

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT BUILDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 8, 2007 – 3:30 P.M.
SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: F. Proto, Chairman, T. Joseph, Vice Chairman, J. Dennis, K. Luz Herrera
Excused: D. Randall
Staff: E. Marx, Commissioner of Planning and Public Works; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; D. Squires, Finance Director; A. Cole, Health Department Director; B. Grinnell-Crosby, Health Department; K. Prince, Union Representative; A. LeMaro, Facilities Director; R. Kissinger, Assistant Facilities Director; K. Fuller, Deputy Clerk
Guests: T. VanCort, City of Ithaca; K. Marren, LaBella Associates
Legislator: D. Kiefer

Call to Order

Mr. Proto, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.

Additions to Agenda

Mr. Proto asked if there were any additions to the agenda; no one wished to make an addition.

Approval of Minutes of January 11, 2007

It was MOVED by Ms. Herrera, seconded by Mr. Dennis, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present, to approve the minutes of January 11, 2007, as amended.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Proto, Chairman, welcomed those present and asked members to provide introductions as there were new individuals present at the meeting. He then provided a brief overview for new participants of steps taken over the course of the last several years, starting with the Space Needs and Location Committee and its recommendations to the present. Mr. Proto reported on the meetings occurring since the last meeting: (1) Mr. Marx and Mr. Proto met on separate occasions with the Town of Ithaca and Cayuga Medical Center, and (2) Mr. Marx met with City officials. The purpose of the meetings was to inform each of the County's intent to move forward with the construction of a new Health Department building and to see if there is any new property available to be taken into consideration.

Report of Discussions with Municipal Officials and Cayuga Medical Center

Mr. Marx reported the Mayor and Planning and Economic Development staff participated in a meeting informing them of the County's intent to proceed with the construction of a new Health Department building and to determine if there are any suitable sites within the City. In addition, the meeting provided an opportunity for the City to express any concerns or specific items they would like to see addressed. At the meeting two items were mentioned: (1) the Mental Health building was designed to provide for additional stories, and (2) it was noted that there is a building on the Emerson property which is desired to see utilized. Mr. Marx subsequently spoke to Mr. LeMaro about the Mental Health building proposal and was informed it would be difficult to construct the additional stories while the main building is occupied. With regard to the Emerson property, not enough information is available to comment on at this time.

At the meeting held with Town of Ithaca Supervisor Cathy Valentino and Planning Director John Kanter, there was no concern regarding construction of the facility adjacent to its present location, but the Town would like to know what would be done with the Biggs B building. The Town requested they be allowed to go through the review process, recognizing it is unbinding. With regard to any other sites that may be available, there were no specific sites mentioned and it appears the only other location within the Town would be in the East Hill Plaza vicinity.

The meeting with Cayuga Medical Center (CMC) was to inform them of the possibility of the County building adjacent to Biggs B. Mr. Marx said CMC does not have any plans for construction in the near future and expressed the only concern would be that they not be landlocked. In addition, they expressed interest in what Biggs B usage would be in the future. Mr. Marx said the staff present at the meeting stated there isn't a great deal of synergy with the Health Department, and that they expressed awareness that development in this area may increase traffic along Route 96.

Mr. Proto spoke of his participation at the time the Mental Health building was constructed. Although it was designed to allow for additional stories, he recalled the option being reviewed at the time the Human Services Building was constructed. The review indicated it would require moving all mechanicals that presently are on the roof, and at that time the City of Ithaca also expressed concerns over the height. With regard to the Emerson building, Mr. Proto spoke of his having worked there many years ago. He questioned its suitability for the Health Department and felt that as an older building, many of the concerns presently experienced at Biggs B would be present, as well as increased traffic on Cliff Street.

Mr. Joseph asked if the City had a preference relating to the Emerson building's use; specifically could it be demolished to allow new construction. Mr. VanCort stated the City's preference would be to utilize the existing structure, perhaps sharing the space with a second tenant.

Ms. Cole provided information that the daily contact with patients and staff at Cayuga Medical Center includes assistance with discharge planning, blood work, emergency preparedness with the hospital ChemPack unit, communicable diseases, etc.

Following further discussion it was noted that none of the three potential stakeholders indicated any negative aspect of construction taking place in/near their localities.

Summary of Work Completed for Tompkins County Space Use Master Plan

Kevin Marren, of LaBella Associates, provided a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the work of the Space Needs and Location Committee as it relates to the Health Department Building. It was noted that the original master plan included work completed by Trowbridge and Wolfe. During the presentation, Mr. VanCort indicated he thought the design for parking areas shown within the City could be reduced somewhat, providing additional parking spaces in the plans.

Following the discussion the following items were noted:

- Additional information on adjacency needs should be done, particularly the interaction with Cayuga Medical Center or other agencies, the visitors to the Health Department, and what are the accessibility needs.
- Due to the Workplace Violence Act, additional consideration may be required to assure employee safety.
- How will the building location affect use of vehicles, particularly when looking at future needs.
- It is necessary to develop criteria for any new sites to be considered, and what concerns there may be taking property off the tax rolls.

- Since the original Space Needs and Location Master Plan, the Health Department has an increased need for additional storage for emergency preparedness items.
- If it is determined to construct the building adjacent to Biggs B, consideration is required to determine whether to add a bus stop at the building location.
- County facilities located in the downtown area have more additional air quality issues than facilities located in a more rural setting.
- Emergency Management Group and the County Administration would prefer to have the building constructed outside the downtown area to provide a wider-based area of operation in the event of an emergency.
- Mr. Joseph noted that regardless of location there would be a cost factor associated with it; he believes ownership of real property at the present time should not be a deciding factor.
- Client usage of the Health Department should be reviewed, including the present mode of transportation used.
- Site selection and use shall be consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan of nodal development; there is one possibility of a node development in the Town of Ithaca.
- New sites should be compared to present sites reviewed to determine whether there are factors making it worthwhile to review further.
- Ms. Herrera said she does not have a desire to see work already completed repeated, the parameters should be how new sites not previously considered fit the criteria that was established.
- Mr. Joseph would like to see how a modification in parking requirements changes the size criteria.
- *Additional site recommendations shall be made to Mr. Marx in Planning. He will review the site locations to determine if the criteria are met and review them with Arel LeMaro.*
- It was determined that the intent of the charge was to bring forward between two to five sites that were to be considered, with information providing the pro and con of each site, leading to a recommended site.
- Any additional criteria considerations shall be formalized by the March meeting.
- The time line shall consist of the following: Additional sites may be suggested until April 1, 2007; site selection by the end of May/early June 2007.
- The hope is to complete the process to enable a decision prior to the budget process, with design work taking place over the second half of the year.
- It was duly noted that at this time the County is not undertaking any real estate negotiations.
- *A press release will provide information regarding the timeframe of site selection process.*

Executive Session

It was MOVED by Ms. Herrera, seconded by Mr. Dennis, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present, to enter into an executive session to discuss contractual and potential real estate matters. An executive session was held from 5:13 p.m. to 5:28 p.m.

Amendment of Contract

It was MOVED by Mr. Joseph, seconded by Mr. Dennis, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members present, to direct Mr. Marx to negotiate an amendment to the existing agreement with LaBella Associates, to expand the scope of the design work to include site selection process for the Health Department. MOTION APPROVED.

Criteria for Sites

Any criteria additions, amendments, etc., are to be provided to Mr. Marx as soon as possible.

Health Department Building Committee
February 8, 2007

Next meeting

The next meeting will be on March 8th, 3:30 p.m.

Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature