

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC FORUM

April 17, 2012

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, attended a Public Forum at 6:43 p.m. in the Municipal Building Council Chambers on the 17th day of April, 2012, and notice of the meeting was posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting. The City of Norman is hosting a Public Forum to discuss and receive public input regarding a cultural facility to be located in University North Park Tax Increment Finance District (UNPTIF). Although this forum is not a regularly scheduled meeting of Council, a quorum of Council was present; therefore, a summary of the forum is hereby recorded as required by the Open Meeting Act.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Dillingham, Gallagher, Griffith, Kovach, Lockett, Spaulding, Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT: Councilmembers Ezzell and Quinn

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND PUBLIC INPUT REGARDING A CULTURAL FACILITY TO BE LOCATED IN UNIVERSITY NORTH PARK TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT.

Mayor Rosenthal emphasized that this was not a decision-making meeting and not all potential projects were represented this evening. She said it is hoped that some ideas will come out of tonight's meeting that Council can evaluate in terms of partnerships, return on investment and value to the community, and fulfilling expectations of the UNPTIF.

Ms. Kathryn Walker, Assistant City Attorney, provided background information about the UNPTIF and Project Plan outlining how the TIF is to operate, specifically, as to cultural facilities. The major goals of the UNP were two-fold; the development of UNP was to support a development attracting visitors from across the state and region to this unique retail, restaurant, and lifestyle center destination spot and be a significant economic development component in the northern portion of the projected area. She said the project plan adopted in 2006 set forth the following objectives:

- Construct a conference center and accompanying museums and other cultural facilities;
- To stimulate private commitments to invest in the Project Area;
- To serve as a catalyst for expanding employment, and to attract major investment in the area; and
- To preserve and enhance the tax base and make possible investment, development, and economic growth.

She said \$16.5 million was allocated in the original Project Plan to be used specifically for a Conference Center and Cultural Facility. She said in 2007 the City of Norman contracted with John Q. Hammons who operates Embassy Suites to build a hotel with a conference center attached with plans for the City to purchase that conference center for \$15 million. She said in 2008, the City had the opportunity to build the Rock Creek Overpass which had been proposed but not approved by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. When that opportunity became available, the City was released from the obligation to purchase the conference center and there was a Project Plan amendment allowing a portion of those funds, \$7.75 million, to be reallocated for the Rock Creek Overpass Project leaving a balance of \$8.75 million for the Cultural Facility component. She said it was important to note that this did not mean there was money in the bank, it is part of the Project Plan and any funds spent would have to be supported by revenues created in the TIF. She said the Project Plan does not provide a lot of guidance in what a cultural facility can be. Funding is generated within the Tax Increment District and a portion of the sales tax and ad valorem tax growth generated in the District is set aside for public improvements within the TIF Project

Area. The Project Area eligible for public improvements extends north from Robinson Street to Tecumseh Road and extends east from the west side of I-35 to Highway 77.

Mr. Chuck Thompson, 4519 Chukkar Court, said he was on the original 15 member Community TIF Committee appointed to formulate the Project Plan and after that a Statutory TIF Oversight Committee was organized that included representatives from Norman Public Schools, Cleveland County, and Moore-Norman Technology Center, and two at-large members and he was appointed as an at-large member. He said when the City was released from the obligation to purchase the conference center from John Q. Hammons, the Statutory TIF Committee considered this a great opportunity to have the Rock Creek Overpass constructed. The intent of the TIF District was to provide opportunities to bring visitors to Norman that would not have come here otherwise and create revenue, ad valorem taxes, economic development, and jobs that otherwise would not have existed. He said the suggested cultural amenities at that time were an International Gymnastics Hall of Fame, the National Weather Museum, and the Pisces Project. He said speaking for the committee, they wanted the City Council to take whatever steps appropriate to evaluate the proposed opportunities with a special view towards what kinds of unique and new revenues could come. He said one of the key elements of the Committee's decision to agree with the release of the funds to pay for the overpass was looking at the number of room nights, incremental sales tax increases, and allow any project that would to come forward to take advantage of the funding with Council and the Statutory Committee measuring those projects using this criteria.

Councilmember Kovach said since some of the criteria was bringing in new jobs, he asked what the Norman Economic Development Coalition felt would be the kind of cultural facility that might help sell Norman to a potential employer. Mr. Don Wood, Executive Director of Norman Economic Development Coalition, said the economic development side of this is taken care of with the TIF Element in the Project Plan and there are adequate funds to be able to do what needs to be done to develop the north side of the business park. He said he has also been involved in several projects and recently had been contacted by the National Cheerleading Association about a Cheerleading venue and the number of room nights generated by this type of event is staggering.

Councilmember Gallagher asked what employers were looking for when moving to a location and Mr. Wood said executives are looking for a quality of life, a uniqueness that does not exist in other communities. He said those who live here are looking for what benefits them. He said he wished funding was available to do more than one project because several projects would contribute to the lifestyle of those who lived here and others would attract tourists.

The Mayor opened the podium to anyone who wanted to speak or make a suggestion.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "University Norman Park Tax Increment Financing District, Cultural Facility Component, Public Forum, dated April 17, 2012
2. Brochure entitled "Norman Swim Center and Water Park, a Proposal of the Pisces Project"
3. Flyer entitled "The National Weather Museum and Science Center Looking for a Home!"
4. Brochure entitled "National Weather Museum and Science Center Sponsorship Opportunities"

Participants in discussion

1. Ms. Nancy Yoch, 617 Okmulgee Street, in support of an Aquatic Center
2. Ms. Ann Schroeder, 1128 Pinehurst Drive, in support of an Aquatic Center
3. Mr. Edward Schrems, 945 Mockingbird Lane, in support of an Aquatic Center
4. Ms. Diane Moershel, 31228 Western Avenue, in support of an Aquatic Center
5. Ms. Ana Gonzales, 302 Willow Branch Road, in support of an Aquatic Center
6. Mr. Sam McAdams, 4216 Brownwood Lane, in support of an Aquatic Center
7. Mr. Don Wood, Executive Director of the Norman Economic Development Coalition
8. Ms. Sue Schrems, 945 Mockingbird Lane, in support of an Aquatic Center
9. Mr. Mark Campbell, Post Office Box 3053, in support of an Aquatic Center
10. Mr. David Hopper, 1620 Oriole Drive, in support of a Weather Museum
11. Ms. Alva Brockus, 1228 Leslie Lane, in support of an Aquatic Center
12. Mr. Korey Nunno, 212 Waterfront Drive, in support of an Aquatic Center
13. Mr. Mark McCurdy, 4601 Greystone Court, in support of an Aquatic Center
14. Mr. John Dyer, 4101 Colchester Court, in support of an Aquatic Center
15. Mr. Steven Tyler Holman, in support of an Aquatic Center and suggested an aquarium
16. Mr. Stephen Koranda, Executive Director of the Norman Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2424 Springer Drive, Suite 170, in support of an Exhibition Hall
17. Ms. Jeanette Coker, 620 East Main Street, asked questions
18. Mr. Kent Nicholson, 2643 South Pickard Avenue, in support of an Aquatic Center

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor