

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

November 16, 2013

Mayor Joe LaCascia called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL – Sheandolen Dunn

Present: Mayor Joe LaCascia, Vice Mayor Mike Blethen, Councilor Trudy Block, Councilor Don Kimsey, Councilor Keith Prestage, City Attorney Thomas Cloud and City Manager Patricia Jackson

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Proposed Polk City Community Center

City Manager Pat Jackson presented information regarding an offer from Mr. Donald Bronson to build a Community Center in Polk City which would be constructed in the rear of the Polk City Government Center.

Mr. Donald Bronson spoke further on what he wanted to do for Polk City. In previous years he was not pleased with the direction City Management was headed, but is now comfortable and feels the time is right. His plan is to build a Community Center that will be approximately 5,000 square feet. This building will also serve as a storm shelter.

Councilor Block asked if this design is true to scale because it looks like the same size as the Water Plant?

City Manager Jackson stated Kathy Delp drew the design to give you some idea.

City Attorney Cloud suggested giving Mr. Bronson an uninterrupted amount of time to hear the overall idea before questions are asked.

Mayor LaCascia stated there are some things that need to be worked out in order for this plan to come to fruition. This project will be done in order prior to the Community Center being built.

Mr. Bronson continued his presentation stating that this building will seat approximately 250 people. Will not be a full kitchen, but will have commercial warmers. Food can be catered in because when you get into the idea of a full kitchen there would be a need for a fire walls and such. I like tall ceilings, so looking at least 14 feet. Since this building will serve as a storm shelter, it will need to be as strong as possible; so we need to reach out to the Red Cross to find out what criteria needs to be met in order to have such a facility.

Mr. Bronson stated he will meet with his builder and will schedule a date/time later for him to meet with the Council.

City Manager Jackson stated we did go over the maps and how this building would fit on the property.

Mayor LaCascia stated it is just important to know why we are here today and decide whether we want to move forward with Mr. Bronson's plans to build a Community Center.

City Attorney Cloud stated before an acquisition, if necessary, the Council needs to determine, if in fact, there is a need for a Community Center. What is the best way to lay it out on the site? Where is the best place to put it? A lot more issues other than ownership of land need to be discussed and worked out; such as ownership, parking, storm water and how that matches the stormwater for City Hall and access to public roads. Laying out the site can be done without acquiring additional property. These are all things that need to be worked out through a site plan. However for today, the Council needs to decide if this is something you wish to pursue further. The appropriate siting and construction of a Community Center at the best possible location in conjunction with Mr. Bronson.

Mr. Bronson stated he felt this would be something everyone would be proud of. Come in from Highway 33 and Broadway Boulevard. This building will look very nice.

Vice Mayor Blethen stated we need to get a consensus first.

Councilor Block stated she has a lot more questions. She questioned Mr. Bronson on persons in attendance of meetings regarding the proposed Community Center.

Mr. Bronson responded, Himself, Mayor LaCascia and City Manager Jackson.

Councilor Block stated she found out from her husband when he came home from the first visioning meeting. She also stated that she learned from the Mayor we had secrets which bothered her and she went to the City Manager and asked what secrets because we are an equal council. City Manager Jackson stated you know what's going on because you were the City Manager for one year for free. Remember those days, So I said ok.

Councilor Block stated since meetings have been going on since March and going down this whole path, she has a lot of questions. Making a motion and doing an agreement is not appropriate. This should have been brought to us before doing all of this. However, this is an incredible offer. We are blessed to have people like you (Mr. Bronson) in our community and I hope we can get through all of this. I am sorry that I am the one to have to say this.

Mayor LaCascia responded to Councilor Block as to why he was involved in the meeting. This was a direct request from Mr. Bronson. This came about after seeing him on a regular basis during breakfast time at Angel's on Sunday mornings. Mr. Bronson stated he was pleased with the direction Polk City was headed. This conversation further evolved into him asking me to sit down with himself and City Manager Patricia Jackson to formulate a plan as to what he could do for the City. Mr. Bronson did not want this information publicized until he was ready to disclose his involvement.

Councilor Kimsey stated as long as the Mayor and the City Manager met, there is no issue.

City Manager Jackson clarified further that this project came to Council as soon as Mr. Bronson said he was ready to proceed with building a Community Center in Polk City. I stated to him the next step was to take this to City Council. Until that time, there was nothing to discuss with Council.

Vice Mayor Blethen asked if the Council wanted to build a Community Center?

Councilor Kimsey asked how can we say no?

Councilor Block continued comments regarding her priorities being a library and a park in Polk City. If there is money going to be spent, I think we need to look at the City's vision and priorities. This Council needs to look at the cost of a Community Center.

Vice Mayor Blethen asked do we want a community centeryes or no!

Councilor Kimsey stated this is not coming out of our pocket.

City Attorney Cloud stated we are in a Council meeting right now discussing this for the first time. A lot of questions will need to be answered. This is not our money. There are no funds to build a Community Center or a Park either. There are just barely funds to keep the City going. But, we have an offer coming from a person to build a Community Center. Is there a need for a Community Center? If you decide there is not a need...then, no further questions. However, if there is a need, this is the appropriate forum for such questions.

Motion by Councilor Kimsey to determine if there is a need for a community center.

Vote: Mayor LaCascia-aye, Vice Mayor Blethen-aye, Councilor Kimsey-aye, Councilor Block-aye; Councilor Prestage - aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Councilor Kimsey that the Community Center be funded by Mr. Donald Bronson at no expense to the City, except for the donation of property.

Councilor Block asked if the motion could be amended to include ongoing cost?

City Attorney Cloud stated that there does need to be some consideration of how best to proceed. There are probably some issues that we do not know the answer to at this time, but can be worked out prior to construction beginning. City Manager Jackson has done quite a bit of homework on the site issue.

Vice Mayor Blethen stated we have a proposal from Mr. Bronson. We need to take action on his proposal. So do we proceed on the proposal? We can figure out the environmental issues later.

Councilor Prestage reiterated we agreed that Polk City does need a Community Center.

Mayor LaCascia asked for a very simple motion for today. The purpose of today's meeting was to get this project off the ground, bring it to the public's attention, and follow this path to fruition. Have Council simply accept consensus and schedule a workshop at a later date to iron out issues more in depth.

City Attorney Cloud suggested verbiage for a motion would be to authorize staff to proceed with Mr. Bronson to investigate the issues that would need to be resolved for the development of a Community Center in Polk City.

Councilor Block stated she has questions before that.

Councilor Kimsey withdrew his motion to accept Mr. Bronson's offer to build a Community Center in Polk City.

Motion by Mayor LaCascia to proceed with Mr. Bronson's proposal and to investigate the issues that would need to be resolved for the development of a community center; the motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Blethen.

Vote: Mayor LaCascia-aye, Vice Mayor Blethen-aye, Councilor Kimsey-aye, Councilor Block-nay; Councilor Prestage – aye

Motion carried 4/1.

Councilor Block stated I thought we had a motion to discuss this. We haven't discussed it and now we're going to make a motion. She desired more discussion on the issue.

City Attorney Cloud stated the initial motion was to accept an offer.

Councilor Block agreed that we have a fabulous offer; but would like to know some of the history behind this proposed project. The Mayor has had an advantage of knowing what the history is. What other options were considered? I don't have the benefit of knowing this history. Not sure how much money we are talking about. It would be good

to have some history prior to making these decisions. I'm guess making a decision on having the staff move forward with research.

Mayor LaCascia stated City Manager Jackson shared the history. A few meetings with Mr. Bronson in a broad amorphous way, simply that he wants to do something for Polk City, he wants to build a Community Center. Mr. Bronson knows exactly what he wants to do and the square footage. By rough calculations it comes out to approximately \$250,000.

City Manager Jackson mentioned other city property that was discussed for this project that did not prove to be large enough to be a community center. Therefore, we reverted back to this particular property. Our architect has donated his time to create this rendering. This was the only logical choice for a site. All of this is preliminary work.

Councilor Block stated this building is going to be a crown jewel of Polk City and according to what I see, we've hidden it. Can we discuss other options?

Councilor Kimsey responded why would you want to buy something when someone is giving something to you! That does not make any sense.

City Manager Jackson stated Mr. Bronson looked at other properties and they were entirely too much money. The City cannot afford to buy property. Mr. Bronson does not want to invest in other properties that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and turn around and build a Community Center. I realize there are a lot of other questions and we have a lot of investigating to do as well.

Councilor Block asked when do we talk about the need? When do I get to ask my questions?

City Attorney Cloud clarified there was a motion done earlier that determined that there was a need, that does not commit the City to build in any way shape or form or to approve construction of anything. Simply that there was a need for a Community Center.

Councilor Kimsey stated all five of us voted for it. A unanimous vote.

Mayor LaCascia stated we tried to accommodate very generous donation. We wanted to ask City Council. The next thing is going forth with the motion that City Attorney Cloud articulated. We can further discuss putting this item in a workshop because there is so much more to discuss. A very amorphous plan was brought to the Council....should Mr. Bronson go forward with his plan?

Sheandolen Dunn read motion again – “to proceed with Mr. Bronson’s proposal and to investigate the issues that would need to be resolved for the development of a community center”

Councilor Block stated, so at the workshop is when we will talk about the specifics of the Community Center.

City Attorney Cloud stated there are so many questions that we don't have the answer to at this point and won't have answers for quite a while.

Mayor said it's very simple that we do not have any specifics at this time.

Sheandolen Dunn read motion once again – “to proceed with Mr. Bronson’s proposal and to investigate the issues that would need to be resolved for the development of a community center”

Councilor Block asked for an amendment to the motion to say that we proceed with the investigation of the need and the whole idea of a community center.

Councilor Kimsey stated that she already voted to proceed.

Councilor Block shared her disappointment and “free” title in the newspaper article.

Mr. Bronson asked that the building be put to use only as a community center/storm shelter.

Dwight Kitchen stated he is pleased that this project has come about and the people in Polk City need a storm shelter.

Vice Mayor Blethen stated that we need to have a list of questions/concerns to be answered at the next best possible time.

City Manager Jackson asked if those questions/concerns can be put in writing.

Councilor Block asked if a progress report can be done regularly regarding this project.

City Attorney Cloud shared final comments regarding other cities building community centers. Some have brought cities together and some have not. It is really important to get it right. This is not a closed process. We want this to be successful

ADJOURNMENT- 9:55 am

Patricia Jackson, City Manager

Joe LaCascia, Mayor