

**CITY OF WINTER PARK
CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES
JULY 30, 2007**

The meeting of the Winter Park City Commission was called to order by Mayor David Strong at 1:05 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, 401 Park Avenue South, Winter Park, Florida.

Members present:

Mayor David Strong
Commissioner John Eckbert
Commissioner Douglas Metcalf
Commissioner Margie Bridges
Commissioner Karen Diebel (arrived 1:16 pm)

Also present:

City Manager James Williams
City Clerk Cynthia Bonham

Commissioner Metcalf spoke about the proposal from Trans Systems concerning the Commuter Rail Stop Design Study RFQ. He stated there were five proposals submitted for this RFQ and it was unanimous that Trans Systems was ranked the best. He addressed the presentation from Trans Systems on July 25 concerning their proposal for the design study and spoke about them being very knowledgeable about an urban city, mixed use and commuter rail. He addressed their strong relationship with CSX and Amtrak and that they recently provided transportation and traffic consulting on several projects associated with the restoration of Kansas City's historic Union Station. He stated they have a clear idea of what the City wants and needs to construct a commuter rail station. He answered questions and stated they do not have a cost estimate on the construction at this time.

Mayor Strong asked if DOT had a time constraint for this project. Planning Director Jeff Briggs explained that DOT is supposed to have a platform design with 30% completed in September. He stated they want the ideas of the Commission in two weeks so they can begin working on the contract to bring them on board and to interface them with DOT. Upon a suggestion by Mayor Strong to have a contract ready for review and approval at the next meeting, a consensus was reached. City Manager Williams stated they would bring a contract for approval at the next meeting. Commissioner Metcalf stressed the need to move this forward as quickly as possible to preserve Congressman Mica's funds and to have less resistance from DOT. He estimated the cost to be around \$350,000 and stated they need to ensure this is part of the 10% contribution the City is making.

Mayor Strong spoke about the need to discuss venues. He addressed what he came up with as a baseline (and from a worse case scenario) if the post office is not accommodating to anything but what they agreed to, i.e., mainly moving to Morse and Denning. He stated if they are not receptive to other alternatives, his approach would be to move the post office to the 5 acre site at Morse/Denning. He stated if we stay with what is currently in the comprehensive plan, we could have roughly 100,000 feet on that site. He stated the post office would use up approximately 22,000 feet of the site, City Hall could be there (use about 50,000 feet), and the remaining property could be used for other uses. He stated that would require about 400 parking spaces (117,000 feet of surface parking). Mayor Strong further elaborated on his ideas. He stated this would be the lowest base alternative where we have a need to build a post office for \$5 million and

a City Hall for \$10 million. He suggested financial alternatives to include selling the current City Hall site (about \$10 million), will get a \$1.5 million grant from the State (would have \$2.5 million in value if we retain the north portion of the post office site), the excess footage on the Morse/Denning site is valued at \$2-\$2.5 million, and could sell the University water treatment plant for about \$1 million. He stated this would be used to build the post office and City Hall on this site. He stated this is not the most desirable alternative but it works financially and from a timing standpoint.

Commissioner Eckbert thought they should not assume that the State grant would come through. He stated that his analysis was much less financially orientated than what Mayor Strong's solutions were and looked at it from a wider perspective, i.e, what the opportunities were, what the constraints are and where it can go from here. He also believed it was important to seek national guidance from professional planning experts in order to bring analysis and tools to assist the Commission to make those decisions.

Commissioner Eckbert presented two maps of the Central Business District. He spoke about the Enzian site, executing the Parks master plan with underground parking and if it is feasible and economic; or to look at other locations to concentrate all of the parking. He spoke about the south half of the current post office site in the Central Park expansion; considered the post office splitting the facility between sorting and retail; having alternatives of the mixed use component such as office or residential along with the post office; relocating City Hall outside of the Central Business District leaving only the core functions; and have Commission venues downtown. He spoke about his suggestions for the location of the Enzian; purchasing the property adjacent to the Public Safety Complex and construct City Hall at this location; or the possibility of a non-retail aspect of City Hall at the Howell Branch Road area. He also talked about right-of-ways, creating greater setbacks from the streets and having structures on buildings appear less obtrusive. He encouraged the consideration for alternate right-of-way structures to optimize the redevelopment opportunities and to improve design. He believed the library should not be moved and if improvements are needed, this should be done on site and to sell the State Office Building to the highest bidder.

Commissioner Bridges stated her approach was of a citizen vision based on strategic planning and the citizen survey concerns. She believed there were five important goals: pay for the post office; protect the brand/identity of Winter Park; create parking for future and current needs; create and protect economic viability and stability for the future; and create added value for current Winter Park locations. She outlined the strategies on how to get there such as taking the money from the sale of the old water treatment plant on University Boulevard, using City owned land at the State Office Building and partner where it's appropriate for redevelopment combinations, and to sell the City Hall site. She believed City Hall at the Morse/Denning has good possibilities and the post office should share this space. She envisioned 3-4 story buildings, the parking requirement could be met and there could be green space. She believed the library should stay where it is and perhaps the City could afford them a better opportunity for a better design and utilization for the space they already have. She stated she would not like to see the "arrowhead" property (north half of the post office property) be used for any building but be used for green space. She also spoke about structured parking, utilizing the water treatment space by moving the pro shop from the golf course, and replace it with a restaurant.

Commissioner Bridges disagreed with Commissioner Eckbert about locating the Enzian to the Knowles Avenue parking area. She stated she would like to see that area closed for two way traffic and do more of a dexterized surface parking area, add a few trees and make that block just for parking. She also believed that the Enzian or some other theater element deserves to be here on the City Hall site; restaurants and a cultural venue would be very significant to keeping the economic viability of downtown historic Winter Park for the future. She suggested considering making New York Avenue south from Canton Avenue to Lyman/Fairbanks Avenue and Park Avenue north from Fairbanks to Canton Avenue one way and to create wider walkways for pedestrians and have angle parking along the park edges. She believed they must do what they can to preserve the downtown core and maintain the historic aspect.

Commissioner Metcalf thought the perfect situation would be if the post office agrees to split the distribution. He explained there would be a choice of two places for the retail at the arrowhead and where the old fire station was located. He stated he was not in favor of using the 5 acres of the State Office Building for the post office. He commented that the ideal spot for City Hall should be downtown and believed they should obtain the Samuel Lawrence Center. He spoke about structured parking and agreed with Commissioner Eckbert that the Enzian should be on Knowles Avenue. He stated it would enhance the City by placing retail on Park Avenue which would increase the value of the other buildings on the street. Commissioner Metcalf also suggested purchasing the Bargain Box property on N. Virginia Avenue (across from Public Safety Complex) and moving City Hall to that location, and having retail at Park Avenue/Lyman and creating parking. He was also in support of the library staying where it is.

Commissioner Diebel stated it made sense to consider City Hall and the post office together and to locate employees at the Howell Branch site. She stated this should be explored and that she was in favor of having the City Hall site redeveloped into mixed use because it can produce revenue for the City and connects an economic stream along Park Avenue. She asked about the time frame that City Hall needs to be redeveloped and the longevity of the current building. City Manager Williams explained that this building is old, there are problems with the ADA and space, it is still functional but there are reasons to consider a new building.

Commissioner Diebel spoke about the two major projects under consideration and an obligation to satisfy the post office and City Hall requirements. She spoke about the State Office Building and this site to fund those projects and suggested looking at an alternate site for City Hall that is out of the downtown area. She stated being across from the Public Safety Complex may be a good suggestion if the numbers work financially. She also offered suggestions regarding properties to possibly sell to fund the other projects. She believed they should retain the water plant on West Swoope for a future golf course development/expansion/pro shop/retail area. She concluded that all of this depends on what the post office is willing to do because if they do not split the operation from the retail they are limited on how they can reorient the space.

Mayor Strong summarized the issues they had consensus on: the library should remain at its current location and as is for the foreseeable future; and identifying, pursuing and initiating structured parking conversations in the strategic areas around the City. Commissioner Eckbert identified the following opportunities for parking: City Hall, the St. Margaret Mary deck; the under grounding of the west side of the park (could be

economically illogical), and the stretch behind New York Avenue that could be structured parking. Commissioner Diebel raised the question about paying for parking. Mayor Strong stated that Winter Park residents should not be charged for parking but raised concerns with parking for commuter rail and did not want to discourage people from shopping here because of having to pay for parking.

A majority of the Commission agreed to sell the University plant. Commissioner Metcalf was reluctant because he believed there will be annexation issues in the next 20 years and will need additional property that is available for commercial and industrial.

The Commission also agreed that the south side of the current post office site should become park but that they are not committed today to do this. Commissioner Eckbert stated if the post office is not willing to split their post office, he wanted to understand what the City's resolution will be. Commissioner Metcalf agreed with Commissioner Eckbert and addressed concerns with giving up the 5 acre property because of its worth and losing the Tax Increment Funding (TIF) forever. Mayor Strong stated he only saw the City losing 2 acres of the site to build the post office. Further discussion ensued regarding this issue. Mayor Strong stated if the Commission is not committed to making the south end of the post office site into park, they should return contributions made on that assumption. There was a consensus and further comments made regarding this issue. Mayor Strong addressed the pledges and contributions all depending on whether the property extends Central Park. There was further discussion regarding the Carlisle property and parking at that location.

Commissioner Diebel asked for clarification of the choices regarding the City's obligations to the post office. Commissioner Eckbert expressed his understanding that the City is not mandated to relocate the post office. Commissioners Eckbert and Metcalf asked that the City Attorney provide a written opinion regarding the City's obligation to build a new post office and asked for an acknowledgement from the post office that the City has no obligation to build a new post office. The Mayor announced the work session on August 27 at 2:00 with the post office.

Recess from 3:33 – 3:40 p.m.

There was a consensus to present the following alternatives to the post office: having a retail post office on the arrowhead and a distribution facility on the Swoope water treatment site; and to consider the Bargain Box site on Virginia Avenue for City Hall. Commissioner Eckbert also suggested another alternative to put retail at City Hall or the "arrowhead" (north half of the post office property) and put the distribution at the Swoope site or the Bargain Box site and sign off of any combination thereof. Mayor Strong stated he did not disagree with presenting that. Mayor Strong clarified it will be a 10,000 square foot facility in either place for each function of the post office.

Commissioner Diebel addressed her belief that they agreed to sell the State Office Building if necessary. Mayor Strong stated he does not agree to sell the site at this time because that is the only alternative that the post office has agreed to. He stated that they will know in about 30-45 days about the post office and the grant and the post office will tell the City what can or cannot be done. Commissioner Bridges agreed that she was not in favor of selling the State office property at this time because she wanted to see what the post office wanted to do. She thought it was important to focus on the

community presence and the appropriate location for City Hall but believed that this is not quite as important at this time. Commissioner Eckbert spoke about the previous process and previous Commission decisions concerning City Hall and the outcome that a private/public partnership was the correct thing to do. He asked if any commitments were made back then and if the outcome of the Commission at that time held meaning at this time. He indicated that the Commission should refresh their memory of what previously happened with the process. Mayor Strong disclosed speaking to Pizzuti about City Hall and informing them that the City was not ready to make a decision. Commissioner Metcalf inquired whether the City preferred to ground lease or to sell any of the sites. Commissioner Eckbert wanted to see the economic difference.

Mayor Strong addressed the differences in opinion regarding the Enzian. Commissioners Metcalf and Eckbert preferred the Knowles site; Mayor Strong preferred the current City Hall site because of their parking needs being after hours. There was discussion regarding the previous conversations about the Knowles Avenue and City Hall sites. Mayor Strong stated the Enzian warrants more thought.

Commissioner Eckbert asked about using City's right-of-ways to encourage development in what he considered to be less than attractively developed properties and to use them as enhancement tools for the Commission's planning and formed based code guidelines. Mayor Strong liked the idea. Commissioner Bridges stated she would want to see some defined parameters for doing that and abandoning the rights-of-ways but saw this as a viable tool for creating a good economic situation in the sites on Fairbanks (Pittsburgh Paints and Holler properties).

Mayor Strong commented regarding the purpose of today's meeting to define areas of common ground and disagreement to guide the City's consultant for the RFQ. He asked if there are other areas the Commission agrees or disagrees on.

Commissioner Bridges spoke about the overview of the City, how we want downtown Winter Park to look and be preserved, and how we approach open spaces within the downtown redevelopment. She showed pictures she had taken to help the Commission better understand how garages and antennas behind buildings on Park Avenue have affected the look of Park Avenue because they are visual from the street and degrade and compromise the historical buildings. She addressed the importance of the downtown area remaining historic and being preserved. There was discussion concerning the photos and the economic vitality of the downtown area being critical. Commissioner Bridges agreed that the City needs to grow but that the appropriate places are west of Park Avenue on New York Avenue, Orange Avenue, Fairbanks Avenue and other areas.

Commissioner Eckbert asked what they do next with the areas they agree on. Mayor Strong stated we are hiring two consultants; one to identify and outline a formed based code and the other one is a vision for the City, in particular the downtown area (urban planner). Commissioner Eckbert asked if the intent of this meeting was to inform the consultant as to where they agree and disagree and why this meeting took place before the consultant is hired. Mayor Strong stated the purpose was to identify the issues they agree and don't agree on which they have done in respect to public facilities but that there are some constraints until the meeting with the post office takes place. He asked if they want to expand the discussion to the rest of the City. Commissioner Metcalf

commented what he believed would be the schedule for putting the codes into place. Mayor Strong spoke about the work session on August 9 regarding the comprehensive plan. There was discussion about another possible work session being scheduled before the final adoption of the comprehensive plan on August 27.

Commissioner Diebel asked what is actionable from today's discussions. She stated she would like to summarize what they did today and what they are supposed to be doing with the information. Mayor Strong stated once they have a response from the state grant and the post office, they can make decisions. He stated it is about 60 days away and then they can set a calendar and discuss the money involved. The Holler property was addressed as well as the need to have a discussion regarding their property on Virginia Avenue for a City Hall.

Commissioner Metcalf asked Mr. Gottfried what he needed from them for the August 9 meeting. Peter Gottfried of Canin and Associates summarized what they will cover during the August 9 work session. He stated they will review their recommendations from before which have not changed a lot; and will review parking garages, FAR's, and possibly scale. He addressed the need to agree on issues discussed at the work session going into the first reading. He stated there needs to be some flexibility in the code and you cannot include items in the comprehensive plan that will limit what the City wants and likes what is happening in the City.

Mr. Gottfried stated the City needs to have a vision or guide book outlining certain details that the Commission and staff can utilize. Building Director George Wiggins spoke about the RFQ for the Architectural Planning Consultant being submitted on August 1. Commissioner Eckbert asked Mr. Gottfried if there is anything that can be provided to be prepared for the work session so they can make decisions at that meeting. Mr. Gottfried stated he will provide them with a binder with the original recommendations, the future land use element sent to the state, the ORC Report, the revised future land use element currently on the web page, and the input from people with suggested language; comparisons of some buildings and what the FAR's look like if this went into effect and what the FAR's are now.

Mr. Gottfried stated they will meet with the Commission individually before the meeting if they choose to and asked the Commissioners to call them if they wish to set up a meeting. Comments were made regarding the ORC Report and the P&Z recommendations made after transmittal. Commissioner Eckbert spoke about the result of the Architectural Design Task Force that came forth that has articulated the formed based code as a direction for the City to take. He stated their recommendation agrees with many of the recommendations made by Canin and Associates in the original submission in terms of creating an enabling document that would allow the City to pursue a formed based code approach. He stated that may not be in the original submission to the DCA.

Commissioner Diebel asked about creating flexibility. Commissioner Eckbert stated they are asking the consultant to review the documents and help them understand the differences and the fixes to create a good comprehensive plan. He stated there are issues that need to be worked through on August 9 to include mixed use and FAR's related to parking garages so the document on August 13 can be voted on that evening without it being a substantial change. Commissioner Diebel wanted to see a structured

meeting on August 9 and to list out the issues that fall into the gap between formed based code and retention in the comprehensive plan and review those one by one, reach agreement on the issues they all agree should be in one document or the other, and discuss those that they do not reach agreement on.

Commissioner Eckbert stated he is looking for Canin to guide them. Mr. Gottfried stated they will provide guidance, will list out the issues and that the commission needs to agree/disagree on each issue. He also spoke about dealing with mixed use and other issues. He stated they are going to provide the Commission the framework to make decisions at the next meeting and education regarding the issues to the Commission before that meeting.

City Manager Williams commented about what he believed the Commission concluded and arrived at a consensus regarding their ideas on the facilities to utilize. He stated that will help prepare a scope of work for a consultant and at the same time move ahead with the process of securing a consultant to review that. He addressed the need to budget the money. Mayor Strong also stated that he wants the Planning Department to do a schematic of the post office site. City Manager Williams stated that is being prepared for the two sites they discussed; the arrowhead and the Bargain Box sites. It was also verified that staff will contact the Holler's about the possibility of that site.

The meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.



Cynthia S. Bonham, City Clerk