

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE MINUTES

November 25, 2014

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a conference at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 25th day of November, 2014, 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 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Councilmembers Castleberry, Heiple, Holman, Jungman, Lang, Miller, Quinn, and Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT:

Councilmember Williams

Item 1, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER AND POTENTIAL SITE SELECTION.

Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, said on April 1, 2014, the Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST) was renewed and part of the package voters agreed upon was a new Emergency Communication Center (ECC). He said at the time there were questions regarding the location and the community was told the City was preparing criteria and guidelines for a new Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the site chosen could possibly be land the City already owned. He said a Task Force of employees that included Mr. James Fullingim, Fire Chief; Mr. Keith Humphrey, Police Chief; Mr. Jim Bailey, Deputy Fire Chief; Major JD Younger, Police Department Support Bureau; Mr. Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator; and Mr. Tim Powers, Director of Information Technology (IT), have been investigating potential sites for Council's review. He said Staff would like Council to select a site tonight.

Chief Fullingim said the location of the ECC/EOC Facility is the most important aspect of the entire project. He said the Task Force looked at several locations and the impact of the location on the community. He said there is City owned land that would work really well for the facility.

Major Younger said the process for finding a location, to date, has included multiple departments within the City, e.g., Fire, Police, Public Works, IT, Planning, etc., all of whom have contributed to the information Council will be reviewing tonight.

Major Younger displayed photographs/renderings of existing emergency communication facilities in Smith County, Texas; Hernando County, Florida; and Charleston County, South Carolina, that have combined ECC's and EOC's. He also displayed a rendering of photographs of the communications floor of the Charleston County facility.

He said the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has an assessment checklist for consideration when designing a facility. The six primary areas identified by FEMA are 1) facility features, 2) survivability, 3) security, 4) sustainability, 5) interoperability, and 6) flexibility. He said the first four are the most important when choosing the site for a facility.

Major Younger said facility features examine the physical features of the ECC/EOC such as siting, structure, and available space. Components high on the list of available space is personnel space needs; equipment space needs; proximity of government center; rapid access for government executives/officials; avoiding areas of congestion; and allowing rapid response to all parts of the jurisdiction. He said while the facility should be located on an arterial roadway, but should not be located in a primary center where congestion would be expected.

Major Younger said survivability examines the ability of the ECC/EOC to sustain the effects of a hazard event and continue operations after the event has occurred. Hazard considerations include proximity to railroads; highways; pipelines; flood plain; airfield landing paths; high voltage transmission lines; hazardous materials; and human generated attacks.

He said security examines the protection of the ECC/EOC facility, its occupants, and communications equipment and systems from relevant hazards that includes a safety zone from roadway and parking areas, safety of ingress and egress for occupants, and redundancy of technical capabilities.

Major Younger said sustainability examines the ability of the ECC/EOC to operate for extended periods of time without interruption. He said examples of sustainability are an on-site emergency generator capable of operating the entire facility independent of normal electrical service; a backup system capable of providing potable water if municipal water service is interrupted; and the ability to provide room, board, and facilities for essential personnel for up to two weeks.

He said Staff is confident a facility would need to be placed on at least ten acres of land to accommodate the structure, parking, extreme loading (equipment, etc., needed during a hazard event), and communication towers. He said a one mile buffer from likely hazards is needed for survivability, protection for facility and occupants is needed for security, and short-term functionality without external resources is needed for sustainability.

Major Younger highlighted the potential City owned sites as Franklin Road and 36th Avenue N.W., State Highway 9 and 36th Avenue N.W., Franklin Road and 12th Avenue N.E., and Robinson Street and 24th Avenue N.E., and highlighted the pros and cons of each site.

He said the State Highway 9/36th Avenue N.W. and the Franklin Road/12th Avenue N.E. sites are not eligible for ECC/EOC operations due to restrictions of park deeds for those sites that prohibit development not related to park services.

Major Younger said the Franklin Road/12th Avenue N.E. site has adequate space and electricity can be provided; however, a significant amount of public water and sewer lines would need to be installed to serve the site and the potential for fiber optic cable and fiber optic redundancy would be costly to install at this site. He said this site also has flooding issues that would make access to a facility difficult during a flood event. The Robinson Street/24th Avenue N.E. site has adequate space with enough room to expand the facility (if needed), has availability for public utilities, has potential for redundant fiber optic feeds, and adequate electricity for operations can be provided. He said this site meets all FEMA criteria and holds the most promise as a site for the facility needed.

Councilmember Castleberry asked where the ideal location would be if City owned property was not being considered and if the Task Force had even looked at non-City owned sites. Chief Fullingim said sites were reviewed citywide, but there are really no other sites available that the Robinson Street/24th Avenue N.E. site does not already provide. Councilmember Holman asked if the facility would be located on the north side of Robinson Street or on the same property as the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and Major Younger said the north side of Robinson Street on the northern most part of the site to have plenty of separation from the roadway. Mayor Rosenthal asked how many acres is at that site and Major Younger said approximately 61 acres.

Councilmember Jungman said the site is geographically central, but population wise it is not central at all and asked if that mattered. Chief Fullingim said fire and police will not respond from that location, it is simply the location where calls come in and are dispatched from. In the event of a disaster, the facility will serve as the EOC, which is not a place the community should be coming to and not a place emergency management will be responding to the community from. He said it is more about getting employees to their post.

Councilmember Holman said he came into this meeting thinking the Robinson Street/24th Avenue S.E. site would be the best choice.

Mayor Rosenthal asked if the site would require any type of environmental remediation and Major Younger said no, the site is clear.

Mr. Lewis reminded Council that this site has been proposed for a one million gallon elevated water storage tower and that tower will take a small portion of the site; however, there is plenty of room for the tower and an ECC/EOC facility.

Mayor Rosenthal said Staff should think about development around the location.

Ms. Joy Hampton, The Norman Transcript, said if the facility is supposed to withstand a hazard would there be any cooperation with other emergency management entities, such as Cleveland County? Chief Fullingim said each jurisdiction has their own EOC at this time. He said police and fire from different entities get together regularly for Statewide emergency operation exercises and the City of Moore's EOC hosted the event for Cleveland County a couple of weeks ago. He said Moore's facility is large enough to accommodate all the jurisdictions and he is anticipating Norman's EOC having the same capability although it will not be a "joint" EOC.

Mayor Rosenthal said there seems to be consensus to move forward with investigating the use of 2600 East Robinson for the ECC/EOC facility location.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "City of Norman Emergency Communications Center Site Selection," City Council Conference, November 25, 2014
2. Emergency Communication Center/Emergency Operations Center Location Details

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The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor