

River Heights City

COUNCIL WORKSHOP AGENDA

Thursday, September 10, 2020

Notice is hereby given that the River Heights City Council will hold a workshop beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the River Heights City Office Building at 520 S 500 E to discuss options for The Old Church.

Posted this 9th day of September 2020

Sheila Lind, Recorder

Attachments for this meeting and previous meeting minutes can be found on the State's Public Notice Website (pnn.utah.gov).

In compliance with the American Disabilities Act, individuals needing special accommodations (including auxiliary communicative aids and services) during this meeting should notify Sheila Lind, (435) 770-2061 at least 24 hours before the meeting.

River Heights City

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2020-09-10 River Heights City – Workshop to discuss old church property

Present:

- Mayor Rasmussen
- Councilmember Gallup
- Councilmember Thatcher
- Councilmember Milbank
- Councilmember Clausen
- Councilmember Wright
- Joe Ames (taking minutes for Recorder Lind)
- Kathryn Hadfield
- Heather Lehnig

Workshop Purpose:

- Mayor Rasmussen: wants to get as many ideas recorded so that we are confident we have explored all of the options.
- 1-Is the use going to be well-used in the future - last the test of time.
- 2-Use that will be approved by the neighbors - not a distraction or decrease property value or to enjoy their own property.
- 3-What is the financial burden on the city - short-term and long-term.

Mayor Rasmussen shared some online images of churches converted to new uses - mostly homes. Discussed that the building does have some neat architectural features that could be shown in a remodel. Mayor and Councilmember Wright went on a tour of Cache Valley. Impressed with what Mendon has done with the old Mendon Station. They restored it to somewhat original. Then they turned it into an event center. Both thought it was an attractive use. Only downside is that there is a lot of open space to dissipate noise from an event. Our location would be up against residences. There is a lot of need for that kind of space (wedding/event center). Mendon was \$500 per event, and bumped up to \$750. Many similar places are already booked into next year. Councilmember Milbank asked if this would be owned by the city, as such? Mayor said it could be someone else or the city.

List of various ways to deal with the building (Mayor to build a better version of this based on his notes):

- Partial Reno - event rent [classrooms for homeschool groups]
- Partial Reno - housing [single vs multiple]
- Partial Reno – Library
- Re-creation - new building

45 Raze - sell or build [4.32 acre lots 70-80k=320k] or [55+ community]
46 Sell - development - active adults
47 Sell - development - single family (city would probably have to tear down the old building)
48 Raze - City use - shop
49 Repair – rent
50 Raze/Sell partial - keep north end
51 Raze partial - raze north end and sell lots there, City keep the older portion

52
53

54 **Discussion:**

55 Councilmember Gallup asked if planning to renovate the whole building, or only partial? Mayor
56 stated that we would want to make it attractive by changing some outdoor things.

57

58 Councilmember Thatcher mentioned requirements such as asbestos, earthquake, etc.

59

60 Councilmember Wright never felt, until the Mendon Station, that a community center was a
61 viable option. But after going there, after asking Mendon Mayor, if rent is covering operating
62 expenses. They are making money on the deal. There are plenty of people that like to use the
63 facility. If Mendon can make it work then River Heights can. We have a better parking situation.
64 But the renovation here would be more work than Mendon's. If we were to pursue, we'd really
65 need to do our homework. Could talk to Mendon about construction expenses and how they
66 make it financially work. A decision like this would impact a lot of taxpayer's dollars and future
67 administrations. Really need to do homework.

68

69 Councilmember Thatcher suggested a library (proposed by a resident).

70

71 Councilmember Milbank asked if this could carry into the future long-term? It would benefit
72 "downtown" River Heights.

73

74 Councilmember Wright mentioned that reno's are often more costly than building new. But in
75 this case there is some historical value in this building. The use and impact on the neighborhood
76 needs to take priority over saving the building.

77

78 Mayor mentioned that the Mendon Station was tied to an old school. Now it is tied to a new city
79 office and library. Mendon is a little smaller than River Heights. Tear down/renovate would
80 probably be 1.2 million. Feels that historical buildings give a certain feel to a community.

81 Councilmember Gallup mentioned we still have the old school, but others felt it isn't the same as
82 the old church, historically. Wellsville tore down old school - \$385,000 to raze, sold property for
83 \$195,000 for the property. When Dixie had it appraised felt it was around \$200,000 to raze,
84 could be more around \$300,000 now.

85

86 Councilmember Milbank talked about spot zoning. It is in the central part of the city. Not a bad
87 idea and may fit in with neighbors if we raze and put in 8 units for 55+. Councilmember Thatcher
88 knows she and others would like to stay in the city but not have a yard to care for.

89 Councilmember Milbank says the use of red brick could help match other city buildings in the
90 neighborhood.
91
92 Councilmember Clausen said the previously mentioned 55+ would probably break even.
93
94 Councilmember Thatcher would like to see moderate sized homes that fit in with neighborhood,
95 not mansions. Often people start to reno and then can't afford to complete the project. Mayor
96 says these things can be handled in a contract.
97
98 Councilmember Milbank asked Mayor to explain how we got to this point:
99 River Heights had a current lease with the opera company for \$1 per year. They hadn't kept up
100 with all aspects of the contract. Mayor came in and looked at the contract and felt it wasn't being
101 met by the other party so he voided the contract. Dixie wanted to tear the building down and put
102 a park or open space there. Mayor wanted to get the council involved to come up with a
103 direction for that building. Through discussions the council wanted to sell it and have it
104 renovated - with intent to preserve the historical nature. Several options were considered at that
105 time. Councilmember Thatcher had suggested 55+ housing. Councilmember Wright mentioned
106 that insurance is tough when you have connected condos. Council's vision was to see the
107 historical nature saved with vision to consider apartments or work/live space. High-end
108 apartments to sell were also considered. Decision was more towards selling the property with
109 historical preserved with some housing type product. Declared surplus property. Then moved on
110 to RFP. Only had one RFP that came in, from Tony. Decided to slow down and rethink.
111 Councilmember Milbank asked if the RFP was restrictive - we didn't want noisy options.
112 Something to keep the building similar.
113
114 Councilmember Gallup reminded her previous suggestion of tearing down and using for a city
115 shop.
116
117 Councilmember Clausen suggested going back to Opera Company - City could fix up, paint
118 trim, fix landscaping, ask if they would pay \$3000/mo to rent it? Guess that it would cost
119 \$100,000 to fix it up.
120
121 Discussed an option of fixing up for homeschool groups to rent rooms for school use as
122 classrooms. Councilmember Thatcher would like to see the interior painted. Councilmember
123 Wright says there is a reason the paint has bubbled - probably more work than paint.
124
125 Councilmember Wright said there was a church group that wanted to rent it, before the Opera
126 company. They couldn't get permission from the fire marshal for safety reasons.
127
128 Mayor mentioned about spot zone that if it were planned by the city it may work. Risk would be
129 if the buyer zoned as they wanted there could be risk. The city needs to have a direction for the
130 property, first, and zone it that way.
131
132 Councilmember Thatcher asked what the next steps are?

133
134 Mayor said we have some homework to do to determine positives and negatives to narrow
135 down the decision. If we decide to keep the building we need to undeclare the building as
136 surplus. Mayor to put this together in a document and ask people to do specific research.
137

138 **Public input:**

139 Heather Lehnig - not attached to the building, having moved into the community. Doesn't feel it
140 anchors the community - feels it looks like a rat's nest. Sent an email to Mayor and
141 Councilmember Wright - in Farmington they have 'skittle homes' that are in a row. They are on
142 .16 acre, individually owned. Each is slightly unique. They are called skittles because of bright
143 colors. I thought what a great place to put cute homes right here. Suggested to research Old
144 Rock Church. If we add one more event center would it dilute what is happening in Providence?
145 Councilmember Wright says that if we try to replicate what Mendon did, could we attract people
146 the way they do?
147

148 Kathryn Hadfield: We've lived here 42-43 years. Always thought that the old church was an
149 eyesore. Not pleasing. To me, to save it is not that important. I like the idea of tearing off the
150 north end and renovating the oldest part. As far as selling to a buyer to do a single home, a
151 person with that much money would not be building in that neighborhood. I like the idea of
152 tearing the whole thing down, sell the land, and as a taxpayer I wouldn't feel bad if the city didn't
153 make money, but just break even. I think it is a great idea for 55+ housing as smaller homes.
154 There is a demand for that kind of housing. Feels that Mendon Station works well because of
155 the open area around it - we don't have that open area. Councilmember Wright suggested that a
156 Mendon Station type building could be built where the old school is.
157

158 Joe Ames mentioned that in Hyde Park there is a 55+ community where many long-time Hyde
159 Park residents have moved into the retirement community. People want to stay in their city, just
160 change homes and have less yard to worry about. Joe also mentioned to the Mayor and
161 Councilmember Wright after the meeting to research the new building in Wellsville which sits on
162 the corner coming in from the Burger King. It is a two-story building that has an Aggie Ice Cream
163 shop, an accounting business and also an events center.
164

165 **Final Discussion:**

166 Councilmember Wright suggests landscaping improvements and sell partial, but keep the north
167 historical end. Keep some for parking. Then if parking isn't needed it could still be sold in the
168 future.
169

170 Kathryn Hadfield: The Mendon Station, when the restaurant was there you didn't hear good
171 things about it. But the other thing is that all of the building in that area are the kind of people
172 that would use that event center.
173

174 Councilmember Milbank would like to get a sense of how many people would want to keep the
175 old part of the church. If you tear some down you'd have to rebuild the north end.
176

177 Councilmember Gallup suggested a bike/skate park (recreation).

178

179 Discussed Library options and how it would fit into the county library system. Many are using the
180 Logan Library, but don't want to pay higher taxes to use the Logan Library. The bookmobile was
181 discontinued.

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183 Councilmember Milbank asked how long we can sit on the property? Mayor mentioned it is a
184 liability right now. Mayor feels we could leave it forever, as long as a specific risk isn't identified.
185 Council feels that this administration should make the decision on what to do with it. Council has
186 a desire to set some deadlines, do the homework, and make a decision. Councilmember Gallup
187 proposes coming back at beginning of October with research results. Mayor likes having a
188 direction by the first of the year, then have a contract signed and moving forward by end of June
189 (end of budget year). Mayor to draw up the list of ideas and pass to council. Need to also
190 research seismic requirements/occupancy/asbestos/plumbing and HVAC.

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192 Workshop adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

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194 Council to walk over and look at the building after the meeting.

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Joe Ames, Minute Taker

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Todd Rasmussen, Mayor