

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
MEMORIAL BOULEVARD TASK FORCE
CITY HALL, 111 NORTH MAIN STREET
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
111 NORTH MAIN STREET
7:00 p.m.**

ATTENDEES: Chairperson Ellen Zoppo-Sassu
Commissioner James Albert
Commissioner Peter Del Mastro
Commissioner Paul Murdock
Commissioner David Mills
Commissioner Janet Williams
Commissioner John Soares
Commissioner Frank Stawski

ABSENT: Commissioner Cheryl Thibeault

ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chairwoman Zoppo-Sassu called the Thursday, February 12, 2015 Special Meeting of the Memorial Boulevard Task Force to order at 7:00 p.m. No members of the public wished to speak at this time.

ITEM #2 – ACCEPTANCE OF JANUARY 15, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

IT was MOVED by Commissioner Mills and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stawski to accept the January 15, 2015 meeting minutes.

ITEM #3 – UPDATE OF DRA CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Anwar Housain and Peter Austin of DRA reviewed all the studies that were provided to them and conducted a walk-through of the building to evaluate its condition. The building is a gem in the rough and appears to be in sound condition, structurally. There is adequate acreage conducive for its use. We need to ensure that we meet with the regulatory officials (Building Inspector, Fire Marshal, and Planner) early on to keep them in the loop.

The purpose of their study is to provide a conceptual design, and also a study to address the conditions of all the components of the building.

Handicap accessibility is a key component. Building codes mandate that we must have elevator accessibility to all levels of the theater and school. By constructing an outside elevator on the southeast corner of the courtyard, it will provide access to all levels of the school and theater. By constructing a glass elevator to allow visibility of the school, would keep within the guidelines of the historic regulations.

The building code states that we have to have a large amount of bathrooms. It also states that you can go up or down one floor to access them. Since none of the existing toilet facilities are handicapped accessible, new ones will have to be constructed.

The rest of the building looked good and all the uses that the Committee suggested are good and can be lumped together and classified as Business B. The remainder of the school would convert into rentable space.

The outside site work is a key component. Anwar recommends removing the steps coming up to the elevator and adding handicapped parking spaces and introducing a landscape to the area. The City Planner was very helpful in this design.

Anwar stated that they are still in the process of providing cost estimates. The key components will be electrical, mechanical and heating systems. He then turned the meeting over to Peter Austin to provide an overview of the systems.

Peter Austin stated in reviewing the systems he notes that all the systems are worn and have served their purpose. Going forward, the building will require a full replacement of the electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and heating and air conditioning systems.

A question and answer session was then conducted. Commissioner Albert questioned when, and in what sequence the replacement of the systems would be conducted. Peter stated he could prioritize the sequence of the systems but heat is a significant issue and the boilers need to be replaced. Code compliance is a priority and DRA will work with the City to determine what our priorities are.

Commissioner Murdock asked whether we could keep the existing duct work if the mechanical system was replaced. Peter stated that the duct work isn't sized correctly for the current ventilation codes. It needs to be 5 times bigger.

Commissioner Del Mastro discussed the financial analysis and the phasing out of the various systems over a ten year span. Anwar stated that he could prepare a breakdown of each year after meeting with City officials and determining what our priorities are. Phase I and II will be at a higher cost because of the building infrastructure (i.e. boiler and elevator).

Commissioner Soares asked if DRA conducted a study of the outside of the building and if so, what its condition was. Peter stated that the exterior of the building was very sound. It was very beneficial that the City replaced the roof in 2008 which made the building water tight. The City also replaced the windows in 1983 which was a plus. The exterior looked structurally sound. We would need to work on walkways, stairs, etc.

Commissioner Albert stated that the Committee will need a list of what needs to be done immediately and what the cost would be by the next time we meet. DRA will provide this information.

Commissioner Williams asked whether the replacement of the systems would be energy efficient. Anwar stated that they have to meet energy codes so anywhere they can replace systems with energy efficient systems, they will. They can provide a rough estimate of costs, but until they know what the exact use of the building will be, they have to wait.

Chairwoman Zoppo stated that the City Council has given them permission to market the building through fundraising. She asked Anwar from a building use stand point, could we use the theater as a stand-alone without triggering any problems. Anwar stated that we could use it as a temporary use. There are minimum requirements to bring the theater up to code. It wouldn't be considered a change in the A-1 code, which is assembly. Chairwoman Zoppo stated as long as we conform to the codes as we did for the November events, we can continue to use the building for small events. Anwar stated that he would provide color coded drawings/renderings to use as a marketing tool.

Commissioner Albert stated that the Chamber of Commerce deals with a lot of solar energy vendors who could outfit the building with roof top solar panels. Anwar stated the building is perfect for this use because of its large flat roof. Commissioner Albert suggested that the Committee look into this and all members were in agreement.

Commissioner Albert asked whether the existing elevator could be used as an alternate use. Anwar stated that in speaking with the Building Inspector, he was hesitant that it would get re-certified. He suggested not taking it out though because we might be able to use it as a freight elevator or for custodial use.

Commissioner Albert questioned the use of the kitchen area as a commercial use. Anwar stated the existing kitchen was too outdated and suggested converting it into a food gathering one level down from the theater.

Commissioner Albert stated that in conducting the fundraising events in November, it was noted by the theater group that there wasn't a lot of prep space for acts, changing rooms and

instrument storage and asked if DRA would consider some of the classrooms adjacent to the theater. Anwar recommended that if we made the stairs going down from the stage area 5-6 feet wider, there is approximately 1,500 square feet of space that can be utilized.

Commissioner Stawski asked whether DRA could provide estimates going forward for design and soft costs. Anwar stated he could include this in his report which he should have complete in approximately 2 to 2 ½ weeks.

ITEM #4 – REPORT OF SUB-COMMITTEES:

Commissioner Mills reported that since the City Council made a motion to allow fundraising events in the building, he has been putting together a schedule of events. On Sunday, April 19th at 1:30 the Whiffenpoofs from Yale will be performing. Tickets will be sold at \$20.00 each. On May 3rd at 4:00, the Bristol Brass and Wind Ensemble will be conducting a performance. A tribute band will be scheduled in early April. The exact date and time will be determined.

Commissioner Del Mastro reported that he and Commissioner Thibeault met and created a model of numbers to see how it looked. Once they receive the actual numbers from DRA, they can create a better financial forecast.

Commissioner Albert reported on the Use Committee stating that Richard Rich has done a lot of legwork on coming up with rentable rates for business incubators, summary analysis of utility costs and reviewing the floor plans to get an estimate of rentable square footage. They will conduct another meeting on Tuesday, February 17th at 6:00 at the Chamber of Commerce at 200 Main Street. The Agenda will be posted tomorrow.

ITEM #5 – NEW BUSINESS BY TASK FORCE MEMBERS

No new business was conducted.

ITEM #6 – NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 19th at 7:00 in Council Chambers and the last regular meeting will be held on Monday, March 2nd at 7:00 in Council Chambers.

ITEM #7 - ADJOURNMENT

IT was **MOVED** by Commissioner Mills and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stawski to adjourn at 8:10 p.m., and it was unanimously approved.

Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, Chairperson
Memorial Boulevard Task Force

cc: Commission Members
City Council Members
Kenneth B. Cockayne, Mayor

