

WILL COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

10:45 a.m.
Will County Office Building – County Board Room
302 North Chicago Street
Joliet, IL 60432

June 19, 2008

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Moustis called the meeting to order at 11:55 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present were Members: McMillan, Woods, Anderson, Piccolin, Singer, Weigel, Dralle, Riley, Wisniewski, Kusta, Maher, Gerl, Goodson, Baltz, Gould, Rozak, Bilotta, Konicki, Svava, Stewart, Adamic, Babich, Wilhelmi and Moustis.

Absent were Members: Brandolino, Blackburn and Travis.

Present from State's Attorney's Office:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were presented for approval.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

City of Joliet's concept plan for redevelopment of City Center, including "governmental campus"

Mr. Thanas, City Manager, presented the concept plan for the City Center.

Mr. Moustis recognized Councilman Shetina who was also present today. Thank you for all the work you have put in. When we talk about the First Midwest site, we are talking about a clean site; the area will be clean to build on.

Mr. Thanas agreed; we would be taking the entire block; there was talk about using the existing building but that would be a real challenge. We would be looking at a series of land exchanges; there are only 2 pieces of property we would acquire. In exchange for giving that to the county we would be looking for the county to exchange that with the State's Attorney's building and the west half of the city/county parking lot across from Union Station. This gives the county an opportunity to consolidate all of your operations on 4 square blocks.

Mrs. Woods commended the city for the work that was put forth. This is a proposal that she can accept. Until this happens she would like to see the parking situation addressed for something to use throughout the county.

Mr. Maher commented that this second plan is much better than the first time we put something together. We will have an RFQ coming out this week to do a comprehensive planning and needs analysis. He does like some of the ideas the city has come up with but he wants to be little a cautious. There are slides that we have not seen before; there is much work to be done before we make any formal decision. This is a great start.

Mr. Kusta left at this juncture

Mr. Moustis agreed; this is the first workable start I have seen in 16 years.

Ms. Konicki left at this juncture.

Mrs. Dralle indicated this is a very creative plan. Are you looking at stimulating private retail that would fit into this plan as well?

Mr. Wilhelmi and Mr. Singer left at this juncture.

Mr. Thanas answered yes; we do not want Joliet to be the governmental capital of Will County. We want it to be the governmental and business center of Will County. We are trying to identify large blocks of land to keep for private development – not city development.

Mr. Gould and Mr. Bilotta left at this juncture.

Mr. Gerl stated this shows excellent vision; this is the first plan that takes into account our existing assets and utilizing those assets for our space needs and parking needs. What is your next step? How do we move forward with the acquisition plan?

Mr. Thanas replied our recommendation is to take the existing committee of 3 members from the city and 3 from the county and have the people put in place to start working on land acquisition. We may decide the city will be the leader in acquisition. We need both the city and the county looking at bond issues; we need to be looking at private equity companies. We could have one person from the city and one from the county co-chairing these sub-committees and then bringing in the right people who could help with those components. We break it down into 10 or 12 committees that would address parking, financial, architectural, space needs; then get to a point where they make some decisions and then bring those committee reports back to us.

Mr. Gerl suggested putting together a timeline with some dates on it, having a point person and move forward.

Mr. Thanas indicated the committee is ready to do that; we are looking for a nod of the head to keep working.

Mr. Svava stated Joliet is not the only option. In order for him to talk to his taxpayers, he needs to know what the cost is to go somewhere else. He would like to see some kind of parallel development to compare it to. Competition gets you the best price; Joliet is still in competition.

Mrs. Dralle left at this juncture.

Mr. Thanas commented what he hears is that you have an open mind and are willing to look at this plan.

Mrs. Woods and Mr. Babich left at this juncture.

Mr. McMillan indicated the space needs analysis will be for the county's primary purposes; some of the aspects of that study may come up with additional facilities. We will not know until we have some finality on our overall long-term needs. You have done a nice job – this appears to be good start. We need to know where we are going overall.

Mr. Wisniewski and Mrs. Riley left at this juncture.

QUORUM WAS LOST.

Mr. Moustis stated we are talking about what we would do in partnership with Joliet – that does not mean we are not going to look at other facilities throughout the county and how we will deliver services to the entire county. This proposal is about how we may go forward within Joliet. Through our committee structure, we will continue to talk about other facilities throughout the county.

Mr. Weigel commented he is glad to see the cooperation from Joliet. Is there any chance the city is changing their view on the future of Silver Cross Hospital?

Mr. Gerl left at this juncture

Mr. Thanas answered the city is still committed to seeing Silver Cross remain in the City of Joliet.

Mr. Anderson commented historically the county has taken a band-aid approach regarding space needs. This presentation demonstrates the kind of vision we need to solve these problems.

Mr. Shetina indicated in this process we have been looking for some kind of understanding and some trust; we have never had that. With this committee structure as we go through this process and recognize each other's needs. We are not afraid to compete with anyone. We are asking for an opportunity. We recognize you have to look at all options; we want to have a part in the dialogue.

Mr. Maher agreed; we need to do this in a planful way. We want to make sure it is positive for Will County and the residents we serve. In order to do that we need to have as much information as possible; there are some really good ideas here. He sees the committee meetings taking place in the future – months from now after we know what the expectation is from county board and elected officials.

Mr. Thanas stated we are not trying to rush the process; Will County is in line now for additional judges after the census in 2010. We do not want to shut down any conversations about any other facilities. The County Board will have to make a policy decision. We are here to give you our pitch on why to stay in downtown. There should be satellites in other parts of the county, but there needs to be a centralized court system.

Mrs. Voots indicated we do have satellite branches in Bolingbrook Crete. We have to plan for the future and offer more things to the customers.

Mr. Moustis stated it is important for County Board to hear where we are and we have accomplished that today; that was our intent. It was nice for the city not to push anything forward; we will all continue to move forward. This is the first time we have seen a workable plan. Thank you for coming today; this has been very productive.

Mr. Thanas thanked the County Board for their time. We look forward to working with the county.

Other Business

Executive Session

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 12:55 p.m.