

**WHITEFISH FUTURE CITY HALL STEERING COMMITTEE
THURSDAY JULY 18, 2012, 8:30 A.M. TO 10:00 A.M.
CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM
402 E. 2ND STREET**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Baccaro called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Committee members present were Phil Mitchell, John Muhlfeld, Toby Scott, Robert Blickenstaff, Ian Collins, Ross Anderson, George Gardner, Wendy Compton-Ring, Necile Lorang, Chuck Stearns and Vanice Woodbeck. In the audience were Turner Askew, Rhonda Fitzgerald, Aaron Wallace, John Kramer and Heidi from the Pilot.

Chairman Baccaro would like to move item #7 Public Comments to after #3 as we received an e-mail from Aaron Wallace from Montana Creative Architecture & Design with different ideas on the two sites. She also said that we will still have public comment again at the end.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

Chuck Stearns made a motion, 2nd by Necile Lorang to approve the minutes from the June 28, 2012 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

3. REVIEW/COMMENT ON COUNCIL MEETING LETTERS RECEIVED FROM CITIZENS CONCERNING CITY HALL LOCATIONS

John said there is overwhelming support for the current City Hall site.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Aaron Wallace from Montana Creative said after the last meeting Scott Elden talked to Aaron about doing some maps with some different ideas for the City Hall sites based on questions that the committee had asked. Scott provided a letter and drawings of his ideas for the committee to consider which Aaron presented and discussed.

John Kramer said to pay attention to public comment input. Overwhelmingly they support the current city hall site.

Turner Askew said the public does want the city hall to stay at this site. But he also feels if they do a parking lot with a city hall it would not be a parking lot. At previous committee meetings they did not discuss cost of buying property & parking lot issues.

Rhonda Fitzgerald said she operates a hotel on 5th & Spokane and when they are full finding another hotel for the guests is hard because they would really like to have one in the downtown area. Rhonda read the letter from Crandall Arambula the section of the

Baker site which stated. The estimate for a new City Hall on the Baker site is approximately \$5.1 million. That site, like the Bank site, is disconnected from the Central shopping street. The site might work if Central retail already extended two blocks south of where it exists today and the City Hall front door was on Central. This scenario is unlikely to occur because of the expense associated with acquiring the half block between the Baker site and Central and the cost associated with building four additional retail block faces on Central.

Rhonda said it has been suggested that the sloping site is an advantage because it could eliminate the ramp between parking floors. While this could save some money disconnected parking floors are not a good idea as parkers become frustrated when they have to exit and re-enter the building to find a parking space if one floor is full.

Someone suggested that it is an opportunity to extend retail south along Baker from Second. The reality is that Baker will never be a good pedestrian shopping street because the retail will be discontinuous and only on the east side of the street.

Rhonda stated the letter lists six reasons why the current location would be better and they are as follows:

- 1). A City Hall should be symbolic of a community's pride and history. A new building on the existing historic site has the potential to meet that need.
- 2.) It is a cost effective solution.
- 3.) The existing City Hall location supports the fragile downtown retail environment by attracting potential customers into the center of the downtown shopping area.
- 4.) Expanded City Hall parking can be shared with downtown businesses to fill the immediate need for more downtown parking.
- 5.) Government needs to lead by example-why should developers invest in the downtown if government is moving out of the downtown?
- 6.) Needed downtown public restrooms can be located in the new City Hall.

4. REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS COMMENTS AND QUESTION ON CITY HALL LOCATIONS

a. Any attributes or detriments to add to two locations (Current City Hall site, JCCS Building). John said the #1 reason for this committee is find a location then getting an architect would be #2.

Toby asked if we wanted to get further public input as he thought they could set up a booth at Farmers Market for a couple of weeks to do a poll of the citizens. Phil thought that would be a good idea or maybe a mailing. He has heard from a lot citizens saying they would like to see City Hall moved from the current location. He does do a lot of traveling and other towns do not have City Hall in the downtown area. If it was moved it would really help with downtown parking.

Necile said the cemetery committee sent out surveys' through the utility bills and received a good response from it. City Manager Stearns feels there has been a lot of public input and with a survey they would need to get a lot of information to go with it.

He does not feel the public will change as they will probably default to the current location because they are more comfortable with it. Phil stated he believes we need more response from the public because only 60-65 people had attended the open house. Phil stated he felt a survey through utility billing would be the best way to go.

Ian said he has been involved for several years with different projects downtown and they have had plenty of opportunities to be heard. He also feels we would be spending zero money for the current lot as we already own it so keeping it here would be the most cost effective.

Ross said a City Hall with a parking structure could work well and look nice but it would be a challenge. City Manager Stearns showed where if we built the City Hall at current location to keep on one floor would take up ½ block, two stories would be ¼ of lot and with 3 levels would be 1/7 of lot which would leave more space for parking structure.

Vanice said she was born and raised in Whitefish and she has seen all the changes and growth that has happened over the years. It would not be hard to imagine the downtown area growing and moving farther south and then City Hall would be in the downtown area. Toby feels it would be very important to have some retail in the City Hall along with parking. Ross said Crandall Arambula has spelled out their thoughts and does not feel they will change their opinion. Phil said with the 3 stories and a parking structure it could make the parking spaces around \$40,000 a space so he would like to see more costs with these locations.

Ian said Mayor Jenson had asked Grover & Company to do a site design for 2nd & Spokane which he passed out. He said not to spend more money on land and to have a mixed building with a parking structure. Try and get the best of what we own and not on land.

City Manager Stearns stated although we would spend money to purchase the Baker site we will receive money for the sale of the current City Hall site that will offset that expense.

Necile made a motion, seconded by Sherri to not narrow down to 1 site at this time and wait until they meet with Crandall Arambula before making a decision.

Ian is not in favor of this. John said the downtown Master Plan does not show this site as being for City Hall and it shows expanding retail from Railway to 3rd street. Necile said Crandall Arambula will be here to do a update to the Master Plan. City Manager Stearns said they will be doing an open house at the O'Shaughnessy and he feels it wouldn't hurt to wait. John asked if Kimley-Horn Consultants (parking structure consultants) and Crandall Arambula ever worked together before and they have and they could both provide helpful information.

The motion passed with a 7 yes and 4 no votes. Those voting in opposition were Ross, Toby, Robert and Ian.

5. SOIL/TRAFFIC ANALYSES OF LOCATION(S)

a. When/if to do soil and traffic analyses? After some discussion if we should do both sites or not Ross said it would be a couple of months before getting any results back.

Phil made a motion to add the Baker site for the soil and traffic analyses. Motion died for lack of a second.

John made a motion, 2nd by Phil to recommend to the Council to add JCCS site for the studies.

City Manager Stearns said this committee does not have the authority for recommending the use of funds.

John withdrew his motion.

Sherri made a motion, 2nd by Necile to remove soil/traffic analyses of locations from the agendas until after a final site has been decided. The motion passed with a 10 yes and 1 no vote with Phil voting in opposition.

Sherri did a straw vote of City Hall site location just to see where everybody might be sitting at this time.

A-Current site – 8 votes

B-JCCS site- 1 vote

C-Undecided- 2 votes

6. OTHER BUSINESS: None.

7. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Aaron Wallace of Montana Creative said the example that City Manager Stearns gave for a building on a lot from 1 to 3 stories would work well at both sites.

Rhonda Fitzgerald said bringing in Crandall Arambula will be very helpful. She also said to make sure when they start getting cost for a City Hall and parking structure that the costs are broken out because they did not do that with the 2nd & Spokane site and she feels maybe that is why it did not go through.

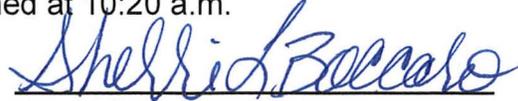
Turner Askew feels the Baker site would be cost effective because of the topography in the area.

8. SET DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING(S)

a. **Week of August 6th and/- or August 23 (Crandall Arambula here)**

John said just to wait until August 23 when they can meet with Crandall Arambula and Kimley-Horn Consultants.

9. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.


Sherri Baccaro
Sherri Baccaro, Chairman


Vanice Woodbeck
Vanice Woodbeck, Assistant City Clerk



WHITEFISH FUTURE CITY HALL STEERING COMMITTEE

**MEETING OF Wednesday, July 18, 2012 8:30 – 10:00 A.M.
CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM, 402 East 2nd Street**

- 1) CALL TO ORDER
- 2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING
- 3) REVIEW/COMMENT ON COUNCIL MEETING LETTERS RECEIVED FROM CITIZENS CONCERNING CITY HALL LOCATIONS
- 4) REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ON CITY HALL LOCATIONS
 - a) Any Attributes or Detriments to Add to two locations (Current City Hall site, JCCS Building).
 - b) Discuss/Decide to narrow to one site.
- 5) SOIL/TRAFFIC ANALYSES OF LOCATION(S)
 - a) When/if to do soil and traffic analyses?
- 6) OTHER BUSINESS
- 7) COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (limit 3 min. per person)
- 8) SET DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING(S)
 - a) Week of August 6th, 2012 and/or August 23rd, 2012 (Crandall Arambula here)
- 9) ADJOURNMENT