



City Commission Work Session Minutes

August 12, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.
Virtual

Present:

Mayor Phil Anderson
Commissioner Marty Sullivan
Commissioner Sheila DeCiccio
Commissioner Todd Weaver
Commissioner Carolyn Cooper

City Manager Randy Knight
Asst. City Manager Michelle Neuner
City Clerk Rene Cranis

1) Call to Order

Mayor Anderson called meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2) Discussion Item(s)

a. Post Office Property Discussion

Mayor Anderson stated that he and with Mr. Knight have met to discuss possible locations for a new Post Office facility. In addition, he stated that the city has reached out to USPS through congressional delegates and lobbyist. He explained that USPS representatives have indicated that they are not interested in speaking with the city at this time and will talk when the city can provide their list of requirements, which are a consolidated facility, 2 - 2/12 acres of owned land, combined retail and surface parking.

Mayor Anderson stated that none of the properties he and Mr. Knight have looked at thus far, that are available for sale, are feasible and explained that the city is now working to find a path to open consideration for a split facility. He outlined a split facility concept that would be on land the city already controls, either at city hall or other land the city is acquiring. He noted that there is no open consideration from USPS for a split facility at this time and stated that he and Mr. Knight have spoken with an organization that may open up another channel toward finding a path for a split facility. He stated that Critical path is lining up or eliminating all possibilities of a site that matches the USPS requirements.

Mayor Anderson stated that given the boundaries of where the city is looking for a location in the CBD, the pricing is in the \$12-\$15M range and discussed availability of funds for the long term. He stated that \$8.5M has been allocated for the property.

Discussion followed on options for reserving future funds for the post office purchase. Mr. Knight stated that he spoke with the Orange County administrator about holding funds on a dedicated project that is already in the CRA plan for a period of time after CRA ends. He stated that the timeline for the spending of unused funds has changed by

Statute and while the county is ok with the concept, they will do some research to confirm the concept is legal. Mr. Knight stated that designated trust fund could be another option to store the funds, similar to a Parks acquisition fund, that could be set up fund to start reserving funds for future purchase. In response to questions. Mr. Knight stated that the tree farm or old library could be sold for the purchase and mentioned that the city could also could acquire property that is for sale and hold it, but noted that the current investment policy may not allow the city to invest in real estate.

Mayor Anderson stated that an option for land-banking might be to make a reasonable guess on the kind of land that may work for a split facility or adjacent to a city services area. The city would have to make an educated guess of the kind of property that a carrier site would look like.

In-depth discussion followed on different locations for a combined facility including a land-swap with Rollins College, the property on New England Avenue, the property on Pennsylvania Avenue, the Lawrence Center and the OCPS Vo-Tech facility on Denning.

Commissioner Cooper gave a presentation and stated that the city has leadership support, access to funding, policy and community support and noted that USPS is willing to consider and offer. She reviewed USPS key points including property value, construction costs, USPS requirements and noted potential threat from development. She expressed concern that the city waiting for the USPS to be ready to sell, disposing of property that could be used to a resolution, and tagging the USPS acquisition as future debt were not the answer to finding path forward. She reviewed components to find a path forward including finding ways to influence the seller, finding a motivated developer and a skilled lobbyist to assist. She summarized by stating that the city needs a plan and provided suggestions including development action plan, identifying UPSPS needs and Winter Park land opportunities and putting together a committee of local influencers.

Mayor Anderson stated that his takeaway from the presentation is to build a broad base of support that could lead to long-term commitment. He stated that Commissioner Cooper provided good points and feels the commission should think about the points raised and the best way to build a broad, public coalition to get into the market.

Mr. Knight asked if there was consensus from the commission to trade the old library site as part of the assemblage, under the right conditions, to gain land for the post office. Commissioner Sullivan stated that consensus would depend on the exchange. Commissioner Cooper is opposed. Mayor Anderson stated he would rather have a clean transaction where acquiring the property is currency for currency.

Commissioner Weaver stated that there are opportunities for contributions and stated that he has heard from residents that they do not want retail site moving away from central core and feels the site would need to remain downtown to have community

support. Mayor Anderson suggested having another short public meeting to discuss how to go out to the market and then use that to compare options.

Commissioner Sullivan asked what the federal lobbyist is working on for the city in terms of purchasing the post office. Mr. Knight stated that lobbyist was able to confirm what USPS feels is an acceptable deal from the city and that would consider a proposal. Discussion followed on potential use of the Pennsylvania property for the USPS facility.

b. Old Library Discussion

Mr. Knight stated that staff had discussed using the property as a swing site for remodeling city hall. He reviewed the improvements needed at city hall and explained that staff has concluded that a swing-space is not required for the renovations and there was no need to hold on to the old library property for that use. Mayor Anderson noted that the site was large enough for a museum use.

Commissioner Sullivan stated that the old library is a net financial asset and feels that Commission needs to decide what they want to do with the property. He gave positive suggestions such as selling the land, developing the land, a mixed-use concept or land lease that would put the city in the black with the property. Alternatively, he stated the Commission would need to determine if they are ok being in the negative with using the property for an art, culture, non-profit or education use that would put the city in the red. Mayor Anderson added that a neutral option would be to use the site as a park and noted that there would be an operating expense incurred by the city. Mr. Knight stated that staff has discussed the cost to moth-ball the building until a decision is made and reviewed the analysis staff has done on the current state of the building.

Mayor Anderson opined that the property is not a highest and best use or form of liquidity and does not feel compelled to make the property a positive item. He added that he would rather see it as a neutral impact to the city financials. Commissioner Cooper stated that the property is the entry feature into the city when coming from the airport and would like the residents to own the entry feature into the CBD. She does not see a need for it to be a big money generator, but is not opposed to the possibility. She stated that her first choice would be to renovate property and use it for a civic service such as retail, small arts, arts & culture, etc.

Commissioner Weaver agreed that the property is an entry feature into Winter Park and suggested moving the Morse Museum to the site. He stated that since the Cornell Museum is moving to the Lawrence center and the Polasek Museum is in the area, it would allow for a museum row. He stated an even swap would resolve some of the north park avenue parking issues, beautify the corner and the Morse Museum would have a larger space. Mayor Anderson stated that the Commission might consider

offering the shell to one of the more notable users in Winter Park to see if there is interest in using the property in some form. He stated that the consensus was to use the property for an arts-oriented use as opposed to a commercial use.

Commissioner Sullivan suggested trading property for property with Rollins to give an advantage to the city and noted the boathouse area by Dinky Dock as a possible location for a trade. Commissioner DeCiccio agreed and suggested having a discussion with Rollins and see what sites they may have for an equitable trade.

Commissioner Cooper reiterated that she feels the city and residents should own the property, not Rollins. Commissioner Weaver stated he would not support disposing of the property unless there was a significant trade. Mayor Anderson summarized that using the building is still an option geared toward arts, there are budget constraints that may require a sponsor, there is consideration of using the property as part of a trade and consideration of using the property of a park. Discussion continued on possible uses for the property and reaching out to the 5-6 institutions in the city to see if there is any interest in using the shell. Mayor Anderson stated that a Winter Park Center for the Arts would be an interesting option with a collaborative rotation of all the museums in Winter Park. He suggested bringing the topic back at a Commission meeting for further discussion before giving staff direction.

3) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Mayor Phillip M. Anderson

ATTEST:

City Clerk Rene Cranis