



Richland County Council
Courthouse Ad Hoc Committee
December 4, 2017 – 2:30 PM
4th Floor Conference Room
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia 29204

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Seth Rose, Chair; Greg Pearce, Joyce Dickerson, Paul Livingston and Dalhi Myers (via telephone)

OTHERS PRESENT: Michelle Onley, Sandra Yudice, Jamelle Ellis, and Brandon Madden

CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Malinowski called the meeting to order at approximately 2:30 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. October 23, 2017 – Ms. Dickerson moved, seconded by Mr. Pearce, to approve the minutes as distributed. The vote in favor was unanimous.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA – Ms. Dickerson moved, seconded by Mr. Pearce, to adopt the agenda as distributed. The vote in favor was unanimous.

JUDICIAL CENTER DISCUSSION – Mr. Livingston inquired as to what the committee’s primary goal was for today. He stated he knows we talked about something from the City, at one point.

Mr. Rose stated, as he recalls, the item that was to come before us today was to explore the letter the Mayor sent. He believes staff reached out to him. He has talked to the City, and at this time, they are not offering anything in particular on the courthouse issue.

Dr. Yudice stated the only thing they got was a letter to Mr. Seals from Teresa Wilson.

Mr. Rose stated, at this time, he does not think the City is willing to contribute.

Ms. Dickerson stated they were talking about the possibility of land on Main Street.

Mr. Rose stated he does not think that is an option anymore.

Mr. Pearce stated, if you recall, the City has managed to acquire, diagonally across from City Hall, a L-shaped piece of that entire block. They purchased the United Way building and the other 2 buildings on Laurel Street. They do not own the Methodist church. At one time, there was a discussion they would give us that land. If we could get heir’s rights for the parking lot, with the church, we would swap them the courthouse for that.

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Mr. Livingston stated what he recommends is that we move this discussion forward with the whole Renaissance Plan because it is going into that, and we cannot make any decision at this point. In the meantime, he would like to have a few questions answered. One of the things that we are looking at, even as it relates to the Renaissance Plan, is looking at value of the current facility. He would like to get a true value of the property. He talked with several people, and he was told the value of it is not what he thought it was.

Mr. Pearce stated he went one step further than that and talked with 3 of the top commercial real estate companies in Columbia. When he told them the estimated sale value was \$47M, they actually laughed. The maximum value he was quoted was between \$8 - \$9M. Nobody believes that the building has any value.

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Dickerson, to forward to Council a recommendation to move the discussion of the courthouse to the discussion of the whole Renaissance Plan, and to recommend staff obtain an appraisal of the current facility.

Ms. Myers inquired as to why we are reluctant to make any recommendation on what we think of the proposal with the new courthouse as a part of the Renaissance Plan.

Mr. Livingston stated his motion was because he has a lot of general questions that he thinks will be better served in full Council, instead of just the committee.

Mr. Pearce stated that is his feelings as well.

Mr. Rose stated, as he understands it, Mr. Livingston wants to make sure and know what the value of 1701 Main Street is, with an appraisal.

Ms. Myers stated the structure staff has put forward does not rely entirely on that sale. The financing plan for the overall Renaissance Plan is not reliant on that.

Mr. Livingston stated it may be something, once we look at the whole plan, that he wants to consider.

Ms. Dickerson stated she was just handed a big binder, and she does not have a clue what is in it. Until she takes a look at this, she cannot....

Dr. Yudice stated the binder is a compilation of all the information that has previously been provided.

Mr. Pearce stated the issue he has is with the installment purchase bonds. He knows that was a financing mechanism the City abandoned, as it related to the financing of the baseball park. There were very good reasons why they abandoned that means of financing, and we have never used installment purchase bonds before. He is not saying he is against that, but he is saying he does not understand those, at this point, and he needs additional education. If we did not use installment purchase bonds, then the sale of that building would be necessary to make up for that money, if we used a more traditional means of financing.

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Myers stated, if the question is on installment purchase revenue bonds, they are not that unusual. Counties as small as Fairfield have used them, and she worked on them for counties, so they do not strike her as odd for this kind of project. She suggested having an expert to come in train us on it, so we can get the background that we are looking for. We would have some ability to at least understand better what it is that is being put forward.

Mr. Pearce stated he was going to take that up at the Council meeting.

ADJOURN – The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:44 PM.