



CITY OF WAUWATOSA

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday, September 5, 2006

PRESENT: Alds. Birschel, Didier, Donegan, Herzog, Krill, Meaux, Sullivan, Treis -8

ALSO N. Welch, Community Development Dir.; A. Kesner, Interim City Admin./City Attorney;
PRESENT: Chief D. Redman, Deputy Chief W. Rice, Fire Dept.; C. Ledesma, City Clerk

Ald. Treis as Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Discussion of Fire Department Facility Study

Referring to the committee's last meeting in July, Chief Redman noted that the committee wanted to hear from the consultant about specific questions, which he summarized as follows: the basis for the site selection; the consultant's position on new construction vs. renovation/addition; the basis for program area sizes, particularly issues of parking, door size, need for a training room; the impact of continuing fire service during construction if staying at the current site; and the feasibility of moving functions to another site or eliminating them from fire department functions. Also, the Chief recalled that he had been asked to make of statement of his own recommendation.

Ald. Stepaniak reported that the Capital Improvements Committee, which he chairs, is a group of citizens that advise the city each year on the capital improvements plan. They had two long meetings and will have another in September, and they have discussed the fire station question at considerable length. They passed a motion unanimously that a replacement facility should be built at a site other than the current site but one that minimized the amount of residential property that would need to be acquired and that provided in its design for long-term use—perhaps 75+ years. A lot of policy considerations were discussed in trying to balance the issues of program needs with available properties and cost.

Chief Redman introduced John Sabinash of the Zimmerman Design Group, 7707 Harwood Avenue, who originally presented the results of the Fire Department Facility Study to the Common Council on May 16th. Mr. Sabinash commented on the questions that have been raised.

Mr. Sabinash said that Zimmerman Design did not select the sites for consideration but was asked to verify that the three sites to be focused on were adequate to house the program, which they were found to do with varying degrees of success. Any new sites would facilitate the turnkey approach—construction and move-in—which compresses the duration of construction appreciably. With any remodeling, construction is extended and there would be concerns about inflated costs.

The primary goal is a state-of-the-art facility that houses what currently exists on-site in programs and facilities and can adapt to transitions in future years. Any sequence of construction that compresses the schedule and reduces construction cost is highly desirable. There are specific challenges with the existing site. There clearly is not a lot of elbow room that facilitates construction while the site is in use. Options there are more limited

and the approach would have to be more creative. Mr. Sabinash said that from their perspective, the sites that had the best elbow room and best orientation of the program were highly desirable.

Ald. Krill asked Mr. Sabinash if he sees any possibility of remodeling the existing site as opposed to rebuilding. Can this building be remodeled in order to meet the needs of the department and the community for the next 65-75 years? Mr. Sabinash said that it is unlikely that the apparatus bays would adequately serve the needs; their heights and widths are not state-of-the-art and there is not enough access. The department would be unable to purchase equipment that fulfills their needs. Given the failures of existing structural components, there would be severe questions as to how to adequately remodel to be comparable to new construction. In addition, there are a lot of unknowns because of the age of the building, and it would be difficult to budget for those factors. With all of the issues there plus the extended construction duration, Mr. Sabinash said, it is his opinion that new construction will give substantially more value.

Ald. Krill returned to the question of whether there is any way to remodel the existing building so that the bays could be enlarged to accommodate needed equipment. Mr. Sabinash felt that more would be spent doing that than on new construction and said he wouldn't recommend it. The existing structural grid would preclude widening, and door and ceiling heights are also restricted. Lowering would be even more difficult to do. There are too many insurmountable structural issues.

Asked by Ald. Krill to rate the building structurally on a 1-10 scale, Mr. Sabinash said that some areas are 2 and some are 6. The building works quite well for office functions but is obsolete for a functioning fire department. That is not to say it couldn't be manipulated, but it would be cost prohibitive compared to other models. For apparatus it is structurally inadequate. With a series of additions to the old building, the exposure to unknowns will be significantly greater than in new construction and it would be a lot more labor intensive.

Ald. Didier asked if underground parking would be feasible if the entire building was razed without acquiring other properties. Could the structure be built up instead of out with administrative offices possibly higher than the second floor or even at another station? Mr. Sabinash said it would be feasible but probably wouldn't be recommended under apparatus bays because of drainage conditions and it is generally difficult to achieve a good design solution. Areas that don't have catch basins are likely to be adequate for underground parking, but that is only a portion of the project. The problem of stacking multiple functions on top of apparatus bays is one of structure involving the ability to provide a column-free environment. It would be costly to provide the type of structure that could bring all those building loads down on a column-free environment.

Ald. Meaux asked if any of the sites would be more adaptable to meet future changes in technology and equipment. Mr. Sabinash said that any site with more room attached would allow for more effective adaptation. He pointed out that in 24-hour-use buildings it is more difficult to vertically expand because there is no down-time. From a design perspective, he would try to achieve a building that would be adaptable to the greatest extent possible. There is significantly more design latitude in new construction than in remodeling.

Ald. Donegan asked if there has been any consideration of separating the functions of administration, maintenance, and fire operations. Could we run a very adequate fire department with administration separated from station #1? Chief Redman said that staff did consider those issues and looked at alternatives. He would strongly recommend keeping those functions that can be separated at least attached to a fire station. Right now, training, maintenance, administration, and fire prevention are all on site. The City Attorney has said that station #3 on the county grounds cannot be considered for relocated functions. At station #2 on Mayfair Road, the amount of available land and the need for acquiring adjacent properties would have to be considered.

There is enough room for the new apparatus bay that is being recommended there, but the study did not consider housing other functions. There is a strong operational advantage to having administration operate in conjunction with an active fire station because of the tasks performed by firefighters on a day-to-day basis.

Ald. Donegan next inquired about the basis of square footage recommendations. Using a 1998 Zimmerman study, he noted that administrative space seems to be going from 1,995 sq. ft. to 3,640 sq. ft. Mr. Sabinash said that his records show the existing building has approximately 2,823 sq. ft. allocated to administration, which makes the increase about 800 sq. ft. Rooms are sized to serve the functional requirements of the use with some space for future expansion. Maintenance bay space goes from 2,365 sq. ft. to 4,300 sq. ft. They have tried to provide enough work space around vehicle lifts, some space for indoor parking, plus space for parts and support for the apparatus bay. The current bays are substantially undersized and inadequate. Most of the growth is largely attached to the maintenance bay to allow for additional support vehicles (functional vehicular apparatus, which is not the same as cars and trucks). They are also allowing for a fourth bay and space for getting at the sides of vehicles, for doors to open for loading and unloading equipment, and 8-10 ft. at the back of the bay.

Ald. Donegan asked about an increase in firefighter staff operations space from 2,865 to 3,390 feet and an increase in parking spaces. Mr. Sabinash said that the major difference is sleeping rooms and sleeping configuration. Firefighters are found to be healthier when using enclosed sleeping rooms. There are also mandatory accessibility issues. Parking spaces are planned to allow two shifts to park at one time, but it will also accommodate other fire and police vehicles plus additional citizen parking on site. Chief Redman said that each shift change involves 11-12 vehicles, plus there are 9 additional staff vehicles. There are now 31 spaces on the north side of the building and 11 on the south side where staff parks, although an apparatus bay there would displace that staff parking.

Regarding shift changes, Deputy Chief Rice indicated that the shift change for 24-hour people is about a 20-minute period, but he said that it is not automatically all at one time. Each shift changes at 8 a.m., so spaces may open at 8:30 but there are clerical, maintenance, light duty staff, and firefighters in training plus any visitors to the station who rely on those 12 vacated spaces. That space is also used for other functions such as hose testing and ladder maintenance, and a variety of training takes place there. He said that he would tend to err on the side of additional spaces.

If administrative or training functions were relocated, Ald. Meaux asked, could the square footage requirements for the remaining functions be met at any of the identified sites without acquiring any residential property? Mr. Sabinash said that there would be substantially more latitude in a new construction scenario. In any of the remodeling scenarios, there is a fundamental problem with the functions that simply don't fit because of floor-to-floor heights, for example. Administration would likely fit best because as an office function it tends to be the most flexible. To use the existing building, you would probably need to get rid of vehicle maintenance. If looking at decreasing requirements at a site, it would probably be administration.

Ald. Meaux then asked what would fit and what would not if the building were razed. Mr. Sabinash said that the site clearly has more room if size is changed, but that doesn't solve fundamental issues such as staging, depth of the site, and physical constraints. It would be a question of which function lends itself best to a functional operation of the department by migrating off site. He agreed that it would probably be best for any relocated function to be attached to an operating building with fire functions. The existing and the 68th Street sites would both still have significant limitations in terms of vehicle operations in the thoroughfare. Parking

would be eliminated to allow for vehicle maneuvers in the street, and additional functional elements around the building would be affected. Having fewer programs on a site would tend to reduce the impact.

Ald. Herzog asked what “elbow room” entails in terms of remodeling or reconstruction at the existing site. Mr. Sabinash said that one factor is room for the contractor to stage construction. He needs significant space and it helps to have more land available. Another problematic issue is the ability to fit all the program elements on site without compromising them such as having aprons to pull equipment out and do training and maintenance. That is difficult on the existing site because of bay depth. They could improvise and overcome these problems, but they are trying to eliminate as many compromises as possible, acknowledging that no site is perfect. Sites that provide enough room to construct and move around have that elbow room. In remodeling, provisions would have to be made for apparatus, perhaps some temporary accommodation or split of apparatus within existing infrastructure. Firefighters are highly adaptable, but they would try to move them as few times as possible. This is a topic that has the most uncertainty because it is very complex. Ensuring that the contractor operates so that delivery of services is not impacted is another consideration. All of those uncertainties tend to make it more difficult and more costly.

Ald. Birschel said that he is specifically interested in the Sts. Helen and Constantine church site at Garfield and Wauwatosa Avenues, which he sees as more comparable than a long, thin lot although it is 2,000 sq. ft. less in size. Mr. Sabinash indicated that that site was not included in the study but that possibility could be investigated.

Mr. Sabinash confirmed a summary statement by Ald. Meaux that removing the administrative program from one of the sites would reduce space requirements and still accommodate other program needs. He added that equipment maintenance can’t go anywhere else from the standpoint of controlling the size of a building; but when factoring in parking, it might be worth considering whether relocating the administrative function would have an equal site impact. Ald. Meaux then asked if there would be enough space at any of the sites without using adjacent residential property if one of the programs were removed. Mr. Sabinash said that is something he would have to look at on a plan but he would tend to see relocation of administrative as not as effective as vehicle maintenance. In part, requirements are driven by the apron and the depth and size of the bay.

Mr. Sabinash confirmed that 50 ft. is used as the ideal apron size because it addresses about 90% of the vehicles. Asked by Ald. Donegan if the 30 ft. apron available on the existing site is adequate but has negative consequences, he said that if adequate is defined by saying most of the vehicles can vacate the bay, it is inadequate because they can’t do that without going into the right-of-way. Parking would need to be removed because of the turning radii. Even a 50 ft. apron is not turnable on the existing site. On Mower Court, parking wouldn’t conflict with emergency response or maintenance functions on the apron.

Moved by Ald. Meaux, seconded by Ald. Krill that this committee finds that it is in the best interest of the community and the firefighting program for the city to build new facilities –

Ald. Herzog clarified an understanding that this motion does not affect the study’s recommendation regarding the bays at station #2.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 8

Brian Craite, 1457 Underwood Avenue, asked if there is any structural reason that a building on the existing site cannot have a basement that could be used for training and administration or that the building could have three floors for non-critical activities. Mr. Sabinash said that is a possibility. Mr. Craite then reported on his observations on parking between 7:21 and 8:21 a.m. on a weekday. He said that at no time was the main area for 30 cars full during that shift-change period.

Sally Springer, 7435 Harwood Avenue, asked if the current site could be set up so that vehicles enter on one side and exit on the other. Perhaps the building could be reoriented on the site to do that. Mr. Sabinash indicated that he believes that would be difficult to achieve. Ms. Springer asked if the other two stations have been considered for maintenance operations. Mr. Sabinash said that station #2 was looked at in terms of apparatus. Maintenance is currently provided only at station #1. In answer to a further question, he indicated that he has not had any discussions on what might happen to the station #1 land.

Linda Craite, owner of Cody and Company, 1457 Underwood Avenue, asked about the source of the \$450,000 estimate for acquisition costs at the current site. Mr. Sabinash said that appraised or assessed value was used, which is not a reflection of what actual costs might be. Only the cost of the property was addressed and not any projected increase in revenue or other costs attached to the property.

Richard Peeples, 11132 W. Ruby Avenue, formerly owner of property at the corner of Mower Court and Harwood Avenue for 30 years, stated his belief that the existing building could be used for administration and be attached to a new building if the building to the south was acquired.

The Chair stated that discussion would continue at the September 12th meeting, possibly with discussion of the Wauwatosa Avenue church site and any other questions that are brought from the committee or the community. Chief Redman indicated that he would not be available for that meeting but other staff will attend.

Conditional Use – Approximately 6501 W. Lloyd Street

The committee reviewed a request by Edward Polito of MI-Tech Services, agent for AT & T, for a Conditional Use in the Parks and Open Space District at approximately 6501 W. Lloyd Street for a telephone fiber conversion cabinet. The Plan Commission unanimously recommended approval. Ms. Welch reported that this request is supported by the Washington Highlands Association. She clarified that a previously approved cabinet is already in place in this area. This request is for a second cabinet adjacent to the first. An existing cabinet in the right-of-way that has been a matter of some concern would be removed after the requested cabinet is in place.

Moved by Ald. Krill, seconded by Ald. Meaux to recommend approval
of the Conditional Use –

Ms. Didier inquired about landscape screening, which Mr. Polito said was requested very specifically by the Washington Highlands Association and will be planted per their recommendations.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 8

Land Combination – 2979 N. Mayfair Road

The committee reviewed a request by AP Properties, LLC and VJS Development Group for a Land Combination in the AA Commercial District at 2979 N. Mayfair Road. The Plan Commission unanimously recommended approval.

Ald. Herzog reported that he has met with the developer and has no objection to this request regarding property in his district. He indicated that the developers are considering some type of office building on this site. In response questions regarding the setback, Ms. Welch said that issue will come before this committee separately at a later date.

Moved by Ald. Herzog, seconded by Ald. Birschel to recommend approval of the Land Combination. Ayes: 5

Direct Legislation Petition

Ms. Ledesma reported that a petition has been filed in support of the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. She has certified that the petition meets statutory requirements for submission to the Common Council. Per Wisconsin Statutes 9.20(4), the Common Council can either adopt the resolution, without alteration, or submit it to the electors at the next general election on November 7. The wording of the proposed resolution is: "The United States should now begin withdrawing troops from Iraq, and continue steady withdrawals until all our troops are home." Ms. Ledesma recommended placing this on the November 7 ballot as a referendum question.

Mr. Kesner clarified that an earlier request to act on this issue was not accompanied by a petition and was placed on file by the Common Council. This petition can be brought forward as a separate action.

Moved by Ald. Sullivan, seconded by Ald. Donegan to recommend to Council that a referendum question be placed on the November 7 ballot –

Ald. Krill commented on the varying opinions on this issue but noted that the petition has sufficient signatures to be placed on the ballot to allow the people of Wauwatosa to decide the issue for themselves.

In response to questions, Ms. Ledesma explained that direct legislation requires the collection of signatures of 15% of the votes cast in the last gubernatorial election. In this case, they needed 3,119 signatures and over 3,800 signatures were certified. The extra cost is negligible because most costs are incorporated in the general election on that date. There would be a cost of perhaps a few hundred dollars for programming.

Mr. Kesner said that Wisconsin Statutes make it quite clear that, if the required signatures are certified, the Common Council is required to either adopt the language or place it on the ballot as a referendum. To do otherwise would provide standing to file a lawsuit. Councils that have opposed direct legislation requests elsewhere, usually as an ordinance matter about things happening in the city rather than an opinion question, have been directed to place the matter on the ballot and to pay damages. The question of whether this is an appropriate topic for direct legislation has been debated among city attorneys around the state. Only one city attorney opined that it might not be appropriate, but the Common Council there put it on the ballot anyway. The resolution drafted for Common Council approval includes reference to the State Statute requirements.

Vote on the motion, Ayes: 8

Land Division – Southeast Corner of Mayfair and Watertown Plank Roads

The committee reviewed a request by William Drew, Milwaukee County Research Park Corporation, for a Land Division in the Research Park Planned Development District at the southeast corner of N. Mayfair Road and Watertown Plank Road. The Plan Commission unanimously recommended approval. Ms. Welch reported that the applicants would like to create a parcel for a proposed new hotel. It meets all the applicable zoning requirements.

Ms. Welch noted that in the future the city will need to acquire a 30-ft. right-of-way here for future expansion of Watertown Plank Road to serve the occupants of the Research Park and the Medical Center and any future development that may occur on county lands. Guy Mascari, Director of Development, Milwaukee County Research Park Corporation, said that they no longer have any control over this site and neither does the County. In their legal counsel's opinion, the matter of future right-of-way would have to be raised with the future property owner, who has this under contract and has the right to acquire what was described in the offer to purchase.

Mr. Kesner said that it is likely that the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) of this area will require the widening of Watertown Plank Road. Research Park attorneys and the County Corporation Counsel feel that a sales contract has been made and they are committed to moving forward. Had the city known of this timing, they could have requested exclusion of that area from the sale. Putting this on hold now would have a fairly significant impact on the transaction. As it stands, the Research Park and the County will benefit from the sale of the land, and the city would be required to acquire the needed land from the new owner. The State will have the ability to buy whatever land is needed for any Mayfair Road changes. The TIA has yet been formalized enough to say that the 30 feet is definitely needed; defining the engineering need is still several months ahead. The city does plan to negotiate with other parties to help provide the needed funds in the future.

Asked about the contract, Mr. Mascari indicated that the buyer has waived all contingencies. They have been under contract since November, but some changes in the hotel brand have delayed the transaction. The Research Park board reaffirmed its decision of last year and voted to allow the change in July. With that approval and financing in place, the only way to transfer the land is through a CSM (certified survey map). Removing 30 feet in the future would have some aesthetic impact on the 100-ft. landscaping setback contained in the design guidelines but would not require relocation of the hotel or parking. Mr. Kesner added that the Research Park's design review board would not declare the building to be non-conforming if a 30 ft. section is removed

Moved by Ald. Herzog, seconded by Ald. Sullivan to recommend approval of the Land Division. Ayes: 8

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

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Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin