

Citizens Oversight Committee (COC)
Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2008

Mayor Peyton opened the meeting at 6:10 p.m., announced topic would be courthouse. Provided a brief history of the project –

- Budget passed at \$190 million
- Delaney increased to \$211 million through vertical contingency fund
- Many factors have contributed to our current budgetary situation:
 - Real estate cost \$26 million, much due to condemnation; location was not contemplated in original plan
 - City did a lot of site prep work based on original concept – relocated underground utilities, closed roads
 - 9/11 changed the way we approach security
 - Construction boom in China impacted cost of materials
- City chose to fire original design firm (Cannon) and construction manager (Skanska)
- Chose Auchter/Rink through another procurement effort
 - Auchter went out of business
- City is now under contract with the #2 firm, Turner/KBJ
- Hired Sam Mousa to oversee development, allowing other senior city staff to focus on other projects

Mayor stated that he is committed to the Lavilla location, given all the work that has been done in and around the site, such as the chiller plant and parking garage, and considering the positive impact it will have in the Lavilla revitalization effort. Explained the issue surrounding the Convention Center and why it would not be a good option for a courthouse; also explained that the current facility is on prime real estate and in terrible shape, making it, too, a poor option for the future.

Council to hear the courthouse plan on March 31; expected to vote on April 22.

Mayor raised the issue of the COC's future, explaining that the group has been an invaluable asset over the eight years of the BJP program, but perhaps thought should be given to determine an appropriate time for the group to disband. It was unanimously decided that the group should remain intact at least until the Courthouse was under way.

Mayor then discussed his recent trip to China and how the Port would be a key factor in Jacksonville's economic future. Also stated his priorities for the last 39 months in office – curbing crime, improving the St. Johns River, bolstering the economy.

Vice Admiral Kalleres suggested the city think not just about the Port itself, but the people working the ships, to ensure there is a place for the crews to go while they're in Port. The Mayor noted it as an excellent suggestion.

The Mayor then turned the meeting over to Dave Schneider to provide the courthouse update.

Schneider briefly explained how the bill going before council differed from previous Courthouse efforts. Sam Mousa came on board in February and immediately began to work with the team in reviewing the numbers that had comprised the \$395 million figure in the legislation proposed in January. They found savings in a variety of areas, which made it possible to adjust the total project budget to \$350 million.

One key factor in the budget adjustment was a change in construction costs – Schneider said that the BJP road program had been experiencing decreasing bid prices, dropping to levels not seen since the early years of the program. This indicated to the Courthouse team that the construction market was softening, and the savings experienced by the road program would also be felt in the Courthouse program, provided the project stayed on its schedule.

Schneider reiterated that the legislation would be before Council in committees starting on March 31, with the full vote expected on April 22. The committee then asked questions.

Do you anticipate that you'll have to ask for additional funding at a later time?

We think the budget is as tight as it can get right now; we are not ruling out the possibility of needing additional funds.

Will the facility you construct be the same one you discussed in November?

Yes.

Have you considered the security risks involved in having local, state and federal government located so close together? What about a dirty bomb?

Our advisory team includes the sheriff's office; I know we're looking at security from a variety of vantage points. Not sure that they've specifically discussed a dirty bomb.

With the Courthouse questioning complete, Chairman Salem then turned the floor over to Jim Manning, Manager of the Ash Remediation Project.

Manning briefly detailed the history of ash in Jacksonville – came from various incinerators in town; people used the ash as fill on their properties. Twelve years ago it was discovered that the ash contained contaminants higher than the minimum health levels. The total study area is 1000 acres, broken up into four primary sites: Brown's Dump, Lonnie Miller, 5th and Cleveland, and Forest Street (location for the new Animal Care & Control facility).

COJ staff observed remediation efforts in two cities with similar conditions – Anniston, Alabama and Omaha, Nebraska. Plan to use their best management practices in our local effort, such as robust public outreach, incentives for the contractors, and extensive pre- and post-remediation field documentation with videos and photos.

Next steps in the process involve putting out an RFQ [request for qualifications] to identify qualified design-build firms. We'll then develop the design criteria packages and solicit proposals from the pre-qualified firms and award four contracts. Our intent is to fast-track the work.

The committee then asked questions:

Whose incinerators created the ash?

They were the city's, though hospitals had them, too, to prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria. We are dealing only with city facilities.

How did the other communities deal with the perception of "partial" remediation?

Extensive public outreach, which we plan to mimic.

What are the contaminant levels we're dealing with in Jacksonville?

The EPA has concurred with us that most ash is no deeper than 2 ft., which is our target level of removal and capping. In areas where we find some deeper than that, we will put mesh down before we cap it with clean soil and put a notice on the deed.

What will you do with the contaminated soil?

Take it to the landfill to use as cover there.

Will this effort require local labor?

Absolutely. A requirement of our RFQ is that we have teams of companies with at least two firms based in Jacksonville. We will also stipulate a percentage of local labor. We have an EPA grant to help in training for this specialized work.

How long will it take to finish?

We estimate four to six years. Hope to turn dirt a year from now...we have \$93.5 million appropriated for this effort in the city's CIP [capital improvement plan].

Will you be testing the water, too?

No, because we have determined no impact to ground water. The heavy materials just sit – they don't really go anywhere.

What are the long-term impacts under the consent decree?

We will continue to monitor the sites and will be reviewed every five years in perpetuity.

With no further questions from members, Chairman Salem adjourned the meeting.