

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING REVIEW COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
NOVEMBER 10, 2014

Session 14-12 a Regular Meeting of the Public Safety Building Review Committee was called to order by Chair Ken Castner at 5:30 p.m. on November 10, 2014 at the Cowles Council Chambers at City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMITTEE MEMBERS PAINTER, CASTNER AND WYTHE  
DESIGN TEAM: DALE SMYTHE, STANTEC

ABSENT: COMMITTEE MEMBER ROBL (EXCUSED)

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

### **AGENDA APPROVAL**

The agenda was approved by consensus of the committee.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Minutes for October 8, 2014 Regular Meeting

The minutes were approved as presented 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)*

Scott Adams, city resident, he questioned that the site selected is 3 times the size of the existing parcel and asked if they needed that large a fire hall since they have a number of firehouses, and he understands needing to get the site locked down for funding reasons but he did not think that this site (HERC) would be all that great since pulling out onto Pioneer would mean that you have to open up that area and asked if additional locations were considered.

Chair Castner responded to his comments regarding the increased size of the building and the locations that were considered and why they were not chosen. Chair Castner further stated that this particular location adds value that will make the new building less expensive if they can repurpose the existing foundation it will save a substantial amount of money.

Roger MacCampbell, city resident, commented in total support of the new facility and stated that this community is going through growing pains. The community needs to treat the police and fire like the professionals that they are and he is not opposed to this site; however he would like to see a new recreation center too.

Kevin Walker, non-resident, commented on the proposed location of pedestrian and bicyclist access on the proposed site and asked for direct access to the front door and not across a lot of parking lot or roadways for those pedestrians and cyclists.

### **VISITORS**

There were no visitors scheduled.

### **STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORT/BOROUGH REPORT**

A. Design Team Status Report – Dale Smythe  
B. Staff Status Reports – Carey Meyer

Chair Castner invited Mr. Meyer and Mr. Smythe to come forward and provide a report on what was accomplished to date on the project.

Mr. Meyer and Mr. Smythe summarized the following:

- The committee request to put a conceptual design on the proposed site leaving the recreational uses of the site in place as long as possible.
- Various design layout increased costs and was very difficult due to the site restrictions
- they provided drawings that showed the build out in phases to accommodate this request to leave recreational use in place as long as possible by building the Police Department first. This would move the City personnel into the HERC offices on the upper floors.
- The second phase would then be the Fire Department which would be reusing the foundation of the HERC building
- The first phase would include some Fire amenities
- The design does include some contingencies since there were many unknown

Chair Castner restated that they were recommending a Phased project.

Mr. Meyer responded that they were not necessarily recommending a phased project but that it could be done as a phased project. He did note that the classrooms could be utilized as storage and office space. The smaller building would be demolished to allow the building of the police and some additional construction.

The following were discussed or commented on by the committee and staff:

- The scheduling a phased project, what departments, amenities would or could be constructed first and the increase of cost
- The use of the classrooms was not included in the Fire Marshall review and would require additional renovations.
- building occupancy was only provided to 47-49 for the gym portion of the existing building
- The Fire Department would be built over the existing foundation of the existing building saving tens of thousands of dollars in concrete work
- phasing the project could push the total costs to \$28.5 million dollars
- Further discussion was required on occupancy and usage of the HERC classrooms
- it is not viable to construct needed Fire and Police amenities in the first phase then expand or phase in the expansions in the future as shown in the projections of the space needs report.
- Mitigations on the site that will need to be accounted for

#### C. Council Report – Mayor Wythe

Mayor Wythe reported that Council approved Resolution 14-110 regarding the Site Recommendation at the last meeting. This was the only action taken regarding this project since the last Committee meeting.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING**

There was no public hearing.

#### **PENDING BUSINESS**

There was no pending business on the agenda.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Memorandum from Public Works Director re: Preliminary Conceptual Design

Chair Castner clarified that the trade-off for phasing the project would allow the gym to remain until the second phase but not building the project out as one would increase the project by an estimated 4% each year.

#### B. Updated Construction Project Schedule

The project schedule was reviewed by the committee members. Chair Castner commented that he wanted some events on here that needed to happen if they were to construct in 2016.

Mr. Meyer stated that one task was added in October 2015 Bond Proposition. It is generally the same calendar as the design team presented during their interview. He further stated that it was apparent that they knew the funding fairly quickly or they will be pushing back the schedule farther back. In December they should be completing this phase of the schedule and if they want to keep going they will need funding next year. If they want to continue with the design they will need more funding 2015. Waiting for the Legislature will mean no funding until late next year.

Chair Castner inquired if the committee had any opposition to adding the Bond Issue to the schedule. It was acknowledged that Council has the final say and approval.

Chair Castner inquired from Mr. Smythe how far ahead of construction do they need to put out construction ready documents. Mr. Smythe responded that in putting in contingencies he believed it could be done within 3 months. He believed that would not be a problem obtaining 65% documents. It was agreed that demolition could be completed prior. Site Development, utilities and demolition can be added to the schedule and as they progress costs could be quantified for utilities, demolition, and site development as well.

#### C. Memorandum from Deputy City Clerk re: Next Meeting Date and Deliverables

Chair Castner would like to talk about the recommendation to Council at the next meeting. He appreciated the phased approach and believed to be a good approach while waiting for funding from the Legislature.

Mayor Wythe commented that she still preferred building out the whole project. She added that if Homeland Security wanted to give them money they would take it; in the initial discussion they determined that the cost in 2015 would be around \$1 million dollars (looking to Mr. Smythe with Stantec) to keep the project moving forward and requested confirmation. Mr. Smythe confirmed that Stantec still owed the concept level design (35%) and costs to build. This would carry through to September of 2015. Mr. Smythe also stated that they had included an 8% Design fee as a round number to use which would more closely represent Design Bid Build process but as a whole project cost to represent everything. Mayor Wythe further stated that they haven't had a discussion on things in the design that could be built and completed at a later time or forestalled to a later date. Mayor Wythe agreed with Chief Painter that the Fire Marshall did not approve to use for the rest of the building and only approved a specific portion of the building for a specific population base so did not believe they could just move city personnel into that building.

Chair Castner stated that they do need to have the discussion on what the space needs study such as the covered impound yard, he did not think a covered yard was needed; also the shooting range could possibly be done with a separate funding source by someone who does shooting ranges. He believed

that \$28.5 million dollars was a big number for the city to take on especially if they lose recreational services.

There was a brief discussion on clarification of how long the gym would be available.

Mayor Wythe inquired about Chief Painter's availability for the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. He will not be here but his representative is available for the discussion of the aspects of the facility that are needed now or could be postponed or framed and completed at a later date.

Chair Castner also requested funding to be on the agenda including the \$2 million dollars that is in the City's Permanent Fund in that discussion.

#### **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. Project Contact List
- E. Supplemental Strategies Chart
- F. Resolution 14-093, Approval of the 2015-2020 Capital Improvement Plan
- G. Resolution 14-110, Designating the HERC Site for the Proposed Public Safety Building Project

There were no comments on the informational items.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE**

Kate Crowley, city resident, commented on the phasing idea and that she understood the final price tag is very important decision but with the idea of phasing makes this easier to swallow for a lot of people and if you are looking for support for a bond issue she believed people would support funding for a police station and somehow not taking away the recreational facility that they do have now. She will take it in and pass it around. Her initial response is this looks pretty good and she appreciates that they are looking at this option despite the price tag and will go a long way to help public support.

Kathy Hill, city resident, she did think that this was at least a compromise regarding phasing and she stated it was unfortunate that recreation has come up in conflict and if they had chosen another location it may not have but at least this gives the city, the community and others time to think where they should be regarding a recreation center since there is no point in going after money for a community recreation center when the public safety is a priority in the city that is a given. She inquired what the cost of demolition would be for the project.

Kevin Walker, mentioned the petition and letters submitted to Council against the HERC site for the project and that it wasn't even discussed and he believes that they should reconsider if it goes to public vote because that is an awful lot of people who spoke against it; he then remarked on the plans, suggesting the city could consider privatizing some of the larger areas such as a gym, cause they could design it as a facility for the public and just schedule the police and fire use or better yet they could use other gyms that are already in town and then they would not need 4+ acres if you take away the gym, all the unnecessary parking, retention ponds, the shooting range; additionally the specs seem tailor made for this site. Mr. Walker thought that the city may be able to utilize some of the existing police and fire buildings and there might be some evidence where some of these things could be compromised or used

and he's not sure if the committee has talked about what to do with the old structures, he acknowledged that the structures are old and that's a problem.

Scott Adams, questioned the combining of the Fire and Police departments, as far as he has ever seen those departments have always been separate; then he questioned where the funding will come from since they have mentioned funding coming from a bond issue or the legislature how are they going to fund continuing this project from now until they get that funding, are they taking it from the general fund or is there a special fund?

#### **COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF**

Mr. Meyer responded to Ms. Hill's question regarding the cost of demolition would be about \$500,000 for both buildings. Mr. Meyer requested confirmation on what was expected of the design team.

There was a brief discussion on the recommendations from Chief Robl and prioritization and the input from the design team. Chair Castner also would like to see developed the 35% for the civil elements so the committee starts, because right now everything is lumped into the sf costs. He would like to know the costs if they will need to bring in a larger water line, also if there is discharge lines, gas and electric. He would like to get this fleshed out. Chair Castner added that he believed the public expects them to figure this out before and he would also like to make sure there are no hidden costs or problems since they are at 28.5 million and no one wants to hear 40 million.

Mr. Nelsen and Ms. Krause had no comments.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER**

Mayor Wythe responded to Mr. Adams that funding for this project was appropriated from the depreciation accounts of both departments.

Mayor Wythe commented that she gets there is financial concern and concern regarding the recreational facility. The Council will perform due diligence on the financial aspects of this project. She can attest from sitting 10 years on the Council that their success rate of not paying better than 50% for anything that has been constructed, in most cases more around the 25% range, has been really phenomenal for many years, so that is the reason that it is not really frightening to her. She also looks at the amount of indebtedness of the City of Homer and it is around \$1.2 million which is really nothing. They have the Library. Port & Harbor pays for itself. She opined that since they are not carrying a lot of debt there should not be a whole lot of concern regarding going out and incurring debt to build a decent Police and Fire Station. Mayor Wythe stated she really likes the idea of figuring this out to construct the whole project at one time because any margin of increase in the cost is a margin they should not have to pay. They need to focus on getting to that place and she is committed to helping support reaching that place. Another aspect is focusing on the long range picture is they want to see this community grow and the community cannot grow much more if they do not do something with Fire and Police Services. There are a certain things that are limiting factors in the growth and development of your community and this happens to be on that list of things. She feels that they need to be focused on it. She is disappointed that people put things in the newspaper that are not necessarily founded in truth.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR**

Chair Castner responded to Mr. Walker that the gym shown in the drawings was not really a gym it would be office space, the shooting range is actually placed on the second floor and the fact that the

design presented tonight was tailor made; there was a lot work done to include all the required items such as parking, the retention ponds, which will handle the water that is or comes onto the site. The dedicated professionals who work for the city worked with Stantec to come up with the design presented tonight and he is very pleased with what they have designed.

Chair Castner responded to Mr. Adams that the funding will be discussed at the next meeting since Council has not talked about funding beyond this point even in a worksession. He has talked to Finance requesting information on mil rates, percent on a sales tax, what the bond bank is charging which is 3.8% and believe me there will be due diligence on the funding of this thing and he does not believe any more money than already funded will be expended on this project until the proper funding mechanism is in place.

Chair Castner remarked that Mayor Wythe said they would be saving money once you take down the recreational facility you haven't saved anything; it is a loss of something. They will need to spend money to mitigate the green space and to go in and tear down the skate board park without replacing it is a loss. The Police department will not be replacing the values lost in the skateboard park or the recreational use of the gym or the green space. He is just trading dollars. In response to Chair Castner Mayor Wythe noted that was not under the responsibility of the committee. ~~Chair Castner acknowledged that they do not have a responsibility to what they are tearing down but they have a responsibility to what they are tearing down.~~ Chair Castner stated that while it is not our responsibility to find a new gym to replace the existing gym, it is our responsibility to identify things that are mitigations and losses. <sup>i</sup>

#### **COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE**

Chief Painter went on record to state that he was not in favor of a phased project. He understood the factors involved and looking at smaller numbers may be more digestible but having the agency pushed back a number of years down the road and have to rely on the existing facility for another 6-10 years was somewhat problematic for him along with the extra cost of a phased approach delaying construction of the inevitable they need what they need now not 6 years or 10 years from now. He agreed with sitting down with the space needs assessment to determine more concrete numbers. There are some numbers such as the apparatus bays and office space were already middle of the road; the training space was based on they required currently and projected out what they will need. They may be some things they could probably do without such as covered storage since the Skyline is almost complete but that will then add time when the equipment is needed. He understood the concept and the attraction to the phased approach but being on the receptive end of phased two he doesn't like at all.

Chair Castner remarked that even using the 50% that Mayor Wythe indicated would represent a cost of \$14 million and then cited that the phased approach would mean something is built in 2016. So do we all get something built today or we all get built in 5-6 years from now. He is willing to talk some more at the next meeting some more. The reality is that people say wrong place, wrong place, wrong time, no money and he believes that it is the right place, right project, right time but he does not have faith in getting the money from Juneau. He would like to see half the money for the pistol range but they are going to really have to look to see what is possible.

**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, DECEMBER 10, 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: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>i</sup> At the 12-10-14 meeting Chair Castner wanted to clarify this statement made during his comments and the committee approved this statement of clarification as an amendment to the minutes.