

**CITY OF STEVENS POINT
SPECIAL COMMON COUNCIL MEETING**

**Police Department
933 Michigan Ave.**

**April 5, 2018
6:00 P.M.**

Mayor Mike Wiza, Presiding

PRESENT: Ald. Jennings, Shorr, Johnson, Slowinski (6:53 p.m.), Kneebone, Dugan, McComb, Phillips, Morrow.

EXCUSED: Ald. Nebel, Oberstadt

OTHERS

PRESENT: Clerk Moe, C/T Ladick, Dir. Ostrowski, Dir. Lemke, Dir. Beduhn, H/R Manager Jakusz, Deputy Treasurer Freeberg, Joe Bachman – Stevens Point City Times.

Discussion and Possible Action on the Following:

2. Presentation by Bray Architects and discussion regarding the proposed new City Hall.

Mayor Wiza said in August, the Council chose to build a new City Hall downtown. He said since that approval, City Electeds, Directors and staff have been working with Bray Architects on a plan.

Dir. Ostrowski said the City of Stevens Point has been looking at a new building since 2013. He said staff has been working with Bray Architects to see what will work best for each department and identify possible efficiencies. Dir. Ostrowski said the building should be a community building rather than a City building.

Mike Hacker, Bray Architects, said this meeting is to get feedback and goals for the project. He said over the past few months he has been working with department heads to get their feedback and opinions for the new City Hall. Mr. Hacker said he would like to receive feedback from the alderpersons.

Ald. Phillips asked if anyone with an outside perspective attends the planning group meetings.

Mayor Wiza said as of right now, no one.

Ald. Phillips asked if they are going to get an outside perspective on this project.

Mayor Wiza said eventually that will be part of the process. They are beginning with the alderpersons at this meeting.

Ald. Kneebone said each department has its own mission and identity. She wants to make sure those identities do not get lost and make it more difficult for people to know where to go.

Mr. Hacker said this is a core part of dialog that will happen at this meeting.

Ald. McComb said she had assumed City Hall wanted to have a separate identity from the County. She said at this meeting she is hearing that it is the differentiation amongst City departments. She would like to know which it is.

Mayor Wiza said he thought it was some of both. He said not only separating from the County/City building but also where the public needs to go.

Mr. Hacker said the goal is that when someone enters the building, the process is streamlined for where they need to go.

Council members discussed what words they thought should be included in the Word Cloud.

Mr. Hacker asked how the project can improve the public service experience and the department operational efficiencies within the building. He said on average there are about 70 people daily in City Hall though that number increases significantly during election and tax time.

Ald. Jennings said she is concerned with the architecture plan going from multiple office windows to one window and how that will completely reorganize the structure of City government.

Mr. Hacker said Ald. Jennings hit on one of the key items. He discussed a previous corresponding study and how that fit into a reorganization. He said 80 percent of what they are talking about is not architecture, but staffing and flow. Due to the size of the site, the building would need to be on two floors and one of the concerns is having a public access window on the second floor.

Ald. Dugan said one window could cause incomplete or unclear information. She said it is invaluable to talk with people in each department because they know their area. She recently had experience with a single service window municipality and the person there was not able to help her.

Mayor Wiza said if a single service window or a multiple window, given the City Hall will be on two floors, the intent would be to send the person to the correct department if they did not know the answer.

Ald. Morrow said a one stop shop sounds good in theory, but it is going to be hard to find someone who knows all the city departments. If you find a person that does have all this knowledge than they should be paid a higher wage.

Ald. Shorr said having a single window may be over-ambitious. He asked what would be a reasonable number of offices on the first floor with windows given the space constraints.

Mr. Hacker said a lot of it depends on the size of the department. He said the planning group is talking about having 3 or 4 service windows spread between two floors.

C/T Ladick said the internal group tried to make the one window idea work but it is not feasible after looking into it. He said his office met with the Clerk and Community Development offices as the three together handle the bulk of customer transactions. They discussed the pros and cons of the idea, but they are not going with one customer service window.

Ald. Dugan said she likes the idea that you can go up to the window and you can see everyone and they are right there if you have a question. She said public accessibility is important.

C/T Ladick said another question is if the Clerk's and Treasurer's offices could share a window. He said that would not be feasible because the job duties are not interchangeable but are specialized and do not overlap. He said it is unreasonable to expect one person to do or know both. He said another thing to consider is with one window is if there is a long line for paying taxes or voting, you do not know who is there to see which office. C/T Ladick said they approached this idea with an open mind; however, they do not want to go along with a design that will not work, and they will have to deal with for years to come.

Mayor Wiza said everyone should remember what the goal was that they had imagined for City Hall. It should be more than just an updated building.

Ald. Johnson thought a single point of contact is a great idea. She agreed with Ald. Morrow that the City would need the right person in that position. She liked the idea of working pods so everyone can work together.

Mayor Wiza said the planning group has decided the single point of contact is not going to work.

Ald. Phillips asked if Engineering is going to be at a remote site.

Mayor Wiza said that has not yet been determined though it is unlikely.

Mr. Hacker said he understands what works best for one city may not work for another. He said the City will need to take what they do and do not like to determine what will work best for Stevens Point.

Mayor Wiza asked the alderpersons what their goals are for the City Hall.

Ald. Shorr said the key pieces make sense in terms of focusing on user experience and efficiency of City staff working together.

Ald. Dugan said she believes they need collaborative spaces for the departments as well as citizen access to departmental staff. She also said the design aesthetics are important to her.

Ald. Kneebone said we are here to serve the public and she wants ease of access for people coming into the City Hall. She does not support one single window but having each department have their own so people can interact with departmental staff and get their questions answered. She would also like an area where public events could be held.

Ald. Johnson said she wants the space to be welcoming to the community as well as a focus on the interoperability of the departments and staff to increase efficiency.

Ald. McComb said she had supported staying in the current City Hall. She said she thought space was important as well as having a welcoming and dignified building. She also said the City should take advantage of the location next to the river.

Ald. Phillips said his views are that they should stay in the current City Hall.

Ald. Morrow said he thought it was important to do the City Hall right so it does not cost the City more money down the road. He also said he wanted a welcoming building for the public.

Ald. Jennings said she voted against the location of the new City Hall as she had concerns about the site. She said because of the size of the lot they are now having to make all these adjustments.

Mayor Wiza said they are not trying to squeeze things in but to give the architect some direction.

Ald. Slowinski responded to Ald. Jennings' statement by saying he hopes the City is not making adjustments because the space is tight. He did not want this site because he did not believe there was enough room.

Mr. Hacker said this is a variable and the challenge is an opportunity. He believes the site has many attributes. He said they are looking to design a building that is timeless and not trendy. He said he found the visual preference survey guide helpful with determining what the building should look like. He explained the process and feedback from the survey. He then went through building images the planning group seemed to have consensus around.

The alderpersons provided feedback on the building images.

Ald. Phillips said all the comments the alderpersons are making have to do with landscaping and other items they want and like. However, he said once the building is built there will be no room for the items they like. He believes it is time to look for a new site.

Ald. Shorr said he is not surprised to hear about the desire for natural building materials. He likes more of a civic presence for the building.

Ald. Kneebone suggested a green roof if there is not enough space for landscaping.

Mr. Hacker showed a bird's eye view of the land and how the building can be situated.

Ald. Jennings asked about the Green Circle Trail in the area.

Mr. Hacker said they are keeping and hoping to enhance the trail.

Ald. Slowinski said he is concerned with the parking being located on the other side of Water Street. He said when he brought this up before, he was told there would be parking on the same side of the street as City Hall. He said this is a main thoroughfare for traffic including semis.

Mr. Hacker said there are parking spots available to the north of the proposed site which is City owned property.

Ald. Slowinski said there are tenants in the building where the proposed additional parking is located.

Mayor Wiza said the current tenants do not use the amount of parking that is available.

Ald. Slowinski said right now the Children's Hospital does not use that much parking but there may be a different tenant in the future.

Ald. Johnson said she understood Ald. Slowinski's concerns with parking. She said Marathon County has parking across the street and people cross a busier street to get to the Court House.

Mayor Wiza said currently there are less than 20 parking spots the City and County share around the Court House building where people do not have to cross the street.

Ald. Slowinski said Water Street and Church Street are two totally different streets to cross.

Mayor Wiza said there would be roughly the same number of parking spots, or more, where people do not have to cross the street at the new location and they will not have to share those with the County.

Mr. Hacker said they believe there is enough parking available including short-term, ADA, overflow, and staff parking. He said the project area is 22,250 square feet though not all that area is buildable due to setbacks, sidewalks and a plaza. He said the estimated gross building area is 20,000 to 24,000 square feet with 20,000 being the target. With the desire for more community space and the circulation patterns, they are slightly over target, but they are refining it. He said only two-thirds of the 20,000

square feet will be on the first floor. They are looking to target as much public space as possible as well as being mindful of which departments' transactional windows are located on the first and second floors. He said they are assuming a building footprint of 14,500 square feet. He said things like the mechanicals and a possible staff breakroom may have to be pushed to a partial third floor, but it would not be accessible to the public.

Ald. Shorr said the discussion has focused on long-term building aesthetics and not future needs. He asked when the City is projected to outgrow the building.

Mayor Wiza said they looked at the previous space needs study but there is no crystal ball. He said they did consider future growth.

Mr. Hacker said they are designing buildings to be flexible. He said there needs to be a balance between having enough space for the future and not overbuilding.

Ald. Jennings said when the City was looking at other building sites, the Council was told the price to build goes up considerably when additional floors are added. She asked if this was true.

Mr. Hacker said he was not part of that discussion. He said generally there is an offset. He said if you have a larger single-story building there is more roof area and inefficiencies. He said with a vertical option there is a smaller footprint and roof but you are adding an elevator and stairs so there is a tradeoff in those dollars. Mr. Hacker said the cost for this building would be close to the same if it was a two to three story building or on a single floor. He said it helps that the City is building on an already developed piece of land.

Mr. Hacker then presented bird's eye and street views of the new proposed City Hall with the alderpersons providing feedback.

Ald. Slowinski asked if the building is being designed with the intent of purchasing the land between the building and river.

Mayor Wiza said it is being designed with the footprint that the City currently has, but they would like to purchase the land.

Ald. Slowinski said the property is confining and they are trying to squeeze in the building. He asked about storm water retention on the site.

Mayor Wiza said the City would not need it because of the storm sewers.

Ald. Slowinski said he thought any runoff created needed to be maintained on site.

Mayor Wiza replied the runoff needs to be maintained on site and the permeable surface does not change. He said the square footage of the footprint is in line and a little more than what the study said the City needs. Mayor Wiza said ideally it would be nice to get the connection to the river which would allow for future growth.

Dir. Ostrowski does not believe this is a squeeze site but an urban site they are working with that has adequate parking. He said he never said all the parking would remain on site. One of the benefits of this site is it allows for phased expansion if needed as the City owns the property and buildings to the north. He said the site allows flexibility, proximity to the County, and the City owns the over flow parking site. Dir. Ostrowski said a lot of people from Edgewater Manor walk down to the ADRC and cross Water Street. He said there needs to be improvements to the Water Street crossing regardless if City Hall goes there or not.

Ald. Kneebone asked for clarification regarding Verso's property.

Dir. Ostrowski explained the property boundaries and said the City is talking with the company.

Ald. McComb said the City's website says that Water Street is not a truck route.

Mayor Wiza said trucks can go up to Arlington Place but he will check to make sure the City's website is correct.

Ald. Slowinski asked if the building is being designed to go up higher if needed.

Mr. Hacker said the City could build vertically; however, it would require additional costs.

Ald. Slowinski said it would make sense to expand to the north rather than vertically.

Ald. Johnson asked if there is room for outdoor amenities.

Mr. Hacker said the building will be designed with a modest amount of outdoor space so as not to take away from the bike path.

Community Media Manager Quirk asked why the new City Hall footprint does not utilize the space occupied by the small office building to the north which the City owns.

Attorney Beveridge said the current tenant has a 5-year lease.

Ald. Jennings said when the Council was originally discussing building on this property, she was concerned that they were going to be taking a valuable, developable waterfront property off the tax roll. She said at that time she was told Verso would never sell the land, so it would not be developable.

Mayor Wiza said he was unsure where she got the information from and said it did not come from him. He said the City does not have the ability to tell Verso what they can or cannot do with their property.

Ald. Dugan said the design looks like the departments would be inaccessible to the public.

Mayor Wiza said the departments would be accessible on one side of the lobby and the other side would be the Council Chambers and other public spaces.

Mr. Hacker said when you walk in the door you will see the service windows and there will be signs indicating which department.

Ald. Jennings asked if the overhangs would be sufficient to block out the summer sun.

Mr. Hacker said the intent of the overhangs is to get the right amount of natural light in the building especially on the second floor.

Mayor Wiza said this is an ongoing process and any suggestions can be directed through the Mayor's Office, Community Development Office, or their Alderperson.

3. Adjournment.

Adjourned at 8:03 p.m.