



CITY OF NEWARK CITY COUNCIL

37101 Newark Boulevard, Newark, CA 94560-3796 • 510-578-4266 • E-mail: city.clerk@newark.org

City Administration Building
5:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers

Minutes

Thursday, October 8, 2015

A. ROLL CALL

Mayor Nagy called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Present were Council Members Hannon, Bucci, and Vice Mayor Collazo.

Council Member Freitas was noted absent.

B. Study Session to discuss a new Civic Center including a library, police facility, and city hall.

City Manager Becker stated that the city contracted with Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning for a Civic Center Feasibility Study. The scope does not commit the city to an actual construction project.

Assistant City Manager Grindall shared the project vision and the progress of the study.

Dawn Merkes, Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning provided an assessment of the current city administration building, police department, and library. The buildings did not meet ADA requirements, were functionally inefficient, and had aged and deteriorated building systems. Each of the buildings required additional space for current and projected needs. The city administration building is 18,140 square feet and needs 24,600. The police department is 17,500 sf and needs 25,000 sf. The library is 15,000 sf and needs 35,300 sf.

Ms. Merkes stated that renovation and expansion of the existing facilities would be as or more expensive than new construction. They reviewed existing buildings to lease or purchase but they did not meet the essential facilities requirements for a police facility.

Ms. Merkes stated that many locations were reviewed for a new Civic Center. She reviewed the top four sites. Site A Community Park, Site B Silliman Center, Site C Silliman Center east and Site H Existing Civic Center.

Site A Community Park

Council Member Bucci stated that he did not like the police department security fence located next to the park. He was also concerned with the removal of the bathrooms

Ms. Merkes stated that the public bathrooms were incorporated in the other facilities and would be accessible to the park.

Sites B and C Silliman Center

The City Council discussed the potential impacts to parking if multiple events were held on the fields, in the library, and at the Silliman Center.

Vice Mayor Collazo stated that they need an amphitheater for community gathering space.

Council Member Hannon suggested that this might be the time to improve the fire station at that location too.

In response to Council Member Bucci, Recreation and Community Services Director Zehnder stated that parking could be an issue, but they could find ways to mitigate it depending on how the amenities were placed.

Site H existing civic center

Council Member Bucci stated that he liked this location. He noted that children who currently use this location may not be able to access other locations. He suggested renovating the current library, saving the rotunda and building on and around it as the new city hall.

Mayor Nagy suggested exploring the idea of leaving the library at this location and moving the other buildings to other locations.

Ms. Merkes summarized community input from first community meeting and Newark days.

Nadja Adolf (notes on file with City Clerk) stated that she was concerned about moving the police department away from the only bridge that crosses the City. She stated that the Wall Street Journal was predicting another recession and how would the city afford this. She knew of at least one building for sale that might be good for city hall. She stated that an independent third party was needed to investigate building a new library.

Fred Arredando stated that he attended the community meeting and had the impression that there was a sense of urgency to get this completed. He stated that phasing in project development is a valuable tool. Constructing the buildings at the same time, could result in cost overruns and engineering changes. He stated that he was not against the project but suggested that they look at it carefully, phase it, and keep control of the costs.

Michael McClary (notes on file with City Clerk) suggested purchasing an existing building at the community meeting. The A proposal put a jail next to the playground; the B and C proposals involved a lot of traffic. Building near the Silliman Center could downsize the project, because of existing meeting rooms. He did not like maker spaces in the library that would disturb the patrons.

Margaret Lewis stated that city land should not be sold. She stated that she thought the library was architecturally significant and should be preserved. She suggested improvements for the library and the expansion of parking.

Sue Arredondo stated that she did not think that more space was needed at City Hall since it is closed every other Friday. She referenced the Fire Department contract with Alameda County several years after building a new fire station.

Lucir Schlickmann suggesting retrofitting the library and making it the new city hall. She thought that building a new library at the corner of Thornton Avenue and Newark Boulevard was a great idea. She stated that retrofitting city hall was not cost efficient.

Ricardo Corte stated that he was against relocating the library. He stated that City staff assumed that the library needed to be rebuilt and relocated at the community meeting. The library could be preserved intact and was well engineered. He requested an independent third party analysis to evaluate the cost of expanding and upgrading the library.

Paul Rea stated that Newark is lacking a sense of community for him. The Community Center could offer meeting space, yoga, and a café. He did not want new buildings nor the current property sold. He stated that the city needed to look at the low employee morale and the quality of people needed to deliver city services.

John Bradley stated that moving the library might make it inaccessible to people who currently use it in the neighborhood. He thought that new buildings would be more expensive and encouraged reuse and renovation.

Rob Sorensen stated that he liked the library at the corner of Thornton Avenue and Newark Boulevard. He thought relocating the other buildings might enhance the NewPark Mall area. He suggested a commercial space at the library that could provide wifi access such as a coffee shop.

Isabel Bronstein stated that she was worried about traffic when the Newark Ohlone Center was opened. She stated that traffic is gridlocked at rush hour. She was in favor of leaving the facilities at the current location.

Briana Pulliman stated that she liked the library at an easily visible location.

Noa Adin stated that she lives near city hall and that children use the civic center to play and learn. The elementary schools need to be renovated, teachers are not paid well. The library is used by people who do not have the resources to purchase books.

Elwood Ballard suggested building a new library at one of the local schools. He stated that they may qualify for state funding if it was at a school site and it would lower the expense to the citizenry. He supported the project and stated that selling the existing property would provide funds for the new site.

Mayor Nagy stated that the library was clearly valued in the community. He stated another meeting would be held in the future to discuss financing.

Council Member Hannon stated that the library needs to be expanded because it is too small for our needs. He would like to see the current library reused for another use. He wants to review the financial structures of renovating current buildings versus building new ones.

Council Member Bucci stated that he wanted to address the public comments. He would like to see city hall open five days a week. The move to Alameda County Fire Department was fiscally prudent and has been beneficial to the city. He stated he did not want to sell current city property. He disagreed with the categorization of low employee morale or low community pride.

D. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:31p.m. Mayor Nagy adjourned the special meeting.