REGULAR MEETING DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES February 6, 1997

The regular study session of the Des Moines City Council was called to order by Mayor Thomasson at 7:34 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 21630 11th Avenue South.

ROLL CALL - Present: Mayor Scott Thomasson, Mayor Pro Tem Terry Brazil, Councilmembers Bruce Roberts, Rob Sheckler, Dan Sherman, Gary Towe (arrived at 7:35 p.m.) and Don Wasson. Also present were City Manager Bob Olander, Assistant City Manager Tony Piasecki, City Attorney Gary McLean, Finance Director Jim Hathaway, City Clerk Denis Staab, Community Development Director Kilgore, Park and Recreation Director Patrice Thorell and Public Works Director Tim Heydon.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Telecommunications Moratorium Progress Report

City Attorney McLean informed Council that he is currently accumulating other cities ordinances to be used as models for Des Moines to pick the best ideas that suit our needs. He informed Council that he will produce an outline for Council to ultimately make needed policy decisions.

Community Development Director noted that Council has been furnished with a notebook similar to the one that the Planning Agency is using in their deliberations. She advised that the notebooks contain resource articles, the work program, a background report and vendor information. She noted that the Planning Agency is doing an excellent job and has met every week and a half since January. She informed Council that at one of their last meetings the Agency had detailed discussions with vendors from the industry and have begun to discuss the permitting process. She concluded by stating that the Planning Agency discussion should be concluded around March 3rd with Agency recommendations due to Council at the March 13th Council meeting.

Council expressed concern that more publicity be given to this process to allow for citizen input as well as the affected vendors. City Manager Olander advised Council that staff will provide extra publicity on the issue.

City Service Center Expansion

City Manager Olander noted that this discussion is continued from the December 4, 1996 Council meeting. With the help of Steve Arai of Arai Jackson, the City's consulting architect, Mr. Olander proceeded to review the options and the associated costs as follows:

OPTION A1 - Utilize existing police facility with minor upgrades - $560,250
OPTION A2 - Major renovation $748,641
OPTION A3 - Demolish and construct new building on existing footprint $930,000
OPTION B - Some remodel of City Hall & Council/Court $529,668
OPTION C - Connect old Police Facility with City Service Center, fill in and build on front courtyard - $2.2 Million

City Manager Olander advised Council that all options could eventually lead to the total reconstruction which is Option C. He informed Council that he has asked staff from different departments to brief Council on their immediate concerns and needs. The following staff and departments highlighted the following items:

LEGAL, City Attorney McLean, City Prosecutor Ha Dao and Court Administrator Linda Dannels:

WORK AREAS:
- No easy "escape route".
- No privacy/confidentiality - especially when prosecutor consults with witness or court staff deals with victims seeking court protection orders.

COURT ROOM:
- No barriers between public & inmates - need secure holding area for cuffing/uncuffing.
- No jury box.
- Poor ingress/egress - Exposure to risks.
- No Judge's Chamber.
- No area for attorneys to confer with clients and witnesses.

PUBLIC AREAS:
- Victims regularly exposed to batterers in small hallway.
- Jurors, victims, defendants and witnesses regularly wander round legal, finance and administration work areas.
- Restrooms deficient - too few and inadequate under ADA standards.

INCREASED DEMAND FOR LEGAL SERVICES
- In 1996, we experienced a 38 increase in active legal matters over the previous two year average.
- The increase through 1995 and 1996 was 54%.
- From October 1996 to January 1997: 93% increase in infractions, 200% increase in criminal citations and 122% increase in total filings.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - Community Development Director Judith Kilgore:
- 17 person staff working in 3,300 sq. ft. area.
- Inadequate ventilation, leaking roof.
- No space to meet with citizens regarding projects (due to regulatory reform).
- When Public Works staff moves back to old public work facility, lose close communication necessary to perform overlapping duties involved with plats, street planning, etc., and will lose part of the computer system they currently share.
- Need close communication with Legal, Executive staff on a daily basis which is lost with their off-campus facility.

9:07 p.m. Mayor Thomasson declared a 10 minute break.

PUBLIC WORKS - Public Works Director Heydon and PARK & RECREATION DIRECTOR Thorell:
- Overcrowded work stations.
- Need to be near maintenance crews (now several blocks apart).

City Manager Olander noted that administration is recommending Option A2 or A3.

MOTION was made by Councilmember Sheckler, seconded by Councilmember Wasson, to direct Administration to proceed with Option A3.

Mayor Thomasson commented that if the funding was assured he would prefer to go for the total build out, but at this time he fully supports total rebuilding of the old police facility. He stated that he would hope that with some fine tuning we may be able to even get more out of the design.

Councilmember Brazil commented that he supports Option A3 as the best buy for the City's dollar.

Councilmember Sherman advised that he would rather support Option A2.

Councilmember Wasson noted that he favors Option A3 as long as Council has final approval of design to be sure the City is getting top value for dollars spent.

Councilmember Towe advised that he appreciates staff's efforts, however he has not heard any complaints from citizens that their needs are not being met. Therefore, he does not feel there is sufficient reason at this time to do any major changes. He felt that Park space and a community/senior center need should come first. He stated that he would rather wait and see what happens with the Park bond issue before committing City funds to any project for expansion of existing facilities.

Mayor Thomasson voiced agreement that the park and community/senior center are important needs, but customer service issues for the most basic of service needs such as permits, licenses, etc., is the basis of good government.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed 6 to 1 with Councilmember Sherman voting NO.

City Manager Olander informed Council that he would like to prepare a contract with Arai Jackson for Council's review and approval. He also assured Council that they would be involved in all phases of the design, just as they were for the new police facility.

Councilmember Brazil suggested, and Council concurred, that a lot of the preliminary review can be handled by the Municipal Facilities Committee and then brought to Council as a whole for approval.

MOTION was made by Mayor Thomasson, seconded by Councilmember Roberts, to authorize the City Manager to negotiate a contract with Arai Jackson for the remodel. Motion passed 5 to 2 with Councilmembers Sherman and Towe voting NO.

Proposed Amendment to CIP for Funding of Initial Sports Park Design and Grant Application

Finance Director Hathaway reviewed the fact that Council has given staff direction to proceed with the development of a Sports Park plan and prepare the necessary material and resources to put forth a bond to the voters for approval. He advised Council that the bond, estimated to be $6,400,000, requires certain development costs to be incurred prior to the vote on the bond.

10:28 MOTION was made by Mayor Thomasson and seconded, to extend the meeting until 10:40 p.m. Motion passed 5 to 2 with Councilmembers Towe and Brazil voting NO.

Finance Director Hathaway noted that the total cost of the “start-up” costs is $25,7000. He advised that the start-up costs are fully reimbursable by the proceeds of the bond issue when it passes. He noted that in effect the MCI would be loaning the money with the expectation of repayment when the bonds are sold, as these expenses are costs that can be directly attributed to the development of the project.

MOTION was made by Councilmember Sherman, seconded by Councilmember Sheckler and passed unanimously, to increase the 1997 miscellaneous line item on the Municipal Capital Improvement Fund to $65,000 and reduce the ending fund balance to $481,727.

February 13, 1997 Agenda Revision

Mayor Thomasson announced that since one of the Councilmembers will be out of town at the February 13th meeting, he has move the item of “Draft Ord. 96-219 Development Regulations for Undersized Single Family Residential Lots, and Legalization of Certain Nonconforming Residential Structures” to the February 27th Agenda.

NEXT MEETING DATE - Regular meeting on February 13, 1997.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denis Staab
City Clerk