

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING - THURSDAY EVENING - AUGUST 12, 2010

PRESENT: Marshall, Cordeiro, Parella (arrived at 7:10 o'clock PM), and Herreshoff

ABSENT: Barboza

ALSO PRESENT: Diane C. Mederos, Town Administrator

Councilman Cordeiro noted at 6:12 o'clock PM that Council Chairman Marshall was on his way and would be in attendance momentarily.

The Council met in special session on Thursday evening, August 12, 2010 in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, beginning at 6:30 o'clock PM, Council Chairman Marshall presiding:

1. Workshop with Animal Shelter Capital Project Committee
 - a. Town Treasurer Goucher re request for authorization of funds for the purpose of obtaining professional services to evaluate the proposed Animal Shelter site,
continued from July 28, 2010

Cordeiro/Herreshoff - Voted unanimously to authorize the Bond Counsel to prepare the necessary documentation to allow for the Animal Shelter Capital Project Committee to borrow funds, not to exceed \$50,000, prior to issuance of the bond for the purpose as set forth at tonight's meeting and not to include any additional expenditure without prior Council approval.

Prior to the vote taken, Council Chairman Marshall explained that at the July 28, 2010 Council Meeting, the Animal Shelter Capital Project Committee requested the authorization of funds in order to obtain professional services to evaluate the proposed animal shelter site and that the purpose of tonight's meeting was to receive an update on the animal shelter project.

Council Chairman Marshall stated that during the construction of the Library, the Capital Project Committee would provide the Council with financial reports and updates on the progress of

the project on a quarterly basis. He then explained that this is how he would like to move forward with the animal shelter project.

Council Chairman Marshall noted that communication and dialogue is important in order to have another successfully completed construction project.

Council Chairman Marshall mentioned the new Fire and Rescue Department Headquarters ribbon cutting ceremony that took place on Sunday, August 8, 2010, noting that this was another example of a successful project.

Council Chairman Marshall stated that he would like to proceed tonight with questions from Councilman Herreshoff to the architect, a discussion about site selection, and an update from the Capital Project Committee.

Council Chairman Marshall requested that the Committee provide the Council with a report on the future projection of the maintenance and upkeep costs for the new facility.

Councilman Herreshoff stated that the goal for the Animal Shelter project is to provide a serviceable, efficient building for a cost not to exceed \$2 million.

Police Chief Canario, Chairman of the Animal Shelter Project Committee, agreed with Councilman Herreshoff and noted that the Committee's goal is to provide an efficient animal shelter that will fit the needs of the community.

Chief Canario stated that the Committee unanimously agreed, after viewing the present animal shelter, that it is outdated and needs to be replaced. He further stated that the Committee intends to build a new animal shelter in a timely and methodical manner.

Chief Canario noted that the Committee visited Potter League and the cost to construct that facility was \$13 million. He then stated that the Committee will not spend over the \$2 million bond.

Chief Canario explained that the Committee has looked at two (2) possible sites and recently met with an engineering firm that will be bidding on the site feasibility project.

Chief Canario stated that the goal of the Committee is to provide an animal shelter that will service the community with the possibility of "renting it out" to other communities under the Town of Bristol's control.

Chief Canario noted that he is working with Animal Control Officer Gibree, who has been the Animal Control Officer for 28 years, in regard to Councilman Herreshoff's concerns with the size of the new animal shelter and potential need for additional personnel.

John M. Lannan, Vice-chairman of the Animal Shelter Project Committee, stated that he is a land developer and has offered to donate a portion of land known as the Deer Run Estates for the new animal shelter site.

Mr. Lannan noted that while the Deer Run site was being assessed, a parcel of land owned by the Town located north of the existing landfill directly behind the Saint Gobain property was found to be available. He explained that there is a strip of woods between 136 Express and the Saint Gobain parking lot that could be used for access to that parcel.

Mr. Lannan noted that the services of an engineer are necessary in order to assess the land properly. He explained that the Committee "walked the land" and had a land clearing company cut walking paths that would allow for the land to be assessed for wetlands, ledge, and contour.

Mr. Lannan noted that a request for proposals to obtain professional services to evaluate the site was advertised and four (4) or five (5) engineering firms attended the pre-bid meeting and walked the site. He explained that the bid specifications are in phases so that if Phase 1 of the site assessment discloses problems the site can be abandoned without much expense but if it is determined to be a buildable site, Phase 2 and Phase 3 can be pursued.

Mr. Lannan provided the Council with a document concerning the proposed site with Director of Community Development Williamson agreeing to post this on the Town's website.

Mr. Lannan stated that the Committee is committed to keeping the project on time and on budget. He noted that he is of the opinion that the project is in a "favorable position", explaining that the trades are slow, the cost for building materials is down, and many offers from skilled professionals have been made to aid in the project.

An unidentified member of the audience asked about the noise from the Town dump with Mr. Lannan stating that he is not of the opinion that the noise from the dump is that loud, noting that the dump is a 7:30 o'clock AM to 3:00 o'clock PM operation. He further stated that the site is not at the landfill and there will be a separate access road.

Mr. Lannan stated that the Committee was advised by the Potter League to have a shelter architect on staff. He noted that the services provided by Warren Freedenfeld, of Rauhaus Freedenfeld & Associates (RF&A), thus far have been paid in full by the "Friends" group but would have to be hired by the Town.

An unidentified member in the audience questioned Mr. Freedenfeld's credentials with Mr. Freedenfeld stating that RF&A specializes in animal care facilities and has designed over three hundred fifty (350) facilities throughout the United States.

Mr. Freedenfeld stated that RF&A has worked in Western Europe, Canada, Central America, South America, throughout the Caribbean, Beijing China, and are now working in Hong Kong. He further stated that he lectures throughout the Country and has lectured at the South American Veterinary Conference held in Rio de Janeiro.

The unidentified member in the audience noted above asked why this design was chosen with Director of Community Development Williamson stating that Mr. Freedenfeld's presentation was intended to be directed towards the Council.

Councilman Cordeiro noted that he reviewed Mr. Freedenfeld's credentials on the internet.

Mr. Freedenfeld noted that animal shelters are now considered to be as much a part of the community as the library, community center, etc.; explaining that animal shelters are not just a place to house animals, but also provide education and interaction with the animals.

Mr. Freedenfeld noted that animal shelter's mission is to place animals into loving homes and that is accomplished through presenting the animals in an attractive environment that replicates the feeling of being at home.

He further noted the importance of educating pet adopters, so the relationship becomes successful, this including training/obedience lessons.

Mr. Freedenfeld explained the development of a cottage concept where each dog is in its own small environment to sleep/eat and then has the opportunity to go outdoors for exercise. He noted that this practice has been used for decades and has been very successful in reducing barking.

Mr. Freedenfeld noted that in order to keep the maintenance and upkeep of the facility as low as possible materials that are nonabsorbent, slip resistant, and easy to clean are used. He explained that flushing floor drains keep down the overhead cost associated with personnel.

Mr. Freedenfeld stated the proposed facility will be enjoyable, educational, and will not cost the taxpayers over \$2 million. He mentioned that there are bonding and humane education areas which go beyond just housing.

Councilman Herreshoff asked Mr. Freedenfeld to walk through the aspects of the drawing with Mr. Freedenfeld explaining that the gray areas are Phase 2 and include a spay/neuter clinic, pet retail store; which is a profit center so operationally the facility isn't a tax drain but can produce more revenue than it would cost to operate, and a mausoleum.

Mr. Freedenfeld pointed out the interactive corridor which is where the public can view puppies, kittens, dog of the day, etc., and various areas/rooms of the proposed facility such as bonding areas, adult cat adoptable areas, humane education room, kitten room, kitten nursery, and adoptable canine cottages.

Councilman Herreshoff asked how many of the canine cottages there were with Mr. Freedenfeld replying twenty-four (24) total.

Councilwoman Parella arrived at this point in the meeting 7:10 o'clock PM).

Councilman Herreshoff asked what the present population of dogs was with Animal Control Officer Gibree replying that it changes daily but can be between four (4) and Fourteen (14).

Animal Control Officer Gibree explained that dogs that are properly collared and tagged; identifying that dog as rabies vaccinated, and dogs up for adoption that have been "fully vetted" and are rabies vaccinated, can be housed in one facility, which is the area that the public has access to.

Animal Control Officer Gibree further explained that there is another area consisting of six (6) units that the public would not have access to. She noted that these are the intake wards which include a garage for the truck to pull into providing a safe place to remove the animals.

Animal Control Officer Gibree mentioned that there is also an in-house veterinary clinic and isolation and quarantine units which are required by state law.

Councilwoman Parella asked where dogs that have bitten would be kept with Animal Control Officer Gibree answering they would be brought to the quarantine unit. Animal Control Officer Gibree noted that dogs with the Parvo Virus would be housed in the isolation unit.

At this point in the meeting, a discussion ensued regarding the Parvo Virus.

Animal Control Officer Gibree stated that there is a similar area for cats in which the cat would be brought in through the garage where there is an intake room, isolation and quarantine rooms, and a decontamination room.

Animal Control Officer Gibree noted that there is a healthy cat room with a partition that can separate the room, making it smaller or larger, depending on the cat population at that particular time. She further noted that there is a pet positive room for cats that test positive for feline leukemia or feline aids, as well as, a room to accommodate up to six (6) nursing cats and a separate kitten room.

Animal Control Officer Gibree stated that each room addresses a special need and that each specific need has to be addressed.

Animal Control Officer Gibree stated that Dr. Marshall, who is the Rhode Island State Veterinarian, noted that when a veterinarian clinic is established the animal shelter could serve as a FEMA site.

Animal Officer Gibree noted that Dr. Marshall recommended enlarging the central corridor so that in the case of an emergency collapsible cage could be used. She explained that these cages could be used for animals that had to be forfeited by their owners and the humane education center could be used as a temporary emergency center providing housing for people who did not want to leave their animals during a disaster.

An unidentified member of the audience mentioned Hurricane Katrina as an example of a situation that people did not want to leave their animals behind and ended up staying behind themselves. She further mentioned her experience in Texas after Hurricane Ike and the fact that there are many dogs that were once house dogs that are now living on Bolivar Peninsula.

Council Chairman Marshall requested that the audience not add to the discussion, although he does appreciate the input, he reiterated that the purpose of this meeting was to authorize funds to the Committee for hiring an engineering firm to perform a site evaluation.

An unidentified member of the audience asked if any consideration had been given to an educational center for students/children as she works for Save the Bay and that is their practice.

Animal Control Officer Gibree noted that was the purpose of the humane education center with Mr. Freedenfeld noting that a summer camp program, class field trips, lectures, and discussions all could take place here.

Council Chairman Marshall asked for an estimated footprint of the facility built out with Mr. Freedenfeld answering that Phase 1 is 8,900 square feet and Phase 2 is 3,500 square feet, totaling about 12,400 square feet.

Councilman Herreshoff asked what the cost would be per square foot with Mr. Freedenfeld replying that the cost per square foot would be about two hundred dollars (\$200).

Councilman Herreshoff stated that two hundred dollars (\$200) times 12,000 square feet equals \$2.4 million with Mr. Freedenfeld stating that he is committed through value engineering, the selection of materials, and perhaps not completely building out to stay within the \$2 million budget.

Councilman Herreshoff asked about the emergency/hospital room with Mr. Freedenfeld replying that it could function independently, explaining that the waiting area for the clinic could be entered from the shelter or the outside.

Councilman Herreshoff asked whether that would be a new element of operation for the Town with Animal Control Officer Gibree answering that Phase 2 which is everything shaded in gray on the presentation is a "Friends" commitment and would not be funded at all by the taxpayers of Bristol.

Mr. Freedenfeld stated that the proposed shelter is designed to be built in phases.

Councilman Herreshoff asked whether the veterinarian would have to be hired by the Town with Animal Control Officer Gibree

replying that she has talked with several, recently graduated veterinarians as to whether or not they would be interested in renting space at the proposed facility and received a positive response. She explained that this would be revenue used for upkeep, etc. of the animal shelter.

Animal Control Officer Gibree noted that the mausoleum, pet store, and humane education center would all generate revenue. She further noted the consideration of hosting birthday parties at the humane education center as an opportunity to share with the children of the Town.

Councilman Herreshoff asked where animals other than cats or dogs would be housed with Animal Control Officer Gibree answering that they would be housed in the humane education center. She explained that there are cages and blinds that can be closed so the animals are not disturbed if an event was scheduled.

Council Chairman Marshall asked if green elements have been incorporated into the building with Mr. Freedenfeld answering that his office has a LEED certified specialist and that examples of green elements used are water reclamation, wind and solar energy, and recycled materials.

Councilman Herreshoff asked about the difficulty of heating the proposed facility due to the outside walls with Mr. Freedenfeld replying that the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems would all be energy saving. He also noted that opportunities would be used to bring in natural light as opposed to using electrical power whenever possible, and the building would be designed for the use of solar gain in the winter, and shading in the summer.

Council Chairman Marshall stated that this meeting is an open dialogue to note the thought process of the Town moving forward explaining that the transfer facility located near the proposed site is being looked at as a future energy generating facility. He noted that this should be taken into consideration when designing the mechanical systems.

Councilwoman Parella stated that she wanted to confirm the fact that the gray area referred to earlier in the meeting as being funded by the "Friends", was the dark gray not light gray area with Mr. Freedenfeld verifying this.

Mr. Freedenfeld stated that Phase 2 would be able to be built out without having to tear out any of Phase 1 or disrupting any functions scheduled at the facility.

Councilman Herreshoff asked if the base building was 8,900 square feet including the two (2) dog cottages with Mr. Freedenfeld confirming.

Councilman Herreshoff asked if the per square foot cost for the cottages would be less than the main building with Mr. Freedenfeld replying that it is hard to say exactly as the two hundred dollars (\$200) is an average with some rooms costing more or less depending on the materials and systems used.

Mr. Freedenfeld stated that one cost saving element of this project is travel. He explained that most of the projects he works on involve the cost of travel but this one is in driving distance.

Councilman Herreshoff asked if the cost to get started is for the site and not the building with Chief Canario confirming.

Chief Canario stated that the request for funds is to determine the feasibility of the proposed site. He explained that the feasibility study consists of utility hookups; water, gas, electricity, sewer line, and whether or not a buildable envelope can be acquired.

Mr. Freedenfeld stated that the feasibility study would include the contours of the site, to determine a buildable area for the project, so the footprint can be tested to fit into that area.

Council Chairman Marshall noted that the Committee should also incorporate the buffer zone from the landfill and the abutting neighborhood.

Mr. Freedenfeld noted that one of the best features of the proposed site relative to the Town dump area is the density of the forestation. He further noted that he is of the opinion that there is enough vegetative density to buffer any sound and would be taken into consideration when locating the shelter.

Chief Canario noted that there was discussion at the last Committee meeting and it was agreed upon that no trees would be taken down unnecessarily. He further noted that there is some rough terrain at the newly proposed site and that this matter was brought to the attention of the respective bidders present at the pre-bid meeting.

Councilman Herreshoff stated that he did not want to see trees taken down and then later replaced with small trees with Chief Canario reiterating that would not happen.

Councilman Cordeiro suggested that a special meeting might be scheduled with Animal Control Officer Gibree and Roger Williams University for the purpose of addressing the situation of animals left behind by students with Chief Canario mentioning that a meeting with the director of security has been scheduled and that this matter is on the agenda.

Councilman Herreshoff requested that the Council be made aware of each step along the way in order to maintain an efficient and logical progression.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Cordeiro, seconded by Councilwoman Parella and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 7:26 o'clock PM.

Jennifer Walsh, Deputy Town Clerk