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**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES, IL  
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP – POLICE FACILITY  
MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2017, 6:15 P.M.**

**Members Present:** Aldr. Turner, Aldr. Stellato, Aldr. Silkaitis, Aldr. Payleitner, Aldr. Lemke, Aldr. Krieger, Aldr. Gaugel, Aldr. Bessner, Aldr. Lewis

**Members Absent:** Aldr. Bancroft

**Others Present:** Raymond Rogina, Mayor; Mark Koenen, City Administrator; Peter Suhr, Director of Public Works; James Keegan, Police Chief; Joseph Schelstreet, Fire Chief; Chris Minick, Director of Finance; Larry Gunderson, Director of Information Services; David Kintz, Deputy Police Chief; Attorney John McGuirk

**1. Meeting called to order at 6:15 p.m.**

**2. Roll Call**

**K. Dobbs:**

**Stellato:** Present

**Silkaitis:** Present

**Payleitner:** Present

**Lemke:** Present

**Turner:** Present

**Bancroft:** Absent

**Krieger:** Present – arrived at 6:30 p.m.

**Gaugel:** Present

**Bessner:** Present

**Lewis:** Present

**3. Discussion Regarding Police Facility Location**

**Mr. Koenen:** The purpose of this meeting to give Staff guidance regarding our Police Facility. We have been talking recently about moving the Police Facility off the Downtown campus to another location; the two sites that seemed readily available are the City owned parcel at Rt. 31 and Red Gate Road or the Valley Shopping Center. The shopping center was considered to be in the greater downtown area and is permanently vacant. The last time we talked about this, Council gave Staff guidance and asked for us

to report back in 60 days. Attorney McGuirk and I had a conversation with the contract purchaser. The Valley Shopping Center site is currently owned by First Midwest Bank. They have a contract purchaser who will remain nameless and they have a Letter of Intent with a due diligence period that they are in right now, before they execute a contract to acquire that property. When we met with the contract purchaser early on, they were interested in working with us on one of two sites within the current Valley Shopping Center site. We had gotten to a point where we were beginning to talk about what the contract terms could be.

In the beginning of December, the contract purchaser called me to indicate they were no longer interested in continuing discussions with the City of St. Charles regarding our Police Department being positioned on the Valley Shopping Center site. The primary reason is that they didn't believe that based on our concept there wasn't enough money in it for them. Having said that, they said they had another opportunity they would prefer to advance and all conversations with the City were off.

At that point, Attorney McGuirk called First Midwest and asked to meet with them directly as the owner of the land. We met with them the week before Christmas; the basis of that conversation is that they thought we were further along in the conversation with the contract purchaser. When we shared with them there was no ongoing conversation, they said that earlier in December they executed an extension for that same letter of intent that would carry them until February 28 and it also provided the contract purchaser two additional 30 day contract extensions so it could potentially take this until the end of April.

At the same time, we asked for information about the environmental conditions at the site because there are representations that there are problems. This is common knowledge because you can go the IEPA website and find reference to the environmental issues. They were very cooperative in furnishing us with information and Peter Suhr worked with our Environmental Consultant named Huff & Huff to examine that information to give us a sense of the magnitude of the environmental problem, the timeline for fixing it, along with the economics of fixing it. We are still missing two or three reports that are in the EPA's office but we can't get them at this point so we can't finalize that for you quantitatively. We can very clearly say there are environmental problems and it's going to take money to fix it.

The other site that I mentioned at Red Gate Road and Rt. 31 doesn't have any environmental problems, we own the property today and we could advance the project forward. Building on both sites would be the same cost, but what separates them is the purchase cost of the land and the environmental issues at Valley.

Chris Minick pointed out to me that interest rates are changing. We are going to borrow money to build this project and the rates have already gone up. By the time we get to construction when we have to bond for the money, there is a good possibility that rates could be higher than they are now. By delaying, it may cost us more money.

**Mr. Minick:** What we are talking about is not an insignificant amount of money. Borrowing approximately \$16 million on a 20 year bond, if rates go up about 50 basis points, we are talking about approximately \$1 million in total debt service over that 20 year period.

**Mr. Koenen:** Regarding the Red Gate site, there are a few folks in this room who would prefer for the Police facility to be in Downtown St. Charles. We have talked about the possibility to still have a Police Department presence in Downtown St. Charles, and Peter and Chief Schelstreet have come up with an idea to put up signage and have a Police presence in Fire Station 1. People could go in the State Avenue door; there would be a telephone where they could connect to 911. There would also be a vestibule with a meeting room to the side that could be used by a resident looking for assistance.

**Aldr. Payleitner:** What does that include; just a telephone and a door?

**Mr. Koenen:** You would enter on the State Street side, go into a vestibule and there would be a phone that would automatically ring 911 whether it was an emergency or not and they would dispatch an officer to that site.

**Aldr. Payleitner:** That's not really a police presence if there isn't an officer on duty.

**Mr. Koenen:** We are spending time and money maintaining the existing facility. Five years ago we had a report that indicated to weather proof the exterior of the building was about \$1.5 million. There is period maintenance that needs to be done. It may feel like I'm pushing you to get to a decision, but I think we do need to come to a decision. The decision you need to get to is either: 1) go to Red Gate site 2) Wait to see what happens with Valley Shopping Center – worst case we wait till the end of April and then enter into a discussion with the bank or 3) find a new site.

**Mayor Rogina:** If we wait on the Valley Shopping Center, we are going to lose 60 more days. If somehow we get into it, we have talked about at least two years for EPA remediation, so you are looking at 2020 or 2021 for the station to be completed at that site. Please don't forget the cost of the property.

Downtown – it has been said by some to tear the existing station down and rebuild it on site. We own the property, so no cost to purchase, but there will be teardown costs and construction costs. But there is a greater cost for doing that; loss of development property on the river, and this has been talked about for years. People ask why we have municipal buildings on the river when it could be used to build a restaurant.

Rt. 31 – no question the perception is that it's too far out. But there is no cost to us, and we could have the satellite office downtown.

Look at other sites – Mark has received some ideas from you, but keep in mind, there is the cost of the land and the time delay in doing that research.

These are all things to consider, and I agree with Mark that time is of the essence.

**Aldr. Turner:** We forgot one thing, and that is the Police personnel. They know we have been doing this for 14 or 15 months now, they know there are sites out there, and they know the building they are in is in horrible condition. Would you want to work in a building like that? For us to say we are going to go back to Valley Shopping Center, and it's not going to be three months of waiting, it's going to be another year or more. We are literally telling our Police officers to work out of a rat trap when we are supposed to have their backs, all the time knowing that Red Gate is available. Chief, you and I have already talked about morale and this is not going to be good for Police morale for us to delay this anymore when they all know there is a site available.

**Aldr. Stellato:** Regarding the Valley Shopping Center; we don't know the terms of the contract and the contract purchaser could keep control of this property for as long as possible. Regarding the EPA issues; I have never seen an EPA issue be cleared up to where an NFR letter is issued in less than two years. We can't get permits or do anything until we get the NFR letter. The property is telling us it's not ready. That doesn't mean it won't be developed in the future with some other use, but it's not right for our needs anymore. We have to learn to be flexible and change with the times. My opinion is for Red Gate & Rt. 31; that is the best option we have.

**Aldr. Gaugel:** I was always a big advocate of the Valley Shopping Center, but that ship has sailed. There is no question in my mind that we need to move on Red Gate right now. Aldr. Turner brought up some good points that I hadn't considered regarding morale. Chief, is there a perception that Council is dragging our feet? When I toured the facility two years ago, the first thing the officers said to me at roll call was "please get us a new station". That was two years ago and here we are, still talking about it. We need to do everything we can to get this to happen.

**Chief Keegan:** We have a great group of employees; we are 183 years old as a community. Our staff has been patient, but they want a decision to be made. Would the officers like it to be at the Valley Shopping Center? Absolutely; but we are at the point where it's taking quite a bit of time for this to materialize and we can make it work where ever the City puts the facility. If we look for other property in the downtown area, it's going to be redevelopment so there will be acquisition and demolition and all kinds of different delays. So my staff supports the facility put at Red Gate Road and Rt. 31.

**Aldr. Silkaitis:** I still prefer downtown, but I realize that isn't going to happen. I agree with the economics of putting it at Red Gate, but it seems far out there. I would suggest that we have a staffed satellite downtown and do it for a trial period to see if people would use it. If they don't use, we can get rid of it.

**Mayor Rogina:** Please clarify your stance. Are you okay with Rt. 31?

**Aldr. Silkaitis:** Yes. It's not my first choice, but I could buy into it if we have a staffed satellite office during the day; I'm not saying it has to be open all night. If we did that, I would go along with Route 31.

**Chief Keegan:** The Newborn Protection Act mandates that by law, each fire house and police station in the State of Illinois has to have these signs erected. They also have to have courtesy phones. All three fire houses have a courtesy phone that as soon as it's picked up, it immediately dials into Tri-Com. The concept that bigger municipalities use is the officers have the availability to go to the respective fire houses to greet a complainant or citizen and bring them inside to a secured interview room. The officers can go there on their off time, stay on the beat, write their reports and there is a bathroom facility. I didn't envision the satellite office being manned full time, but we can talk about that in more detail.

**Aldr. Krieger:** Calling 911 takes forever to get an answer and they ask a ton of questions. I've had a complaint recently about that. There has to be some improvement with Tri-Com in order for that to work.

**Aldr. Bessner:** I would like to see a manned Satellite office as well. I don't want to compare us to Chicago, but they have precincts in every neighborhood.

**Aldr. Payleitner:** I was a proponent for Valley Shopping Center, but I understand that isn't feasible. I thought of a precinct concept too. Not so much for emergencies, more for the PR piece of it to have a police presence downtown. I was wondering if there is a division of the police department that can still be there; maybe special events or something like that.

**Mayor Rogina:** I don't think there is any doubt in my mind that there will be initial backlash of putting the police department on Rt. 31, but it's all about how we present it. As far as the satellite office, that can work too; again, it's how it's done. I've seen so many times where staff has done a great job at making a concept really work. We can still build a first class station that meets the needs of a modern police officer AND meet the needs of the resident who wants a Downtown presence with a manned satellite office.

**Aldr. Turner:** I could see having four Satellite offices to man the Downtown eventually.

**Aldr. Lewis:** That little yellow house is for sale on State Street; is there anything we can do with that? Can we turn that into a police presence?

**Mr. Koenen:** If the Council would like us to, we can look at that. I would only suggest that when you add more buildings to the City coffer, it costs more money and maintenance. If we could use space in Fire Station 1 as Chief Schelstreet can accommodate, that would be more cost effective and we aren't adding to our infrastructure.

**Aldr. Lemke:** I think it's important to make it clear to the public that it is a separate entity.

**Aldr. Stellato:** Can we have someone do a rendering of the Fire Station with the police area and what that would look like? Maybe seeing a picture would help.

**Aldr. Lewis:** I believe everything you are saying, but I still do not believe that Rt. 31 is the right site. I never have and I still don't.

**Aldr. Lemke:** I think we still have to consider other sites. What about the former IDOT garage?

**Aldr. Turner:** I'm sure that location has environmental problems also due to the use of the building.

**Aldr. Lemke:** It would be helpful to know where the plume is at that location.

**Mr. Koenen:** There are two environmental locations on that site; one is on the northwest corner which has an NFR letter on it today. The second location is where the dry cleaners was on the southeast corner and that is the problematic location; we know the plume goes to the east and south and is off-site as well.

**Mayor Rogina:** You may notice the agenda does not suggest an action being taken, but we can take an informal poll for the purpose of giving staff direction. Is the majority of the Council willing to go to the Rt. 31 site? I've heard you loud and clear, we have to have a satellite with a police presence downtown. That is Staff's job to come up with what that looks like to meet Council's expectation.

**Aldr. Stellato:** Based on the handout you gave us, the cost is basically the same at either facility; the only difference is Valley Shopping Center has a \$3.5 million price tag on purchasing the property and/or the clean-up. Plus if we wait, the bonds go up and we run the risk of another \$1 million. Red Gate is still the cheapest alternative, correct?

**Mr. Koenen:** Correct.

**Aldr. Payleitner:** Mark, did you say there was another spot?

**Mr. Koenen:** We have looked at a variety of locations. Aldr. Krieger suggested we look at the First Midwest Bank; we did - it's 1.7 acres and \$1.3 million. We would need another 1 to 1 ½ acres above and beyond that, which we could negotiate with the parking lot owner to assemble the land.

**Aldr. Krieger:** Did you look at the old Regole property?

**Mr. Koenen:** No, because we have to think about how far east we want to go?

**Aldr. Lemke:** That is at Tyler and Main Street; the intersection of two main streets, which would be good.

**Aldr. Lewis:** What about the property by Thompson school?

**Mr. Koenen:** There was a conversation with D303 about 10<sup>th</sup> and West Main, and because of their renovations with their campus, they were not interested in pursuing a conversation with the City.

**Aldr. Payleitner:** They are closing Haines, what about that?

**Aldr. Lewis:** This is still a good 18-20 months out. What is the plan for the existing building?

**Mr. Koenen:** Patch it. Because the police officers know there is a plan in place, they will be patient.

**Chief Keegan:** When issues come up, we work closely with Public Works. We are doing the best we can to be conscientious with costs and we definitely aren't putting anything new in.

**Mayor Rogina:** Let's do a poll so Staff has direction.

**Aldr. Stellato:** Rt. 31 with a stronger presence downtown.

**Aldr. Payleitner:** Rt. 31 with a stronger presence downtown.

**Aldr. Silkaitis:** Rt. 31 with a stronger presence downtown.

**Aldr. Gaugel:** Rt. 31 and move now.

**Aldr. Krieger:** I'll withhold any vote until I see what kind of downtown presence is presented.

**Aldr. Lewis:** I think that is a good decision, I will go with Jo and withhold a vote.

**Aldr. Turner:** Rt. 31 with stronger presence downtown, and I'm sure Aldr. Bancroft would vote the same way.

**Aldr. Lemke:** Withholding a vote the same as Aldr. Krieger and Lewis.

**Aldr. Bessner:** Rt. 31 with a stronger presence downtown.

#### **4. Executive Session**

None.

#### **5. Additional items from Mayor, Council, Staff or Citizens**

None.

**6. Adjournment from Special City Council Workshop.**

Motion by Aldr. Turner, seconded by Aldr. Payleitner. No additional discussion.  
Approved unanimously by voice vote. **Motion carried.**