

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
September 30, 2019
AUDITORIUM

Present: Councilmembers Anderson, Bullock, George, Litten, O’Leary, Rader

Also Present: Mayor Summers, Urban Designer Allison Hennie, Human Services Director Gelsomino, two members of the public

Call to Order: approximately 7:08 p.m.

Communication from Mayor Summers regarding Cove Church FIT Analysis

President O’Leary called the meeting to order and announced that the meeting is intended to get discussions underway about the suitability of utilizing Cove Church as a new space for the Human Services Department.

Residents of 12518 Clifton Blvd., Steve and Kathleen, introduced themselves. They live adjacent to the church.

Mayor Summers updated Council on the steps the administration has taken to analyze Cove Church as a potential community center. The Mayor stated that on the question of adaptive re-use verses new build, that while he is leaning toward adaptive re-use, that he is not yet ready to make a formal recommendation. He stated that while there is no deadline that there is urgency to move the project forward. He outlined the future roles of Council:

- To pass a resolution authorizing an RFQ
- To be prepared to appropriate between \$3 million and \$6 million.
- To authorize the administration to enter into a contract with designers and builders.
- To offer affirmative support of the final project.

The Mayor laid out his goals to update Council on the path ahead and to hear its questions and to seek out answers in the upcoming weeks and months.

Urban Designer Allison Hennie delivered a presentation with visual renderings and discussed the results of the fit analysis. The analysis concluded that re-homing Human Services programming to Cove Church is a more efficient use of space than the existing layout of programming across three buildings. She provided detail and answered questions on estimates provided by contractors. Estimates for an adaptive re-use ranged from \$3.5 million to \$4.5 million. She discussed the differences between the two estimates. Ms. Hennie recommended that the City use a design-build approach and discussed the differences between this approach and the traditional design-bid-build approach. She presented estimated timelines, concluding that an adaptive re-use could be completed by the end of 2021. New construction could be completed by end of 2022. Cost estimates for a new construction facility range from about \$6 - \$7 million.

The presentation concluded with a tentative recommendation to pursue an adaptive reuse strategy with a budget of \$4 million and to release an RFQ for a design-build team by the end of 2019. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of adaptive re-use versus new construction as well as the ramifications on specific programming.

Ms. Hennie shared that all contractors who have walked through the church believe that the 50-year old church has been well maintained and just needs a bit more care to bring up to today's standards.

The Committee discussed the standards by which the schools determined whether to re-use buildings or build new ones and if this standard could be applied here.

The administration discussed ways in which adaptive re-use of Cove Church makes sense and contrasted this with why it doesn't make sense at the Lawther Center for the City. The Lawther Center may be put on the market in conjunction with the Hilliard Theater site.

Director Gelsomino discussed her vision for the space in detail. She does not think that the space will be outgrown in 10-20 years.

During deliberations, Committee members expressed support for adaptive re-use for the following reasons:

- To preserve a building with unique character
- More environmentally sustainable to re-use than to tear down and build new
- Lower cost
- With some investments, the existing building can be brought up to modern standards of efficiency

In response to a question by Councilmember George, Mayor Summers discussed the financing of the project. He identified the following possible sources of funding:

- \$3.5 million in the land acquisition fund (from estate tax windfall)
- Block grants
- Capital funding from the State – if the project can be further along in planning by January
- Sale of the City's property at 1450 Belle to net \$2 million
- Sale of the City's residential properties
- Lakewood Hospital Fund

He advised against using debt.

Mayor Summers provided background on the land acquisition fund. He stated that spending the fund will not have an impact on the City's bond rating. He committed to returning to Council with a draft RFQ and more firm cost estimates.

The neighbors of the site asked questions about ADA accessibility, hazardous materials abatement, the EPA's influence on the project and the differences between the design-build and design-bid-build process. The administration addressed these questions.

Councilmember Bullock asked Council to commit to action on this by January. He acknowledged the high cost but remarked that it is a strategic investment central to the City. He asked for a macro level overview of the City's one-time funds during this year's budget hearings. He remarked on the importance of having reserves such as the land acquisition fund and noted that we should have a plan for replenishing the fund if we spend it.

President O'Leary requested that there be a robust community engagement process around this project. He noted that the process could be done in-house or with an outside partner but that it is essential.

Tree Advisory & Education Board Appointments

The Committee discussed the timing of the appointments with Councilman Rader expressing that sooner rather than later would be appreciated.

Motion by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by President O'Leary to enter into executive discussion to discuss appointments to the Tree Advisory & Education Board.

Councilmember George expressed her preference to not enter executive session and asked Councilmember Bullock to elaborate on his rationale.

Councilmember Bullock explained that he would like to protect the privacy of the candidates and be able to speak candidly about them and their qualifications.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion to enter executive session:

Yeas: Anderson, Bullock, George, Litten, O'Leary, Rader

Nays: none

Absent: O'Malley

Committee of the Whole entered executive session from 8:27 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.

Upon exiting executive session, President O'Leary made a motion, seconded by Vice President Anderson to approve the minutes of the July 1st and July 15th Committee of the Whole meetings.

All members voted in favor. Motion passed.

President O'Leary made a motion, seconded by Vice President Anderson to excuse the absence of Councilmember O'Malley.

All members voted in favor. Motion passed.

RESOLUTION 9090-19 - A RESOLUTION to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law, appointing (1st appointee) to the Tree Advisory & Education Board for a term beginning immediately and ending December 31, 2020.

President O'Leary made a motion, seconded by Vice President Anderson to insert the name Laura Balliett into the blank of Resolution 9090-19.

All members voted in favor. Motion passed.

RESOLUTION 9091-19 - A RESOLUTION to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law, appointing (2nd appointee) to the Tree Advisory & Education Board for a term beginning immediately and ending December 31, 2021.

Councilmember Rader made a motion, seconded by Councilmember George to insert the name Marc Dann into the blank of Resolution 9091-19.

Councilmember Anderson suggested that there were many applicants who are arborists or who have similar expertise who may be a more natural fit.

Councilmember Rader replied that the City already has skilled arborists and that the Board could benefit from well rounded leaders.

On the motion:

Yeas: Bullock, George, Litten, Rader

Nays: Anderson, O'Leary

RESOLUTION 9092-19 - A RESOLUTION to take effect immediately provided it receives the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of Council, or otherwise to take effect and be in force after the earliest period allowed by law, appointing (3rd appointee) to the Tree Advisory & Education Board for a term beginning immediately and ending December 31, 2022.

Motion by Councilmember Anderson, seconded by President O'Leary to insert the name Linda Grandstaff into the blank in Resolution 9092-19.

The credentials of Ms. Grandstaff were discussed, including her service as President of Lakewood Garden Club.

Councilmember Litten expressed concern that the Committee has not selected any of the arborist candidates. The Committee expressed agreement that it would suggest to the Mayor some of the arborist candidates.

On the motion: All members voted in favor. Motion passed.

Committee of the Whole adjourned at 8:54pm.