

The Council of the City of Villa Rica met in a special, called meeting on Thursday, January 22, 2009 in the Council Chambers at 101 Main Street, Holt-Bishop Justice Center, Municipal Courtroom. Those present were Mayor J Collins; Councilmembers Perry Amidon, Verland Best, Woody Holland, Joey Kelley and Shirley Marchman; City Manager Larry Wood; City Clerk Reedell Saxon and City Attorney David Mecklin. Approximately 33 people were in attendance.

Collins called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

The invocation was given by Holland. All recited the pledge of allegiance.

Collins opened the discussion on the short- and long-term disposition of the future City Complex by calling this one of the more important crossroads in the history of the city. He asked for everyone to be open-minded as options are presented. However, he urged Council to, at the least, agree to remove the old mill buildings. Best referred to a handout [attached to this document] summarizing seven options for consideration. Best said that since six of the seven called for the removal of the two old buildings, he would move to go forward with demolition of those buildings. This was seconded by Holland. Kelley called for discussion. He said a time line needed to be established and noted that there was no money budgeted for this project [in the FY2008-09 budget]. Kelley suggested the new budget [FY2009-10] could contain appropriate funds. He acknowledged there are funds currently budgeted for the asbestos removal project and that was not a problem. However, he was not comfortable removing the buildings until funds were budgeted. Best asked if there was an estimate on the cost. Wood said the projected cost, based on the previously removed city buildings [in 2007], would include the use of the City's labor force with at least one large piece of equipment needing to be rented. The material removal would be accomplished using City dump trucks and would only cost the amount of tipping fees at a landfill. The City could buried material such as concrete and brick and would salvage all saleable metals and materials. Kelley asked about the cost of securing the opening that would be left in the existing complex when the old buildings are removed. He suggested the removal be a part of a time line to be agreed upon at this meeting. Collins asked about the cost of the previously removed buildings. Building and Vehicle Maintenance Manager Charles Davis said it cost approximately \$10,000 to rent removal equipment and construction dumpsters for the four buildings. These were rented for thirty days. Davis also noted that the salvaged materials from the old mill buildings would bring in approximately \$8,000. Holland brought up the \$400,000 grant to the City by Carroll County for use in greenspace at this location. Kelley again stated the removal of the buildings should be part of a timeline based on whatever plan was approved at this meeting. Best withdrew his original motion; Holland withdrew his second.

In response to Council questions about any stipulations the County may have placed on the greenspace grant, Collins asked Carroll County Commissioner Vicki Anderson to address the issue. Ms Anderson said she sponsored the greenspace project known as "The Mills", and the grant was approved by the Board of Commissioners for use on that project. If the City wasn't going to use it for the particular project the Commission approved, then the money would not be forthcoming. As to matching funds, that requirement was already met

by the purchase of the complex and the funds which would be spent on demolition and renovation.

Wood identified the specific buildings by designations “A” through “F” as they related to the seven possible courses of action in the handout. He then read each option ranging from “Do Nothing” to spend \$4.4 million to incorporate Phase One of the Sutton Architect design.

Wood asked Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Reese to present Option 5, which was designed by Reese using existing buildings E and F only. [A copy of this design is attached to this document.] The Option 5 design would be built in phases with a 14,000 square foot center area which would house over twenty offices on the first floor and designed for future construction of a second floor above that. It would have the potential for a new 300-person capacity Council meeting room and an 18,000 square foot exhibition center as a latter construction phase. This plan also incorporates greenspace with an amphitheater, covered picnic areas, concession stand and restrooms. Reese said much of the construction labor would be provided by inmate crews. After some Council questions, reporter Prissi Sullivan asked about the first view a west-bound traveler would see when entering town on Hwy 78. Reese explained the fall angle of the amphitheater would make it very visible from Hwy 78. Additionally, travelers would see the proposed brick, stucco and faux window exterior of the south end of the building.

Collins continued the discussion on the remaining options. Council discussed several of the choices and possibilities. Best asked Commissioner Anderson if the City would have to re-petition the Board of Commissioners for the greenspace funds if the project was not exactly what was presented to them initially. Anderson suggested Council talk with the Commission Chairman but she thought there would be no problem. Best questioned the number of parking spaces shown in the Option 5 conceptual drawing. Reese pointed available parking on City-owned property behind the police department as well as the potential of a double-deck parking area there due to elevation. After further discussion, Holland moved to approve Option 5, demolish buildings A through D, and proceed with the project with a cost report to be prepared by Staff and presented to Council by the regular March meeting with identification of funding, seconded by Kelley. Motion carried 4/1 with Best opposed. Council asked that the cost report and time line be organized in phases with the following items addressed: demolition, short term repairs to the opening left in existing buildings, the renovations to the remaining buildings, and the greenspace project.

There was no further business.

Collins opened the floor for public comment.

Carolyn Camp, 719 Old Tanyard Road, owns an area of downtown and commended Council for their decision which she believes will greatly benefit the downtown area.

Becky Lauritzen, 1688 Hickory Level Road, also owns a downtown business and applauded Council’s consideration of this needed project which would provide a focal point downtown.

Vicki Anderson, 1026 Lakeview Parkway, wanted to encourage Council to proceed with the greenspace as soon as possible to enhance downtown.

Bill Taylor, Downtown Development Authority, noted that many projects are coming together for the downtown area and anticipated the plan just approved would be the “crown jewel”. He promised the assistance of the DDA in any way it could help.

Patricia Proctor, 556 Leslie Drive, who was on the committee who designed the original greenspace plan presented to the Board of Commissioners, wanted to say “thank-

you” to the Council and said the greenspace/park Reese presented would be a well received focal point.

Mike Williamson, 3411 Doe’s Court, also applauded the Council and Reese for the plan which was approved.

There being no further comments, the floor was closed.

Kelley moved to adjourn into Executive Session for the purpose of land acquisition, seconded by Best. Motion carried 5/0. Adjourned to Executive Session at 6:50 p.m.

Council returned to Regular Session at 7:02 p.m. Collins announced no action taken.

With no further business, Best moved to adjourn, seconded by Marchman. Motion carried 5/0. Council adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

J Allen Collins – Mayor

ATTEST:

Reedell Saxon – City Clerk