



MEETING DOCUMENTATION

Planning • Architecture • Engineering • Interiors • Facility Management

PROJECT: Henry County LEC – Citizens Committee Meeting #6

LOCATION OF MEETING: Mount Pleasant, IA – Courthouse 3rd Floor Court Room

PROJECT NO.: 160811 **DATE:** February 20, 2017 **TIME:** 6:30 PM

PERSONS INVOLVED:	COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION:	EMAIL ADDRESS:
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Julie Pilling	Henry County Jail Administrator	jpilling@henrycountyiowa.us
Jim Classe	Prochaska & Associates (P&A)	jclasse@prochaska.us

Guests in attendance:
Delbert Longley, Chief Jail Inspector, Iowa Department of Corrections
Jeff Heil, Vice President Public Finance, Northland Securities, Inc.
Several other guests also attended the meeting, including members of the media

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the meeting was to receive input from two special guests regarding the proposed LEC project: Delbert Longley, Chief Jail Inspector for IDOC, and Jeff Heil, VP Public Finance, for Northland Securities, Inc. The meeting location was moved to the 3rd floor courtroom to accommodate the large audience in attendance.

1. Committee Chair Mike Hampton opened the meeting and thanked the two guest speakers for agreeing to join us. As we narrow down to a recommended site option, Mike talked about the

importance of being mindful of the City's 10 year Comprehensive Plan. It was noted that this Plan provides for some flexibility and is not set in stone. Mike mentioned another site for possible consideration, following a recent meeting in which the State may turn over land to the City of Mt. Pleasant. The State-owned property is part of the existing prison/mental health site and is believed to be between 20 to 80 acres. Details regarding the possible acquisition are still unclear. Other sites have also been discussed with some potential but not formally pursued. It was noted that a City administrator had recommended that a single site be submitted for a Special Use Permit (or other variances as needed) rather than asking the City to consider multiple options.

2. Sheriff Rich McNamee commented about last week's tour of the Washington County Jail. About 12 Committee members attended the tour. The facility provided an example of a central control station with views of surrounding day rooms and housing cells. Scheduling a public tour of the Henry County facility would also help to communicate the needs of the facility to the community.
3. Jim Classe of Prochaska & Associates talked about the possibility of the Citizens Committee hosting a public forum (or more) to show citizens the options under consideration. This idea promotes transparency, making the planning process visible to all. It also provides the public with an opportunity to voice feedback regarding the options prior to any recommendation being made to the Board. The site options can be illustrated on presentation boards, each with a title to identify them and a list of Pros and Cons to be considered. The boards can be displayed on easels in an open space, allowing the attendees to move about and ask questions of the Committee members. A comment sheet can be made available so that people can write down their thoughts, and these sheets can then be reviewed by the Citizens Committee. This forum concept will be discussed later in tonight's meeting.
4. Delbert Longley was introduced as a speaker. He is currently the Chief Jail Inspector for Iowa and provided much insight to the group on the process the State follows. Delbert started as a reserve officer and was also a sheriff in Lucas County for 10 years. He has been with the Iowa Department of Corrections for 10 years. He commented that the existing Henry County LEC is extremely outdated. He indicated that the facility is as clean as any jail in the State, but this does not make up for its deficiencies. Priorities should include #1 public safety, #2 staff safety, and #3 inmate safety. Classification of inmates is a requirement for all Iowa jails and can include up to 25 categories. Some smaller facilities may have about 8 to 10 classifications. The Henry County jail is limited to essentially two classifications: male and female inmates.
5. A question was asked regarding how long the jail can continue without making improvements. Delbert commented that a crystal ball would be needed to know this, but lawsuits can occur when changes don't happen. The Henry County jail inspection reports are not inflated but are based on observed deficiencies. The sheriff's office must file monthly reports to the IDOC. Tonight's inmate census is at 31 (the jail currently has 8 beds). Henry County pays for their overflow inmates to be transported and housed in other area jails.
6. A question was asked regarding the best ways to inform the public of these safety issues. Delbert suggested tours of the existing facility can be very informative. Inmates can be transported to other facilities so the public can get a good look at the jail. He also liked Sheriff McNamee's suggestion of creating a virtual tour of the jail, using a video camera to walk the facility and then posting the tour online.
7. What are some of the safety issues of the current building? Delbert commented that the booking area is upstairs, but the cells are in the basement. A drunk or violent arrestee must be taken down the stairs, which can be dangerous. Inmates must leave the secure area of the building to use the outdoor exercise area. Visitation is also outside the secure area. Delbert reminded the group that escapes can happen, and these issues need to be addressed.
8. Have you closed other jails? Yes, Delbert indicated this does happen. Taylor County was closed before they passed a bond to build a new jail. Washington County was closed for 3 years before building their current facility. The State tries not to enforce the closing of facilities but will do this if progress is not made in the right direction. There is no appeal process to avoid closure of a jail

facility. The biggest issue is the need for adequate inmate classification, such as male/female, juveniles, sexual violators, etc.

9. The difference between a jail and a holding facility is the length of detainment. A holding facility only allows 24 hours to see a judge and transport an inmate. A jail can house an inmate for one year, and this period can stretch in some cases. The existing Henry County jail does not even qualify as a holding facility.
10. Delbert was thanked for his informative presentation. A second speaker was then introduced: Jeff Heil, Vice President Public Finance for Northland Securities. Jeff was once a farmer and later became an auditor. With Northland, he works to loan money to counties and has seen the powerful effect of sharing facts with the public in bond elections.
11. Jeff provided a handout illustrating the tax impact of a bond for the proposed Henry County project. Since Options 1A, 1B and 2 are all similar in cost (each approximately around \$9,000,000), this amount was used in the calculations to determine the levy rate. A term of 20 years was used, which is the maximum term limit. A tax rate per \$1,000 is assumed at 0.7800, meaning a levy rate of \$0.78 as a cost per \$1,000. Rollback assumptions are as follows: residential – 56.9391%; commercial/industrial – 90.0%; and agricultural – 47.4996%.
12. Based on these assumptions, a residential property valued at \$100,000 would see an annual cost of \$44. A commercial or industrial property valued at \$100,000 would experience an annual cost of \$70. An agricultural property of 40 acres would see an annual cost of \$23.59 (\$0.59/acre).
13. Jeff's handout provided a list of assessed values for residential, commercial/industrial, and agricultural categories, the taxable value of each, and the annual cost for the budgeted project. Obviously these numbers must be adjusted once the selected option and associated budget are established.
14. Jeff noted the current rate is at 3.2% on a 20 year bond, which is up from 2.2% before the presidential election. The annual payment for the County on a \$9,000,000 bond would be \$645,000. Jeff mentioned that the cost of jails is up considerably in the last 5 years.
15. Jeff commented about the campaign process to approach a bond election. Some jail campaigns will promote a "Vote Yes" message. Regulations require that these campaigns use their own committee and use their own funding. Other campaigns which focus only on facts (not intended to promote a message for or against a project) may use county funds to distribute this information. Jeff estimated that 70% of the campaigns he has worked with have used a fact-based campaign.
16. To pass a bond, a minimum of 60% of voters must vote in favor of the project. The county has 3 years from the bond issue to spend the funds. Alternates can be used to scale back a project if bids are too high. For a \$9,000,000 bond over 20 years with the interest cost, the total would amount to approximately \$12,286,000.
17. The Committee thanked Jeff Heil for his informative presentation. The topic then returned to planning the public forums.
18. The Committee members agreed that having five public forums would be ideal. The locations would be in the County's polling communities. P&A will prepare display boards illustrating the options considered to this point and will ship them to Rich. To inform the public of these forums, Committee members will prepare a flyer which identifies the date, time, and location of the five forums. Selected dates are as follows (editor's note: the following dates have been updated to match a later press release): Tuesday, March 7th at the New London Ramsey Hall; Wednesday, March 8th at the Salem City Hall; Thursday, March 9th at the Winfield VFW; Monday, March 13th at Wayland-Waco School Lunch Room; and Thursday, March 16th at the Mt. Pleasant Courthouse Rotunda. All sessions will be scheduled from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. A comment sheet should be available at each forum to allow members of the public to write their feedback for the Citizen's Committee.

19. A tour will be scheduled for the public to see the existing jail. The tour date could be mentioned at the preceding public forums. (Editor's note: Per a later press release, jail tours will be planned during the Mt. Pleasant public forum.)
20. A few additional questions were raised. What happens if the bond fails? Option 3 provides this scenario, in which all inmates would need to be transported to other area jails. A compliant holding facility would need to be added as an addition to the existing LEC building. If the bond passes, what happens to the existing LEC building? This answer will need further discussion, although one option is to have space for County offices on the upper floor and storage in the basement. What could close the existing jail? The existing plumbing or electrical systems could wear out and fail, as they are in use 24 hours/day and are 54 years old. The sewer piping currently must be cleared with an auger every 3 to 4 months. In some cases replacement parts must be fabricated for the existing building.
21. The next Committee meeting is now scheduled for Monday, March 20th at 6:30 PM in the 2nd floor meeting room at the Courthouse.

BY: 
Jim Classe, AIA
Vice President/Design

February 27, 2017
Date

If any of the parties present take exception to these meeting notes, please notify Prochaska & Associates within five (5) days of issuance for correction or they shall stand as written.

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