

**CITY OF WINTER PARK
COMMISSION WORK SESSION
PLANNING THE POSSIBILITIES
July 14, 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 arrived (12:31 p.m.)
City Manager Randy Knight
Other staff members

Present from ZHA

ZHA President Rick Mellin
Myra Monreal
Santiago Fernandez

Rick Mellin, President of ZHA, gave a brief overview of the issues discussed at the June 16 workshop. He spoke about site location options of the Post Office, project cost and land value versus accessibility and opportunity, plan alternatives and the next steps. Mr. Mellin answered questions.

Dan Bellows, 533 West New England Avenue, addressed other alternatives for both retail and distribution sites (on his properties). Mr. Mellin commented that they have spoken with Mr. Bellows about this matter.

Mayor Strong addressed his thoughts on the best financial alternative for the Post Office and his preference for alternatives 'A' and 'B' which would be revenue neutral to the City or see if they can find property from Mr. Bellows. The Plan Alternatives are attached at the end of the minutes. He stated that for the moment they have to assume that the existing Post Office site will be a park because: 1) they have to apply for the grant; and 2) in order to raise \$2 million they have to use that for park acquisition at least with the majority of that land, if not all of it. He stated they need to resolve that issue as quickly as they can. He also commented that when one of the bonds pays off in 2015 that should be the time to reinvest into a new bond to address City Hall. He stated it would not be any additional burden on taxpayers as they continue a financial commitment that already exists.

Commissioner Bridges agreed and commented that the opportunities in front of them are exciting and interesting but they need to resolve the Post Office. She also commented that Mr. Bellows presented other alternatives and they should be fully explored and taken into consideration.

Commissioner Dillaha agreed that the Post Office needs to be taken care of first and suggested putting together a timeline of what needs to be done. She commented that there is a meeting in August with the Post Office to determine how far the distribution portion can be from the retail section and that will drive the different properties they can look at as options for a distribution center. Mayor Strong recommended they find out what the Post Office will do, choose one of

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the alternatives and let the public know what the Commission's intentions are. Commissioner Anderson commented that he would like to work with Mr. Mellin on the Alternative Plans format.

Commissioner Diebel thought 'C' was a good alternative and did not see the downside of moving the Post Office and City Hall to a site that is outside of the Park Avenue corridor. She believed it would help our traffic and parking and wanted to see what the efficiency is of building that site in one project in multiple stages. She also thought that this site would have a greater value in selling, retailing and tax revenue. Mayor Strong agreed that it is more efficient and it creates more value and believed they need to figure out what our citizens think. City Manager Knight suggested that this could be included on the citizen survey. Mayor Strong agreed.

Commissioner Dillaha suggested putting together a pros and cons format that would be like a town meeting. She commented that she liked alternative 'A' or 'B' and the fundamental concept of a town square and having the civic venues downtown creates the traditional village feel. She expressed that historically this has been what the City has done and they would be changing that whole concept by moving those civic venues to another site. She did not agree with doing this on the survey. Commissioner Bridges believed they needed to have good input from citizens and did not think the survey questionnaire was the best way right now.

Commissioner Anderson stated that City Hall should remain downtown. He believed it was a town planning concept to have it around the core of an old New England Midwestern style setting. There was further discussion on the plan alternatives and the library to reserve parking capacity for future expansion.

Mayor Strong suggested that Mr. Mellin meet with Commissioner Anderson and outline some of these alternatives and meet with Mr. Bellows to obtain information on some of his sites. Mr. Mellin replied that Mr. Bellows is already working on that and commented that Michael O'Shawnessey had a similar offer. Mayor Strong added that he would like to meet with him before the Post Office meeting. Mr. Mellin agreed. He also suggested making this a ballot question of plan 'A' and plan 'B' that is non-binding and have a vote. Commissioner Dillaha suggested having a town meeting and show visuals and data, let everyone ask questions and have a high level of participation. Mayor Strong agreed and commented that will decide if they need to take a vote.



City Clerk Cynthia Bonham