

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

January 5, 2016

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a Study Session at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 5th day of January, 2016, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Councilmembers Allison, Castleberry, Heiple, Holman, Jungman, Lang, Miller, Williams, Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT:

None

Item 1, being:

PRESENTATION BY MEYER, SCHERER & ROCKCASTLE, LTD., REGARDING ANALYSIS OF LOCATION OPTIONS FOR A NEW SENIOR CENTER.

Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, said McKinney Partnership Architects (McKinney) and Meyer, Scherer, and Rockcastle, LTD., (MSR) are working together to present site options and provide an alternative design study for a Senior Center. McKinney was asked to prepare an alternative design study for a stand-alone Senior Center near the new Central Library site and MSR was hired to conduct site analysis of six locations for a stand-alone Senior Center and incorporate that with McKinney's study information. Those results will be presented and discussed tonight by MSR.

McKinney prepared a space study in 2008, for the Municipal Complex that included review of the City office space and current library building. Based on that study, an election was held in 2008, and voters authorized the renovation of the current library building to include a Senior Citizens Center; however, the renovation was contingent upon a successful vote for a new central library which failed. Since that time the City has done a number of facility renovations to various municipal buildings; constructed a modular building for Municipal Court; and had the opportunity to acquire some additional property. In June 2015, McKinney was asked to prepare an update to the Space Utilization Study (Update) to include projects that align with those approved in the 2008 General Obligation (GO) Bond Issue.

A voter approved Norman Forward Quality of Life Initiative in 2015, included construction of a central and east branch library. During the Norman Forward discussions, a group of citizens, including senior citizens, requested the City consider a stand-alone Senior Citizen to be constructed next to the Central Library site instead of refurbishing the existing library for a Senior Center as originally planned in 2008.

Mr. Jeff Scherer, MSR, said MSR did not create detailed designs for all the sites, but took the geometric configuration and size of the existing library and Andrews Park site to see if a Senior Center would fit onto any of the other reasonably available sites based on McKinney's study. The site at Andrews Park is an odd shape and somewhat constrained by existing buildings, equipment, recreational sport area, playground, physical limitations, etc.

Norman Forward Ordinance language allows the City "to construct and equip a Senior Center through renovation of an existing facility or construction of a new free standing facility at a location to be determined by Council, after consideration of the desires of Norman citizens who would likely use the facility, functionality of proposed facility, and feasibility including how to accomplish other voter authorized complex improvements to be funded from the proceeds that can be generated from the sale of General Obligation Bonds authorized by voters in 2008, or from revenues generated from the Norman Forward

Quality of Life Project Sales Tax of 2015, and to be located in the vicinity of Andrews Park or another site shown to be reasonably available for this purpose.”

Mr. Scherer highlighted the Senior Center evaluation criteria for renovation of the existing facility versus a new free standing facility as follows:

- Desire of citizens who would use the facility
- Functionality of the proposed facility
- Feasibility of the proposed facility
 - accomplishing other voter authorized municipal complex improvements
 - funded from 2008 General Obligation Bonds
 - revenues from Norman Forward
- Located in the vicinity of Andrews Park
- Other sites shown to be reasonably available

Mr. Scherer said MSR looked at six sites that includes Option EL, the existing library site; Option AP, Andrews Park; Option L1, Senior Center conjoined with new central library; Option L2, site north of new library site; Option L3, site west of new library site; and Option L4, purchasing additional land on Acres Street facing Andrews Park (now occupied by condominiums).

Mr. Scherer said in this study, MSR did not provide functional designs for either the Senior Center or library except for Options EL and AP as provided by McKinney nor did MSR include a detailed, line-item cost estimate for each option except for Option EL as provided by TMP Architects (a separate contractor working with McKinney). He said MSR also did not include detailed engineering and transportation analysis.

Mr. Scherer said it is not clear whether General Obligation (G.O.) Bond money approved in 2008 to refurbish the existing library for a Senior Center can be applied to sites other the existing library. MSR is currently assuming the funds are not applicable for a Senior Center in Options L1 through L4 until they are told otherwise by the City.

Norman is a big, little City and is at the point of needing parking garages so that needs to be part of the discussion for a Senior Center near the library. Senior parking uses are different than library parking uses so a parking lot could easily be shared. Mr. Scherer said final determination of minimum parking will require a detailed time-of-day study to ensure adequate on-site parking. All parking is public and can be used by any citizen. Additional parking in Andrews Park may be necessary in the future, but Option AP incorporates 107 spaces for that site.

Mr. Scherer said the advantages of Option EL is that it meets all the program requirements; has direct access to required parking; has an existing built-in bus drop off; is consistent with 2008 G.O. Bonds; has no negative impact on other Norman Forward projects; is sustainable; and allows for future expansion. The facility would be one level with a service entrance for the kitchen. The disadvantage would be the distance from the new library. He said there has been a lot of disparaging comments made about McKinney’s design of the existing building for a Senior Center, but in all fairness McKinney was asked to look at redesign of the building, not the parking lot. If the existing library is a viable option the parking lot would have to be reconfigured and there would be less demand on the parking lot when the Central Library is open. This option would require an additional \$651,000.

The longest period for construction of a Senior Center is four years and the shortest period is Option AP, which could start immediately and be constructed within two years. The new Central Library will not be completed for at least three years. A new Senior Center in Andrews Park would meet all program requirements and would be in a close proximity to the Central Library. There is direct access to required parking, which would be shared by seniors and library patrons.

Councilmember Allison asked why a Senior Center at Andrews Park could not be more rectangular in shape to make the parking adjacent or closer to the building and Mr. Scherer said that type of design would have people walking between cars making it difficult for those using a walker. He said that is a valid, complicated question and McKinney's design was simply trying to minimize the amount of land being used in the park. Mr. Scherer said if Council voted for Option AP, the final design may not look like what is being shown today. He said these drawings are simply giving an idea of what could fit on that particular parcel of land to meet the economics and guiding principles for a Senior Center. He said seniors will want to be part of the final design product. This option would require an additional \$6.1 million to \$10.5 million depending on the availability of the \$4.4 million 2008 G.O. Bonds. This option also requires .39 acres in addition to land that is already paved and occupied.

Councilmember Jungman asked why the Andrews Park option is \$5.5 million more than the existing library option and Mr. Scherer said the renovation costs are less and \$4.4 million from G.O. Bonds can be used for the existing library. He said the Andrews Park option would require an all new facility that would cost \$6.1 million if the \$4.4 million G.O. Bond money can be used; however, if the \$4.4 million cannot be used, that pushes costs to \$10.5 million.

Mayor Rosenthal said a ruling from the Attorney General would be needed on whether or not the G.O. Bond money could be used for the Andrews Park site. Mr. Jeff Bryant, City Attorney, said because the money is G.O. Bond money, the Attorney General will look very closely at how the City wants to spend that money and whether or not that meets the intent of the voters in the 2008 election. It is not difficult to argue that if the Senior Center is kept within the municipal complex, which includes Andrews Park, the G.O. Bond money could be used on a site in Andrews Park, but there has been no definitive answer to date. He said it is more unlikely that the G.O. Bond money could be used for property north of Andrews Park where the Central Library will be located.

Mr. Scherer reminded everyone that all estimated costs are a little soft and are not set, but MSR has tried to keep the cost comparisons as close as possible.

Councilmember Lang left the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Mr. Scherer highlighted Option L1, a Senior Center joined to Central Library. The facility would require a three story building; library parking would be too remote and chaotic so a parking structure would be needed; the cul-de-sac radius is minimum and conflicts with passenger drop off and pedestrian safety; the required drive-up for book return would not be feasible; library guiding principles would be compromised including clarity of front door, flexibility, ease of use, future expansion, identity, and access to outdoor spaces; service deliveries would be compromised; complete re-engineering of James Garner Boulevard expansion would be required; library construction would be delayed by one year, which would have a \$1.875 million inflation impact; the facility would require 10% more funding for stairs and elevators; and would require structured second and third floors. This option would require an additional \$13.54 million as well as the inflation impact of delaying the library project.

Mr. Scherer highlighted Option L2, and said a Senior Center at the north end of the new library site would require two to three stories. The facility would have direct access to required parking, but additional parking may be required in the future; would require long walking distance to library; have direct access to Legacy Trail; library construction could proceed on schedule; and no additional land would be required. An additional \$9.76 million would be required.

Mr. Scherer highlighted Option L3 and said a Senior Center built west of the new library site would require one to three floors depending on set-backs, courtyards, and access options; a parking structure because library parking access would be too remote and very problematic; no land acquisition would be required; library construction would be delayed; and the site would also allow for separate identities of a Senior Center and Central Library. An additional \$12.5 million would be required.

Mr. Scherer highlighted Option L4 and said a Senior Center built northwest of the library would require one to two stories; it would have direct access to required parking; fronts Andrews Park and is proximate to the library for easy access; library project can proceed on schedule; and will require additional land. An additional \$9 million would be required plus land acquisition costs that are unknown.

Mr. Scherer said 50 parking spaces could be added in the future in Andrews Park if the Senior Center is located near the library giving the facilities a total of 400 parking spaces.

Mr. Scherer said MSR recommends Options EL, AP, and L4 for further consideration and recommends Options L1, L2, and L3 be eliminated from further consideration.

Councilmember Castleberry asked how much Norman Forward funding was budgeted for a Senior Center and if additional money is needed, would that come out of other Norman Forward Projects. Mr. Bryant said there were revenue projections of \$210 million and projects were identified in the amount of \$148 million before Senior Center language was added. There were no allocations for the Senior Center in the original budget discussions. Councilmember Castleberry said whatever Council decides, the money will potentially be taken from another project and Mr. Bryant said that is true and factors considered for Norman Forward projects included the strength of the sales tax revenue coming in, how bids came in, etc., but some projects would have to be delayed or additional money would be needed for the Senior Center constructed anywhere except the existing library site.

Councilmember Castleberry asked how long it would be before Staff expected an answer from the Attorney General on the G.O. Bond question and Mr. Bryant said Bond Counsel felt the answer would come pretty quickly, but they did not want to spend a lot of effort on that until they had some sense from Council on whether or not that should be pursued. Bond Counsel was pretty clear that a location north of Acres Street would not be eligible for the G.O. Bond funds and Andrews Park would be a stretch, but they would be willing to visit seriously with the Attorney General if that is Council's desire.

Councilmember Allison asked if Staff had an estimate of the value of the apartment complex in Option L4 and Mr. Bryant said no, but anytime you look at taking people's homes you will pay the premium. Mayor Rosenthal said the housing is condominium's not an apartment complex so there will be multiple owners to deal with and Mr. Bryant said there are six different owners.

Mayor Rosenthal asked if the elimination of L1, L2, and L3 was due to cost factors and Mr. Scherer said Council could interpret it as that, but these options are really not viable for many reasons. Councilmember Allison asked if \$1.8 million should be added to all costs for additional delay of library construction and Mr. Scherer said yes.

Councilmember Williams would be willing to accept the conclusions and go with Options EL, AP, and L4, but really has no interest in Option EL because locating the Senior Center in a refurbished library is not a good option and does not honor seniors in the way they need to be honored. It does not have the kind of community awareness and touchstone of what senior citizenry means in Norman. He also does not like Option L4 and would really like to see Option AP as the option Council seeks.

Councilmember Holman understands that Option EL is the easiest and cheapest option, but many senior citizens have made it pretty clear they are not interested in that option. Initially he did not think he would like Option AP because Andrews Park is a historic park, but now that he has seen a design it looks more appealing. He would agree that Andrews Park seems to be the most appealing location at this moment.

Councilmember Castleberry said public input will be part of the process and he looks forward to presenting the three options to the public to see what their input will be. He would also like to see the citizen group's proposal rebutted to see if anything was missed. He said Option EL is really not an ideal option for him and would like to consider Option AP, which is centrally located and close to the new library, but wondered if it was worth \$6 million. He would also like to pursue an opinion from the Attorney General on the G.O. Bond question because that will factor into Council's decision.

Councilmember Williams left the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

Councilmember Miller agreed that Andrews Park seems to be the best option initially, but felt it is really important to be mindful and careful of what everyone voted on in 2008 and what they voted on for Norman Forward. She said this is part of a long term project that will affect a lot of people and a lot of different groups and it is so important to get this right without spending millions of additional dollars and compromising the number of other Norman Forward projects.

Mr. Scherer said, in his opinion, the refurbishing of the existing library has been wrongly characterized to promote another option. MSR has done renovations on hundreds of libraries and people do not even realize they are in a building that has been renovated. He does not buy the argument that it would be second class because it would be totally changed so that piece of the argument has been a straw dog to push another point when the more important point is the right relationship between the Senior Center and the library.

Mayor Rosenthal suggested the Citizen's Financial Oversight Board (CFOB) and Senior Ad Hoc Advisory Group review the options and give their comments and input since both will be meeting next week and Councilmembers agreed.

Councilmember Jungman said he has some concern about spending the additional \$5.5 million, but if everyone likes Option AP, Council can look at that more closely. He said if the orientation of the two facilities is important and the City made the mistake of building the Senior Center to the south and the library to the north or west, the facilities could be as far apart as the existing library is to the new library and literally have a similar walking distance. He is saying this to implore the design to pull both buildings toward Acres Street for an urban feel because if the City is going to spend \$6 million the facilities should be really nice. Mr. Scherer did not agree and said the existing library is five times the distance of the Andrews Park site to the new library site. Councilmember Jungman said if people had to exit one building toward the south, walk around the building then go around the side of the other building to catch the entrance on the west side then that would be a very long conceptual walk. Mr. Scherer said most Senior Centers want a single entrance for safety and other reasons, but if the north entrance enables people to go through the building, exit onto the plaza part, and be organized from a security point of view then that might be a viable option. There also could be a covered drop off that goes all the way to Acres Street so people could be 100 feet from being outside. Councilmember Jungman felt both buildings should be oriented toward Acres Street in some way

that created a flow across the plaza making it one area, not two separate buildings. Mr. Scherer said the only thing MSR would be concerned about is the ice issue on the north side.

Mayor Rosenthal said Council is not eliminating the existing library or Option L4 at this point and time, but is accepting the recommendations to eliminate Options L1, L2, and L3. She is hearing a lot of positive comments from other Councilmembers willing to spend additional money on the end product, but they want more information before making that final decision.

Councilmember Allison said if Council eliminates what is being recommended, the City is literally saving several thousand dollars a month because if it costs \$1.8 million a year to delay construction of the library then every month Council waits to eliminate options it costs the City a couple hundred thousand dollars. He is okay with moving forward with the MSR recommendation and keeping the library project on schedule.

Councilmember Holman thinks Council can eliminate Options L2 and L3, and believes Option L4 is not feasible given the cost, but does not understand why Option L1 cannot be done. Mayor Rosenthal said Option L1 is being eliminated because the price tag is \$13.7 million plus a \$1.8 million inflation impact to delay construction of the library. Mr. Scherer said he is not suggesting MSR's figures are ironclad, but MSR tried to take the costs they know of for a free standing building and extrapolate that onto options that include a parking garage. The parking garage would not be necessary if the Senior Center is not located next to the library because the library does not require a parking garage in the first place. His concern is how the Senior Center compromises all of the programmatic and guiding principles of how a public library should operate. If the City asked MSR from the beginning to put a Senior Center and a library on the new library site, MSR would have come up with a design that would not violate the library principle. He said Option L1 violates the first principle the seniors requested, which was a one story building.

Councilmember Holman said seniors have told him they do not care if the building is one story. Mr. Scherer said there needs to be a proper programming exercise with lots of public process to determine if that is not an issue. If so, then the Andrews Park site can accommodate three stories that will leave a smaller footprint.

Councilmember Allison asked the City Manager if a survey was done regarding design preferences for a Senior Center and Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, said focus groups discussed it, but a survey was not done. Councilmember Allison asked if a one story facility was desired and Mr. Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation, said yes, the focus groups suggested a one story building. Councilmember Allison said it looks like the City has done its research, but the group that is against renovating the existing library thinks differently. Councilmember Castleberry said if the citizens group is going to meet and rebut the issue he does not think Council should eliminate the option without giving them that chance to rebut.

Mr. Scherer said costs have to be vetted by a professional cost estimator with plans that include the quality of the building. He said Council will get some interesting, conflicting, hard to unravel information from an independent group. He said MSR's estimates were vetted by two construction managers based on the last 100 million square feet of libraries that MSR has done on these types of conditions and he is comfortable with MSR's numbers.

Mr. McKinney said McKinney did a very detailed breakdown of the library site and used those parameters to fill out the schematic cost estimates and the costs are relative to one another. He said the detention for the library site alone is right at \$1 million (about \$7 per square foot of land area).

Councilmember Holman said he is not saying he is for Option L1, it is just the option presented to the City by a group of citizens that spent a lot of time working on it and he wants to make sure Council is not leaving this meeting with that option being off the table.

Councilmember Castleberry said one of his first questions to the citizens group will be where they got their numbers.

Councilmember Jungman said what he is hearing is MSR's numbers are probably pretty good and if the numbers are going to move they are all going to move together whether they are a little high or a little low. He does not know what everyone's criteria is, but Council should think about what their decision criteria will be. He thinks citizens' getting what they want is important, but one of the back stop criteria for him is cost. He does not know how to wrap his head around the \$13 million price tag on L1, so he can just rule that out. He gave kudos to the citizens group who has pushed Council to get these two facilities closer together for a walkable, enjoyable, livable environment because that is a win for them. He said they have already won that from what he is hearing tonight, but \$10 million is a kind of conceptual cap for him on Option L1.

Mayor Rosenthal agreed with Councilmember Jungman. She said the City hired a consultant to do an apples to apples comparison and did not think another group should just come in and argue that the consultant's numbers are wrong. She said that is not the comparative analysis the City asked for and gotten a recommendation for so she is prepared to go with what MSR is recommending because they have dealt with construction costs as well as actual cost for libraries and other facilities. She said Option L1 is really pushing the envelope.

Mr. McKinney said McKinney consulted with Lifespan out of Ohio, who does these types of projects all over the country, and the unit price of a nicely outfitted Senior Center is \$265 per square foot. The unit price on the existing library was \$155 per square foot, which would be a savings of \$110 per square foot. These prices include all furnishings and all equipment so they are turn-key costs.

Mayor Rosenthal said there seems to be consensus to accept MSR's recommendation unless Council hears something important from the CFOB and Senior Ad Hoc Group next week that changes the consideration for other options. Otherwise, Council will meet again to discuss the three recommended options in a Study Session or Conference.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated December 31, 2015, from Steve Lewis, City Manager, to Mayor and City Council
2. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Norman Senior Center Analysis of Six Options Draft Report," presented by Meyer, Scherer, & Rockcastle, LTD. (MSR) Design, dated December 31, 2015
3. Memorandum dated December 31, 2015, from Jeffrey A. Scherer, FAIA, Founding Principal, to Steve Lewis, City of Norman City Manager
4. Letter dated December 31, 2015, from Richard S. McKinney, Jr., AIA, President of the McKinney Partnership Architects, to Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, with Andrews Park - Proposed Senior Citizen's Center Site - Option AP, Andrews Park - Proposed Master Plan - Option AP, and Andrew's Park - Existing Park Plan with Option AP Land Areas

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The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor