

**SPECIAL
CITY OF PALMETTO
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
August 13, 2018
5:30 PM**

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor
Jonathan Davis, Vice Mayor, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2—(Entered the meeting at 5:38 p.m.)
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1
Tambra Varnadore, Commissioner, Ward 2
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

STAFF PRESENT:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Jeff Burton, CRA Director
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Allen Tusing, Director of Public Works
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Amber LaRowe, Assistant City Clerk

Mayor Bryant called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Due to traffic, the presenters, Architects Design Group (ADG), were not in attendance yet. Mayor Bryant asked the public to fill out speakers cards so that they could speak on the agenda item if they would like, or any topic if not on the agenda. She informed the public that comments will not occur until after ADG makes their presentation on the agenda item.

Commissioner Williams exited the meeting at 5:37 p.m. and returned at 5:42 p.m.

Commissioner Davis exited the meeting at 5:38 p.m. and returned at 5:40 p.m.

1. PRESENTATION: POLICE DEPARTMENT SPATIAL NEEDS AND SITE ASSESSMENT

Fred Rambo and Daniel Taylor, ADG made a presentation to the City Commission regarding the assessment performed on the City of Palmetto Police Department. Two sites were reviewed based on June's Workshop meeting where Commission gave ADG and staff direction on the site located on 10th Avenue West (Site Option A) and the site located at 404 10th Street West (Site Option B). A copy of the presentation is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

The following criteria was used in evaluating both Site A and Site B:

- ✓ APPROPRIATE SURROUNDING LAND USE
- ✓ PROXIMITY TO PERTINENT GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS
- ✓ SITE SIZE/EASE OF EXPANSION
- ✓ ZONING
- ✓ SITE DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS
- ✓ VEHICULAR/PEDESTRIAN/PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
- ✓ IMPACT ON DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT
- ✓ PROXIMITY TO POTENTIAL HAZARDS
- ✓ COST/EASE OF SITE ACQUISITION
- ✓ ADEQUACY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Site “A” was discussed first:

- ✓ 8.75 ACRES=AMPLE ROOM FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER GROWTH
 - LAND IS OWNED BY THE CITY
 - ANY SURPLUS AREA CAN BE SOLD OR RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE(S)
 - APPROXIMATE COST IS \$160,000 PER ACRE
- ✓ COMPATIBLE WITH ADJACENT LAND USE
- ✓ CLOSE TO MAIN STREET AND COMMERCIAL STRIP
- ✓ CLOSE TO GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS (CITY HALL)
- ✓ PRIMARILY READY TO DEVELOP
- ✓ FLEXIBLE INGRESS/EGRESS
- ✓ ON THE CITY’S FIBER LOOP
- ✓ PLACING BUILDING EAST PRESERVES FRONTAGE TO 10TH AVENUE WEST
- ✓ POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO DOWNTOWN DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT
- ✓ SITE IS OPTIMAL FOR A PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY

Site “B” was discussed next:

- ✓ .96 ACRES, INSUFFICIENT FOR PROPOSED POLICE DEPARTMENT
- ✓ MULTI-STORY FACILITY WOULD NOT BE ECONOMICAL OR FUNCTIONAL WITH THE SMALL FOOTPRINT OF THE SITE
 - THE SINGLE BLOCK TO THE SOUTH APPEARS INADEQUATE FOR MULTI-LEVEL DEVELOPMENT WITH INSUFFICIENT SPACE FOR PUBLIC PARKING, SECURE PARKING, STORM WATER, SETBACKS, AND BUFFERS
 - SITE ACQUISITION OF BOTH BLOCKS AND A MULTI-STORY CONFIGURATION POTENTIALLY LEAVES AREA FOR FUTURE GROWTH AND BUFFER
 - ADDITIONAL CONSTRUCTION COST FOR MULTI-LEVEL = +/- \$300,000
- ✓ INCOMPATIBLE WITH ADJACENT LAND USE
- ✓ NO ROOM FOR FUTURE GROWTH
- ✓ POTENTIAL HAZARDS ADJACENCIES—RAILROAD
- ✓ REQUIRES ADDITIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO CONNECT TO CITY FIBER RING
- ✓ NOT READY TO DEVELOP
 - REQUIRES ADDITIONAL SITE ACQUISITION
 - DEVELOPMENT OF SITE “B” REQUIRES ACQUISITION OF MULTIPLE PARCELS ON 2.4 ACRE BLOCK AND 2.25 ACRE BLOCK
 - ZILLOW LAND ACQUISITION COST = +/- \$1,562,000
 - PROPERTY APPRAISER LAND ACQUISITION COST = +/- \$1,899,683
 - ADDITIONAL COST TO DEMOLISH EXISTING STRUCTURES
 - NEED TO VACATE AN EXISTING ROAD
 - THIS COULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT OTHER PROPERTY OWNERS
 - PROPERTY COST PER ACRE 4.65 ACRES AT \$1,562,000=\$335,914/ACRE
- ✓ MAY IMPACT CRIME AREA
- ✓ POSITIVE IMPACT ON DOWNTOWN
- ✓ POTENTIAL DISPATCH GRIDLOCK

The summary of probable development cost including additional acquisition of land as required:

- ✓ SITE "A" ONE-STORY = \$8,261,094 (VALUE RETURN FROM POTENTIAL LAND SALES NOT INCLUDED)
- ✓ SITE "B" ONE-STORY = \$9,823,094 TO \$10,160,777 (DEMOLITION COSTS NOT INCLUDED)
- ✓ SITE "B" TWO-STORY = \$10,153,094 TO \$10,469,038 (DEMOLITION COSTS NOT INCLUDED)

Mr. Rambo and Mr. Taylor both stated that the City has to decide what is important to them, whether it is the location of a Police Department in a higher crime area versus a lower crime area, the cost, the expansion capabilities, the number of stories, location of any potential hazards, etc. They took the two sites and tried to compare them equally to give an "apples to apples" comparison. It shall be noted that Site "A" and Site "B" are both in the Community Redevelopment Agency boundaries and are .38 miles from each other.

Commissioner Smith requested a copy of the first presentation done in 2014 by Ugarte and Associates regarding the Police Department Building.

Commissioner Smith opined that building the Department on "B" is a better location and stated it will be better served to purchase and expand the property to the east, across 4th Avenue West instead of to the north as ADG presented. He stated ADG should have analyzed the property and the values to the east of the existing City owned site at 404 10th Street West; he stated doing so would be much "cheaper" than buying to the north.

Chief Tyler discussed the crime statistics of the area of Site "B" as well as the west side of the City. He stated in the area east of 8th Avenue there is 24-hour a day patrolling [the area that is within CRA boundaries] and this is the only area of the City that has that constant patrol presence. Current crime data shows the City has a 3.85 percent crime rate. Part 1 crime has been decreasing in the CRA at a slightly higher rate than the rest of the City; the Chief has also seen crime being displaced to other parts of the City from the CRA. Commissioner Smith stated he is disappointed to hear what the Chief just said. He stated there are shootings in Ward 1 and the Chief stated that he does not disagree that there is violent crime in Ward 1; however, there is violent crime in other parts of the City as well. Commissioner Smith wants to see statistics on these statements. Mr. Smith questioned Chief Tyler on why he feels that crime will not go down with a facility being placed in this area. Chief Tyler stated that patrolling officers do not sit at the Police Department waiting to be called out; he reminded Commission that officers are continuously out patrolling the streets and this includes Ward 1. Chief Tyler also stated that he did not say that crime will not go down with a Department in this area; however, he does not feel that it will go down at such a rate as Commissioner Smith was indicating. Chief Tyler stated that crime has gone down in that area already due to the heavier patrol presence; he is not able to answer Commissioner Smith's question about whether or not a building will have a significant effect on the reduction of crime. Chief Tyler is not saying it will not but he is not saying it will because he does not have that answer.

Commissioner Smith discussed the salaries of the Police Officers and reminded Chief Tyler that he has been the only one supporting pay increases for the Officers. He stated that the Chief is disappointing him with the comments regarding crime and the Police Department in the high-crime area. Chief stated that he is not trying to disappoint him; however, he is merely trying to educate them on the crime and how patrolling is working. Ultimately, the decision will be made by the Commission.

Commissioner Varnadore is concerned with the two to three property owners located near Site "B" that would have to be talked with and negotiations made for the purchase of their property. She expressed concerns with the length of time it may take to negotiate and purchase, etc. Attorney Barnebey stated that if they accepted the offer and were ready to go, the length of time could be just a few months; however, if they do not want to sell for a reasonable price and eminent domain actions are taken, it could take well over a year. Commissioner Varnadore

expressed hesitation in regards to Site "B" due to so many unknowns and the property owners. She is not seeking to take any property by eminent domain.

Commissioner Smith disputed Commissioner Varnadore's comments, stating that all property owners are willing and wanting to sell for "very reasonable prices"; he indicated that "all properties have for sale signs right now." Discussion ensued regarding the properties to the east of Site "B", across 4th Avenue. ADG was asked why they did not look at these properties. Mr. Rambo stated that he did not know about closing off access to the main street of 4th Avenue to all the property owners that utilize that main thoroughfare road. Commissioner Smith indicated that the property owners to the east are the ones that will sell "today".

Commissioner Williams expressed his concerns regarding the displacement of tenants of the properties that would need to be purchased to expand Site "B". Attorney Barnebey recognized that there may be an obligation of the City to take care of displacement that might occur. Mr. Williams expressed his concerns with Site "B" due to further purchasing of land and the cost to build a multi-story building. He opined that a third of a mile distance between Site "A" and Site "B" may not make that much of a difference due to constant patrol already occurring near Site "B" as it is. Commissioner Williams questioned Commissioner Smith's statement of "it is cheaper to build a police department on Site "B" and how placing a building on Site "B" is going to significantly reduce crime as indicated by Mr. Smith as well. Commissioner Williams is also concerned about the timeframe to build and be completed on Site "B" versus Site "A". He opined that getting a Police Department built needs to be done as quickly as possible and as safe as possible; the current Police Department is well past its life expectancy.

Commissioner Cornwell expressed her opinions regarding building on Site "A". Her belief is that the neighborhood already complains about the noise that occurs during special events and, previously, Chief Tyler indicated that a police department can get noisy at times. She is concerned with the surrounding residential of Site "A" that it would be too noisy for them. She is also concerned with traffic access to prime areas if the Department is located on Site "A" indicating that if on Site "B" the Department would be on 10th Street a "main drag". She does agree that Site "A" has the potential to provide more opportunities for development and expansion even with a Police Department building on it; Site "B" does not have this advantage currently. She opined putting a Department on Site "B" will have the opportunity to build-up the surrounding businesses in this area. She does agree with Chief's statement regarding if and how having a building in the Site "B" area will effect crime; this is an unknown as Chief indicated. She does agree with ADG and the hazard of the train, she too is concerned about a train being near the Police Department, but ultimately she does not feel this will detract from her position on where the Department will be.

Commissioner Davis expressed concerns with Site "A". He stated putting it in this area may detract from the City/CRA desire to build up the downtown. He stated that if it does go on Site "A" it should not front 10th Avenue; he hopes it would be more on the east half of the property. Mayor Bryant responded to Mr. Davis' concerns, stating that it has never been proposed or stated that a Department on Site "A" will be the front and center of that property. She stated that the discussions have been to put it more to the north east of this specific property.

Commissioner Smith opined that all municipalities are putting their police departments in high crime areas now and he asked ADG if that is correct. Mr. Rambo stated that individual police departments and municipalities that are building them have different criteria; it is what they see best for their own jurisdiction at the time. Mr. Taylor stated that the last 8 police departments that he has designed, only 3 were built in high crime areas. The other 5 had different criteria per their municipality and what they wanted to see for their specific police department. Commissioner Smith then asked the same question of Chief Tyler [most police departments are now being built only in high crime areas]. Chief Tyler stated that he cannot answer that question for a couple reasons, the first being because he has not studied this area and the second being because he knows of several in the area that have

not been built in high crime areas. Commissioner Smith asked for specific examples of what Chief was saying. Chief Tyler said that Charlotte County Sheriff's Office recently built a new Police Department and it is not in their high crime area. Commissioner Smith stated that is because Charlotte County does not have the same level of crime that the City of Palmetto has nor the same shootings that the City of Palmetto has.

Commissioner Smith then questioned Attorney Barnebey on why he has yet to provide information as requested at the last meeting regarding the cost of the land across the street from the Site "B" property. Attorney Barnebey stated that the property values were presented by ADG this evening as part of their presentation. Commissioner Smith said no, he is specifically talking about all the land to the east that is already for sale. Attorney Barnebey informed Commissioner Smith that those property values are in the presentation as provided tonight, specifically the 15th slide provides an image of the property values both to the north and to the east of Site "B". Commissioner Smith then asked Mr. Freeman for a copy of the presentation made to the Commission years ago the first time the Police Department building was discussed. Mr. Freeman said that he can provide that to the Commission this week when he obtains it; however, Commissioner Smith wanted to review it now. Chief Tyler was able to put the presentation on USB Drive for Mr. Freeman to show to the Commission and public. Commissioner Smith opined that when he asks for items to be provided to him from staff at these meetings, he is never provided with what he asks.

Mayor Bryant discussed Commissioner Cornwell's concerns regarding Site "A" and the noise. Mayor clarified that the Police Department, if built on "A", is intended to go towards the northeast corner of the lot. This specific location is much further from residential areas than Sutton Park is. There will be buffering as well that will surround the Police Department. Mayor Bryant reminded the Commission of the current location of the Police Department and the close proximity that it is to residential; much closer than the location that is posed to be on Site "A". Also, if the Police Department were to be built on Site "B" it is surrounded by residential much more than Site "A", so, in her opinion, noise would be more of a concern for Site "B". Mayor Bryant also spoke regarding the closure of 4th Avenue off of 10th Street (the road to the east of Site "B"). Commissioner Smith had indicated it would be more advantageous to build a Police Department on Site "B" and then close off 4th and continue building onto the property to the east, and the Mayor disagreed with the closure of that road. She stated that, in the past, the Fire Department has been adamant about the closing of main roads and this would be no exception.

Commissioner Cornwell questioned the Mayor if the City has talked to the surrounding neighbors/property owners of both sites to see how they feel about having a police department in their "backyard". She opined that polling the residences may be necessary to determine their feelings about this building and the sites.

Commissioner Williams expressed opinions on the two sites. He echoed Mayor's comments regarding the noise "issue". Commissioner Williams stated that there is better access for the Police Department if located on Site "A" and there is no chance of being blocked due to a train. With that being said, Commissioner Williams does not feel that Site "B" is the best choice for the Police Department.

The following members of the public spoke regarding the site selection for the new Police Department:

- Kim Corbett, resident, did not specifically speak about a particular site; however, she implored the Commission to make the best decision that will lead to the building of a new Police Department with the least amount of time and cost. She reminded the Commission of just how dilapidated the building is at this time.
- Danny Contarino, resident and business owner, spoke in favor of Site "A".

- Margaret Tusing, resident, expressed her opinions regarding the site selection and encouraged the Commission to think about all the facts and information that they have been provided regarding both sites.
- Leo Mills, resident and business owner, spoke in favor of Site “A” and encouraged the Commission to trust the experts.
- Lorenzo Waiters, Captain and property owner in the City of Palmetto, expressed his opinions and statistics on crime. He informed the Commission that he has worked in law enforcement for 40 years and has seen police departments placed in high crime and not in high crime. Specifically, a substation was built in Manatee County and there was no difference on the statistics of crime in that area. He agrees that crime needs to be reduced, but a building is not what reduces crime; it is the diligent and thorough actions of the men and women that serve the City on the Police force.

Commissioner Smith questioned Captain Waiters on the substation, asking what size it was. Mr. Waiters said it housed about 65 people. Commissioner Smith opined that you cannot compare a substation in the County to having a Police Department in the City. The County is significantly larger than the City. Commissioner Smith stated that having a Police Department in his “neighborhood” will stop the crime from spreading. Captain Waiters reminded Commissioner Smith what Chief Tyler already explained regarding the crime trends; part one crimes are and have been declining in Ward 1 (Site “B”) and has increased in the area of the City west of 8th Avenue. Commissioner Smith disagreed, stating that there are shootings now in his neighborhood whereas previously there were no shootings. Commissioner Smith questioned both the Chief and the Captain on the reduction of crime occurring if a Police Department is built in the area? Since there was no real way to quantify that, neither the Police Chief nor Captain answered his question. Commissioner Smith indicated that even if one crime is stopped then having the building there serves its purpose. Chief Tyler informed the Commissioner that the Police Department is already working to reduce crime in Ward 1 and the facts/data support that.

To answer Commissioner Smith’s previous questions regarding the cost comparison of purchasing property to the north of Site “B” and then to the east of Site “B”, Attorney Barnebey collected information from the Manatee County Property Appraiser. He estimated a total cost of \$1.6 million for the parcels to the north and \$1.29 million for the parcels to the east. Commissioner Smith questioned what properties the Attorney was looking at because the cost did not seem right to him. However, he then opined it did not matter what the cost was anyways because building a Police Department on Site “B” will be free and will not cost the City of Palmetto a “dime”.

The consensus of the Commission was to place this item on the next City Commission agenda, August 27th at 7:00 p.m. and to post the meeting date and time on the City’s Gateway Sign.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

James R. Freeman

JAMES R. FREEMAN
CITY CLERK