a brief discussion on what the next meeting would contain in relation to the Task A, B and C as outlined. It was determined that since there is only one appropriate size site that it would be redundant to expend more time on discussion.

Chair Castner wanted to schedule a discussion on cost, including the mitigation cost and possible revenue sources to support this and he wanted to also talk about what their participation could be.

A brief discussion on committee availability ensued to establish the next meeting along with a Public Hearing on the Site Selection. It was agreed by consensus for October 8th at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. Resolution 14-20 Creation of the Committee and Scope of Work
- B. Public Safety Building Project Fact Sheet
- C. Public Involvement Plan dated June 23, 2014
- D. Supplemental Strategies Chart – Updated and Revised as of August 19, 2014
- E. Project Contact List – Updated and Revised as of August 19, 2014

There was no discussion on the informational materials.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Jeanne Clark asked why they did not discuss or evaluate any of the other sites. She noted that 2.A referring to the Matrix Spreadsheet is only one of the criteria on the whole list. She did not understand why it was a deal breaker being just under 4 acres. She stated again that she could not understand why they did not evaluate any other site because of one criterion. Ms. Clark appreciated the Chair bringing up the other points of displacement and she was asked if the committee could evaluate the other sites now at the end of the meeting. She asked if they could not design the building slightly smaller and two stories, that there were lots they could do with the design.

Chair Castner responded that it does not matter since this is the site, referring to the HERC site, the form for that policy decision is the council, he tried to expand what the council was willing to look at and they contracted it so really ever since he was asked to be on this we've been, and Beth objects to me saying this, but we have been crowded onto this site. So now they are bringing it into sharp focus by saying here is the site, here is the pluses and here is the negatives it is your job as a citizen to push back.

Ms. Wythe added for the record of the committee, these sites were all on here, these sites were discussed independent of getting to "oh we have to rate them", there was no discussion that they had to rate them; every site on here was reviewed and discussed and some were brought up that were not even in the original discussion and they were considered and dismissed for various and sundry reasons by the committee, not by council.

Chair Castner added that they would not place a public safety building in a tsunami zone. Ms. Clark agreed with the comment. Ms. Wilson-Doyle mentioned the fatal flaw grading in this type of site selection and Ms. Clark questioned if size was considered a fatal flaw. Ms. Wythe responded that size would be a fatal flaw if you need a larger size. Chair Castner stated that there are other sites he has liked as well as this one, and they have been dancing around the issue long enough.

Ms. Wythe commented on fatal flaw in regards to the existing parcel stating that to plan on building a road that has not been discussed by Council, not even been brought forward to Council that they are thinking of building this road, only because it is in the transportation plan; purchasing a piece of property that has existing infrastructure on it, banking on that you can do that; redesigning and taking properties so you can do that is a fatal flaw in her mind. All the plans regarding roads that the city has

depend on acquiring property and the city has no ability to ensure that it does go through; it was discussed some time ago and Council did not want to do it.

Deb Lowney stated that this process was all academic.

Chair Castner countered that from the beginning it was a forgone conclusion on the site in his opinion but as of today this is what he believes they have to do.

Ms. Lowney responded that they have heard that loud and clear and again she is very frustrated with the process; because again will go back to the Needs Assessment; they haven't waited for that to be completed and she knows that adds time to the process. People are encouraged to speak to the Council and she has heard only people who have spoken to council are those opposed to it going into that site; she has not heard comments from the other side unless she missed those comments. A two story complex that has viability on that site, she thanked Mr. Meyer and wanted to pat him on the back, he relieved some of her frustration tonight, big time, because he addressed the issues that so many people wrote about on their questionnaires, he addressed them. Ms. Lowney acknowledged Ms. Wythe passion but was so saddened that the recreation passion is still just getting lost in this whole picture, she knows it is being heard but there is no road map in this picture they are just losing. She has concerns with it being placed next to a middle school and it is not right next to the high school there is a big parking lot between them and the high school and most high school students drive while middle school students are dropped off; on field trips there is a great amount of foot traffic past cutting right through there, there will be sirens and a lot of distractions that you will be asking teachers and students to put up with. There was a lot more than what was discussed here tonight. She will also not be able to attend the next meeting.

Ms. Wythe stated she would be able to see the memo and submit her comments on it to the clerk.

Chair Castner confirmed that Ms. Lowney would see recreation as a conflicting use.

Mary Griswold, city resident, felt that the facility will be obsolete long before 50 years and better off planning for 20-30 years; she further noted that 4 acres may be the ideal building but she knows many public construction projects that they've adapted to a smaller footprint, they do it all the time, so 3.6 acres is very accommodating. She would like to keep the existing station because it is serviceable, and that is her biggest objection in this, obviously the police department needs a new building, she has toured it, it is a wreck, she doesn't know how anyone works there; the fire hall is not ideal but it is very functional, it is not perfect and doesn't live up to the NFPA standards but 6 months after any building or apparatus is done is out of compliance, NFPA, those are goals that you work towards; no one can comply with all of them; leave the fire station, tear down the police station, build a two story structure that the bottom floor floor that come outs level with the back parking lot of the existing fire hall and you can put the police and shared needs and the new needs for the fire department in the new building, it is not worth adding on to the old fire hall but keep it there its very functional it's a very nice place, been added on to for a long time, very organic and it's too functional to tear down or abandon. She hopes that they would have the design team at least study the feasibility of building on the existing site and maintaining the existing fire hall.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Mr. Meyer stated that he would like direction on what to task the design team for the next meeting. Had they followed the plan they would be plopping down a 60,000 sf building on the different sites and evaluating the items on the decisional matrix and he was wondering if the committee has any guidance for staff. He believes that they should be plopping the 60,000 sf building on each site to prove that the decisional factors are true. Such as does the wetlands affect the building site, how would access be provided to Pioneer Avenue and that would be provided at the next open house.

Chair Castner responded that he wanted to hold the public hearing first since all the uses, accesses and wetlands can be mitigated. He wants to have all the issues mitigated before they are plopping buildings down. Then they can send it on to the Council and give the team their marching orders.

10:30

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

Ms. Wythe stated that at this time they do not have anything (regarding funding sources) to bring with them to do this project, they have not increased the mil rate and they don't have the bond. It may be that they do have to do something like that but at this time all they can bring to the table is the location.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Castner stated that he did not personally believe that the participation was just going to be a site; he clarified that "our" meant community. He believed that the mil rate would have to be increased or go out to bond. He believed that the community would have to come together to get that done. He further stated that they may be in the position of Bethel and have to do this sooner rather than later; there was an item in the newspaper where Bethel took action long before they received funding for the new community pool and we may have to do that same thing. He then thanked the audience for coming and offering comments to the committee.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

Chief Robl commented he believed they discussed it all however he wanted to say that in the meetings they have had they looked at all the sites and they had good reasons why they were not selected; the combined site, fire and police, at one time he thought they could make it work with some additional room, but he felt that the 4 acres was a pretty absolute number they should stick with and right now he questions how they can make the existing site work, knowing the footprint that they need and it seems they would have to demolish both buildings before they could get anything done and how the heck are they going to operate in the interim, they have a jail and dispatch center, we have hundreds of thousands of dollars in just trying to move dispatch somewhere. It would be very problematic.

Chief Painter agreed with Chief Robl, they have looked at remodeling the fire station, the city spent several hundred dollars in the 1990's to bring it up to seismic code and repair the damage wrought on the building due to insufficient planning and construction when it was built by the volunteer corporation. There are major issues with the building use as a fire station; apparatus design, the weights, they are limited to the parts of the building that they can use for specific apparatus because of the design of the building; and that increase cost not only the facility uses but in vehicle design as well. They have looked at the lot and they have talked about maintaining the building while it was being constructed then tearing the existing building down.

Chief Painter believes that the building is viable for other uses; it could be used by Public Works Maintenance personnel who are being displaced and there may be other commercial uses for the building that do not put the demands on the building that the fire department has; they have looked at redesigning the building and remodeling it and just the lot size for the fire station and passed on that 20 years ago; Mark and he have had separate projects on the CIP list for several years until they were taken off because they were getting anything done. Mark and he have decided to combine the departments after looking at where they provide savings having facilities both departments can use. This will present

a savings having joint use facilities and that is where the project has come from; they presented the idea to Council, they liked it. That started the ball rolling and in the long run it will save the tax payer money.

Dale Smythe stated that he wasn't sure of the other information people attending might have but once they (committee and design team) obtained the knowledge from the space needs assessment especially the requirement for 4 acres, even if all the other efficiencies were gained and the entire square footage could not be built, none of the other sites offered anything that was even viable. They did a comparison on those other sites.

Sarah Wilson-Doyle commented on the public question regarding future uses of the existing buildings could provide for the community and she was wondering if it would be beneficial at this time to have the design team review those existing buildings for recreational purposes that would provide an interim solution until the funding could be found. There may be a way that these buildings could provide for the next 20 years with minimal changes and improvements. These buildings could also be sold too providing the necessary funding needed to start the recreation project in the land next to the library.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m. The next regular meeting will be **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2014 AT 5:30 P.M.** and will be at the City Hall in the Cowles Council Chambers at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, and Alaska.

RENEE KRAUSE, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____