

**CITY OF WINTER PARK  
COMMISSION WORK SESSION  
PLANNING THE POSSIBILITIES  
June 16, 2008**

The work session meeting of the Civic Venues Planning the Possibilities was called to order by Mayor David Strong at 12:00 p.m. in Commission Chambers, 401 Park Avenue South, Winter Park, Florida.

Present:

Mayor David Strong  
Commissioner Margie Bridges  
Commissioner Phil Anderson  
Commissioner Beth Dillaha  
Commission Karen Diebel (Departed at 1:00 p.m.)  
City Manager Randy Knight  
Other staff members

Present from ZHA

President of ZHA, Rick Mellin  
Myra Monreal  
Santiago Fernandez

Rick Mellin, President of ZHA stated that this meeting was to discuss individual site options, define what the potential revenues are and the potential cost to achieve those revenues, site option combinations and to receive Commission direction and feedback.

Mr. Mellin gave a brief overview of the individual site options of the Swoope Avenue Water Plant property, Winter Park Library, the Post Office and Central Park expansion, the State Office Building, City Hall, and New York Avenue.

Mayor Strong stated that presently they have a legal obligation this year and next year to apply for grants for the entire post office site. He expressed his preference to have the retail and the arrowhead in the balance of the park because they can build it without having to relocate the existing post office. He advocated a single story building with surface parking. Commissioner Bridges' first choice was to be all park space; her second choice was leaving the post office (retail) on-site.

Commissioner Anderson commented that he thought the Mayor's suggestion may be a great start. However, in terms of long term thinking he believed it could be two stories and they could dedicate parking underground. He suggested the 40,000 square feet could become City Hall, a new library, commercial or other civic venues. He had a strong preference that whatever goes there would be some type of public space. He stated that the plan 'b' solution was a good starting point that has many options. There was a consensus that south of that park area should remain park. Commissioner Anderson and Mayor Strong commented that they would be open to putting underground parking there. Commissioner Anderson stated that would be more for employee type parking rather than discretionary parking. Mayor Strong reiterated that they have to apply for plan 'a' but they can move to plan 'b', however the potential for development for some of the arrowhead would remain.

Commissioner Dillaha stated that her choices were to go all green or have the retail portion of the post office in the arrowhead as well. Mayor Strong asked if she would be comfortable with

possibly having a building on arrowhead. She stated it depends because she did not want to see this as a commercial use but rather for civic use.

Commissioner Bridges stated she was leaning toward a commercial location because she did not see the library moving there and that they should renovate City Hall and leave it at its present location. She stated that she was comfortable with plan 'a' being our first choice; plan 'b' as the second choice; and was not opposed to leaving the Post Office retail site there. She stated when it comes to the development she was in favor of potential offices or commercial space being there but on a smaller scale.

Mr. Mellin projected the investment to move the post office (retail and distribution costs) was \$4 million. Mayor Strong stated that they need to speak with the post office and try to determine whether or not they will split the facilities and find out which alternatives that ZHA suggested would be acceptable to them. He believed that they should move it to City owned land. Mr. Mellin commented that is possible and there are two properties that would be of interest to developers; the Swoope property and the Blake Avenue Storage Yard property. He stated that they need to look at the reality of each of these sites and the ability to put it together or the desirability for the post office to allow it.

Commissioner Diebel believed that moving City Hall or the Post Office to the State Office site was very acceptable. Commissioner Dillaha stated she wanted City Hall to stay at its present location because if they build a parking structure it could be used on weekends for public parking. Commissioner Bridges agreed that parking would be utilized and traditional downtowns have their City Hall presence in the downtown core. She commented that she was in favor of perhaps having the Post Office move in its entirety or in pieces to the State Office site however, City Hall should remain where it is.

Commissioner Anderson agreed that City Hall should remain but if it were to move, it could be redeveloped at the north end of Central Park or at the State Office site. There was consensus that this was not an important site for municipality facilities. Mayor Strong suggested they either sell or release the bulk of that property to accomplish other things they want to do in the City.

Mr. Mellin discussed the parking for the Winter Park Library. Mayor Strong commented that it is not financially feasible to relocate the library. However, he believed they should expand the library on its current site and deal with the parking next door. He stated if they expand the parking, the hotel (Langford) can use that parking in the evenings. Planning Director Jeff Briggs answered questions regarding the hotel. Mr. Mellin suggested putting together a parking study for the two uses. Mayor Strong commented that they need to discuss this with the Langford about expanding the parking towards the library at either the City's expense or some shared expense. Mayor Strong asked Economic Development Director Chip Weston to speak with the Langford hotel about expanding the garage and maybe sharing the cost. There was a consensus that it should not be any higher than what the hotel was proposing and the alternative was to expand to the east and/or to underground.

Commissioner Diebel left at 1:00 p.m.

Mayor Strong commented that they should either sell or swap the Swoope property. Commissioner Bridges was of the opinion that they should be using land leases wherever possible instead of selling municipal property. Commissioner Anderson agreed but he believed

they should do a lease hold with the State Office property. Commissioner Bridges stated that this was a unique and desirable property either for office or residential use.

Commissioner Anderson also commented about adding a water feature to the golf course which could double as the retention and that the buyer could contribute toward the creation of that. Commissioner Bridges agreed that the water feature is desirable but was not sure that the developer would have more lot coverage for that. She believed they should build something that is unique and special to Winter Park which would be appropriate in mass and scale. She stated that they were providing the offsite retention and water feature that enables that.

There was further discussion regarding the City Hall property. Commissioner Bridges believed that the building has architectural value, it should be renovated and it is of historic significance. There was a consensus that City Hall remains and they maintain setbacks on Park Avenue. Mayor Strong suggested that eventually they can see what the community thinks about City Hall and have their input. Commissioner Anderson reiterated that if they were to rebuild City Hall it should be at the north end of the park and it's an option they should keep open. He added that if they moved it to a commercial use they should not pursue C-2 zoning densities because it was not appropriate. Mr. Mellin also spoke about potential revenue versus the cost of potential revenue for each of the properties.

Commissioner Bridges commented that the State Office site was a valuable piece of property and it was important to preserve the green space there. Commissioner Anderson agreed and commented that he would like a negotiated lease arrangement that matches with the bond issue costs and not sell the land but rather lease it long term. Mayor Strong commented that would be his preference as well. He stated the first step was to determine its value and convert that into a lease hold if there is a market for that.

Mr. Mellin explained the first objectives would be to put together two or three alternatives of how much things will cost considering the variable configurations that they put in; they also need to speak with the post office and see what they are amenable to and look at other properties that the City does not own.

Mayor Strong stated they have an obligation to preserve their rights to the post office in February 2010 to break ground. He stated they need to come to a conclusion by the end of this year and if the post office does object to every possibility, the only alternative is to build on the State Office site or leave the Post Office where it is. He added that this solution would not work if they receive the grant without the consent of the seller but did not believe they would receive the grant and that they may relieve the City of this after August.

Commissioner Anderson suggested that plan 'a' could be placing the retail Post Office where the old fire station was located. Mayor Strong and Commissioner Bridges believed that was a reasonable approach. Mayor Strong suggested they return on July 14 at 12:00 p.m. for another work session with ZHA. There was consensus for that date.

#### Other Issues:

1. City Manager Knight asked to schedule another meeting with the Commission regarding the hearing of the Fire Union impasse. He commented that this was for the Fire Union and the City Manager to present its case and for the City Commission to rule on what the contract would be. The meeting was tentatively scheduled for July 7 at 5:00 p.m.

2. Mayor Strong commented that many people were not happy with the proposed design of the Ninth Grade Center and asked what their course of action should be. Mr. Mellin suggested they approach them with another solution or suggest that their three story alternative does not meet their zoning and it will not be done.

Commissioner Bridges expressed that the Virginia Heights Neighborhood Association contacted her and she attended two meetings that the School Board had with the residents and adjacent neighborhood. She stated she also spoke with Mr. Mellin about what he would recommend and she was meeting with Mr. Attaway about having other viable options regarding the bus loop/drop off. She explained that neighbors and others have expressed serious concern about the mass of the building and the undesirability of the parent drop off on a substandard City street. She expressed that she would welcome any assistance on how the Commission would like to direct them. Mr. Knight explained that they would be willing to give them all the staff assistance they need because timing is of the essence. Mayor Strong suggested they place this under New Business to recommend a way to proceed. Commissioner Bridges suggested that Architect Maria Perez draw some illustrations and alternatives and utilize some of the input from Mr. Mellin. She stated she would present something for next Monday's meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:11 p.m.



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City Clerk Cynthia Bonham