

Ely City Council Public Hearing Minutes – March 25, 2013

The Ely City Council Public Hearing was called to order by Mayor Petersen at 6:00 p.m. on March 25, 2013 at the Ely Senior Center, 27 S 1st Ave E, Ely MN.

PRESENT: Council members Debeltz, Kess, Nikkola, Omerza, Polyner, Sheddy and Mayor Petersen (7)

ABSENT: None

Introduction: Mayor Petersen stated that this was the 2nd of 3 public meetings. Tonight's meeting will be mainly to discuss the building options presented by John Jamnick, JPJ Engineering and to hear any new ideas and opinions from the public.

John Jamnick presented 4 building options:

- \$4,435,000 - Option 1 – Upgrade City Hall with new 10,000sqft library at old clinic site
- \$3,435,000 - Option 1A – Upgrade City Hall with library on the 2nd floor and expand City Hall for City Offices and shared space
- \$3,605,000 - Option 1B – Upgrade City Hall with library moved into fire hall on 1st floor and a new fire hall at new location
- \$4,050,000 - Option – Public Works – Remodel Old public works garage for the Police and Fire Depts and new construction for City offices, Library, shared space and other areas
- \$3,650,000 – Ely Community Center Upgrade

Clerk Langowski stated the cities debt limit is \$3.5 million. The city is currently in debt for approx. \$893,000 which will be paid off in 2019.

Council member Kess presented with his thoughts and ideas about the City buildings. He felt the custodial costs to the Community Center were too high at 52% of the total city custodial costs. He stated it should be set at 33% for the operational cost to be more realistic. He said general improvements could be done in a more cost effective manner, keeping both the City Hall and Community Center. He felt they should: slow down the process of making a decision; let the HPC continue to identify ways to use the City Hall and Community Center; identify costs and savings that go with each option; investigate options brought up here tonight; include building improvements within the City Capital Improvements Plan; not in favor of picking any option right now.

Jeff Sundell gave a presentation regarding an all in one complex that would serve the community and the surrounding areas. This regional complex would contain a gymnasium, pool, recreation room, work out facility, library, rehabilitation center, etc. along with housing City Hall and its offices. A possible location would be at the JFK building site. He requested the city to agree to a Feasibility Study and for all entities to work together on this project.

Public speakers were:

Jane Hotesse (White St):

- We should use common sense.
- Put buildings to work for themselves
- Keep buildings running and functional
- Use local workers for renovations
- Food shelf needs a better place to go

Larry Polyner (20th Ave):

- Spoke on the various building options presented by the Council
- It is time to replace the old buildings and move on

Todd Denio (Camp St):

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- Renovations can be funded through a sales tax
- These buildings belong to the people and if we lose them, they can't be brought back.
- The decision needs to be made by the citizens of Ely.
- It is time for a change in this town and for preserving what we have.

Al Forsman (Camp St):

- Buildings should be saved
- The Community Center is 30,000sqft which is what the City says it needs to operate.
- City should not rush into a wrong decision
- They should move forward and consolidate the use of their buildings
- City Hall should be sold.

Pam Brunfelt (Camp St):

- Feels the Council has already made up its mind on this building issue and has no plan to restore the Community Center.
- The Historic Preservation Commission has not been given a chance to do a reuse study.
- Historic Preservation is possible.

Josh Forsman (Pattison St):

- Feels the Community Center should be preserved.

David Kess (Conan St):

- The City needs to slow down and look at the options that the public brings forward.

Jim Lah (Harvey St):

- Feels everyone will need to compromise
- Is less expensive to make the Community Center ADA compliant plus it has easier handicap access.
- The City needs 30,000sqft and the Community Center has 30,000sqft.

Cecelia Rolando (Harvey St):

- The community needs to work together
- She is a preservationist and would like to see the Community Center and City Hall restored
- What is the essence of our community and how do we want the City to look to family, friends and visitors?

Angell Magliulo (Pattison St): (letter presented by Clerk Langowski)

- She worked for over 10 years as an aesthetics consultant for an historic restorer and preservationist.
- Feels Option 1 as presented by the City Engineer is perfect.
- Design and layout meets the city building needs and utilizes the current City Hall building.
- This option also includes a new library built in the old clinic site that will service us for a century or longer.
- Design & construction is important. A timber-frame style building has the lasting characteristics of strength, beauty of wood and speed of construction with energy savings and controlled costs.
- The Community Center will not meet Ely's 21st century needs and to fund its transformation would be fiscally irresponsible.

Sarah Lever (Morse):

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- Community should dream big.
- All groups with ideas should work together.
- The City needs to be efficient and needs a pool.

Celia Domich (Morse):

- If the Library stays in the Community Center, then there are more options for funding its renovation and making it ADA compliant.

John Fossum (Fortier St):

- Troubled by the division in the community.
- Everyone should feel they have a vote.

Kara Polyner, Council member:

- The council has no hidden agenda as one resident implied.
- She likes option 1 with the Library possibly going in a building complex that Jeff Sundell was presenting.
- The Community Center is sucking the City dry and should be run by a separate entity other than the City.

Next building needs public hearing will be on April 29, 2013 at the Senior Center from 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Adjourn:

Sheddy/Nikkola moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Claire Huisman
Deputy Clerk