

# **Facilities Public Forum**

**March 3, 2015 \* CSU Meeting & Training Facility**

City Manager Kelly Templin opened the meeting with introductions and overview of the work being done by the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).

Committee Co-Chair Rod Thornton discussed the task given to CAC members, timelines and reiterated that the committee needs citizens help to prioritize identified needs.

Facilities Sub-Committee Chair Tom Taylor introduced members of sub-committee, gave a presentation about the city's growth, and presented projects that the group has been discussing over the past month.

## **Citizen Comments**

A question was asked about the schools. Taylor and Templin advised that the school district is going through a similar process for their own bond election, which may be held in November of either 2015 or 2016.

A follow-up question from same citizen related to swimming facilities. Templin discussed the joint use agreement between the city and CSISD for the natatorium.

Mrs. Stewart asked a question related to fire response times and how that affects home owners insurance (ISO ratings). Fire Chief Eric Hurt said our current ISO ratings is a 2, which is one step away from the best rating. He further discussed that a nine-minute response time could affect insurance costs but that insurance companies use many other factors to determine rates.

Mrs. Stewart said it's important for citizens to know they will be paying for the new station through a bond election, but they will get significant discounts from their insurance company.

Sub-Committee Chair Taylor mentioned that if he is the one that is waiting on an ambulance, that extra 4-5 minutes is a long time.

Carl Stewart asked about the feasibility of building a joint facility for police and fire on the southern end of the town. Police Chief Scott McCollum mentioned that substations have some advantages, but some of the challenges are the programming needs of a police department and the adjacencies that are needed for effective communication between patrol, CID, evidence rooms, etc. McCollum said that you see substations many times in much larger jurisdictions where you have a replication of the various divisions in each substation.

Chief McCollum discussed the site issues of the PD's current facility and said it was not built to current police programming standards.

Taylor followed up with a question to Chief McCollum about how they deal with longer response times. McCollum mentioned that the Police Department operational model differs from the Fire Department, where firefighters respond from a fixed location (fire station). Police officers are assigned a beat to patrol and respond to calls from their assigned geographical area. In essence, you meet centrally at the station and then deploy into the various beats within the city.

Mrs. Stewart mentioned the city hall building being old and the property itself being worth more than the building. She asked if there was any thought of moving to a different site and selling the land.

City Manager Templin said the city council is looking at several options and has been approached by various parties about the current city hall property. He said the city council is also considering whether to move city hall to the area around Dartmouth and Krenek Tap.

Templin also discussed the work being conducted by PGAL.

Mrs. Stewart followed up by saying it would be nice to have a municipal city center.

A question was asked about a civic community center. The citizen said we currently rely on Texas A&M or the Brazos Expo Center.

Subcommittee Chair Taylor mentioned that the sub-committee has briefly talked about a community center but the Parks Subcommittee is studying the project in more depth. Further discussion was had with the gentlemen following the meeting, and he indicated he was referring more to a community-type center as opposed to a convention hall.

Mrs. Judith Beckman asked if there was a reason in past bond elections that everything is lumped together instead of voting on each project separately. Assistant City Manager Jeff Kersten mentioned that the last bond election had 7 or 8 different propositions on the ballot. Some of the transportation and parks needs were lumped together, but the fire station, city hall and senior center were listed separately.

Mrs. Beckman mentioned that was a refreshing change from previous bond elections but still would like to see it broken out by each individual project.

Mrs. Beckman also had concerns with the growth projections with Texas A&M currently "maxing out." City Manager Templin discussed recent conversations with Texas A&M and CSISD that shows we will see continued growth as well as our own projected growth expectations from city planners. He said there is no sign that the growth is slowing down.

Subcommittee Chair Taylor said retirees are returning to town due to the medical facilities and quality of life.

A citizen asked what is being done to expand facilities such as the Southwood Community Center and the Lincoln Recreation Center. He also asked about improving the acoustics at the Rock Prairie facility.

Mayor Nancy Berry discussed the city's plans to expand the Lincoln Center in the near future as it was on the 2008 Bond election. Public Works Director Donald Harmon gave more details about the Lincoln Center expansion. Jon Denton from Parks subcommittee also indicated that his group is looking at those type of facilities.

Subcommittee Chair Taylor reminded citizens of the upcoming public forums for parks and transportation needs. He mentioned that some of the needs identified could be pushed forward without a tax increase. Assistant City Manager Jeff Kersten said staff is looking at a range for the overall bond capacity to be between 45-60 million dollars without a tax increase. He said voters will be approving the authorization for the city to approve the bonds to be used for the various identified needs.

Assistant to the City Manager Aubrey Nettles said if anyone else has ideas or thoughts about other projects not mentioned tonight, please bring forward either in person, writing them down or going to the website.

A citizen mentioned that he hoped we would use the resources we have close by such as Texas A&M to guide us in through this process.

Committee Co-chair Thornton reminded everyone other ways they could provide input and feedback to the sub-committees.

A question was asked about the time-frame of the process. Nettles and Kersten said the sub-committee plans to have its recommendations to the city council sometime in late May or early June. In August, the council will have to decide if it wants to have a bond election in November.

City Manager Templin invited everyone to stay and eat cookies.