

NOTICE OF STUDY SESSION
Bond Capital Projects &
Policy on Waiving of Solid Waste (Refuse) Interest and Penalties
 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
 February 8, 2021
 5:30 p.m.

AGENDA

Requested by City Manager

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At the Study Session of the City Council of University City held via videoconference, on Monday, February 8, 2021, Mayor Terry Crow called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

In addition to the Mayor, the following members of Council were present:

- Councilmember Stacy Clay
- Councilmember Aleta Klein
- Councilmember Steven McMahan
- Councilmember Jeffrey Hales
- Councilmember Tim Cusick
- Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson

Also, in attendance were City Manager, Gregory Rose; City Attorney, John F. Mulligan, Jr.; Director of Public Works, Sinan Alpaslan; Director of Finance, Keith Cole, and Amy Gilbertson and Amanda Truemper of Trivers.

2. CHANGES TO REGULAR AGENDA

No changes requested

Mayor Crow stated in honor of Black History Month Nashaun Bates will be reading his poem "*Young Black Boy*" at the beginning of the Regular Session.

3. BOND / CAPITOL PROJECTS LIST

Mr. Rose stated this is a brief presentation to discuss the projects he is recommending for bond funding and seeking Council's direction on how to move forward.

Space Needs Study Project

Many of the projects identified in this study can be incorporated into the City's Capital Improvement Program and paid for through a pay-as-you type of financing.

	Total Cost
City Hall	\$ 5,094,798.00
Annex	\$ 15,665,001.00
Trinity	\$ 2,270,657.00
Heman Park Community Center	\$ 1,329,866.00
Central Garage	\$ 1,453,221.00
Transfer Station	\$ 388,919.00
Sign Shop	\$ 214,866.00
Park Maintenance	\$ 909,795.00
Centennial Commons	\$ 162,895.00
<u>Sitework - City Hall Campus</u>	<u>\$ 1,628,174.00</u>
Total Costs	\$ 29,118,192.00

Recommended Bond Projects

City Hall		\$2M
- Water Tight Imporvement		\$1.5M
- Elevator Improvements		\$.5 M
Police Annex Restoration		\$15.7M
Trinity MultiPurpose Restoration		<u>\$2.3M</u>
	TOTAL	\$20M

Mr. Rose stated with the approval of the Mayor and Council he intends to move forward with the documentation needed for St. Louis County to place a bond initiative on the August ballot.

Mr. Rose stated Amy Gilbertson, Amanda Truemper, Sinan Alpaslan, and himself are open to answer any questions Council might have.

Councilmember Clay posed the following questions to Mr. Rose:

Q. Is a two-thirds majority needed for approval of the bond initiative?

A. *That is correct.*

Q. What type of public engagement campaign has staff conceptualized for this initiative?

A. *Although nothing has been formulated at this time, Council will be presented with all information related to public engagement prior to dissemination. Information explaining the costs and type of improvements will be provided to residents via social media and Zoom.*

Councilmember Smotherson posed the following questions to Mr. Rose:

Q. What role can or should I play in this initiative since my wife works for Stifel Nichols?

A. *Typically, a member can participate in the vote and discussions as long as their spouse does not hold a leadership position of influence. However, since this is a legal matter, he will have the City Attorney contact him to gain a better understanding of his wife's role.*

Q. Why is staff aiming for the August ballot rather than April or November?

A. *The timeframe for submitting paperwork for the April election has expired, and the paperwork for August is due by May 25th. So August was simply the earliest date he thought would be reasonable for staff to complete its due diligence.*

Councilmember Smotherson voiced his objection to the proposal, citing what he believed to be a flaw in the location of the Police Department and segregated parking lot.

Mr. Rose stated the conclusion he reached regarding the Police Department was based on three critical issues:

- A.** Financial outlook
- B.** Efficiencies related to its strategic location; the highest number of crimes occurs in this area
- C.** Management related to the need for oversight

Mr. Rose stated Police is the only department in the City with the greatest potential to incur liability. That's why he firmly believes that erosion of oversight by separating the Police Department away from the City Manager can create some challenges. They also work closely with many of the City's Departments.

Councilmember Smotherson stated efficiencies related to costs is somewhat confusing when you're hearing that it will cost \$15.7 million to renovate the Annex and it only cost Creve Coeur \$8.1 million to build a new Police Station. So, it's difficult for him to be on board with this proposal when Council has only been provided with the cost of renovating an old building with possible insufficiencies and not the cost of a new facility.

Mr. Rose stated the estimated cost for the construction of the Police Station was \$18.6 million, minus the purchase of land, and the additional \$2.3 million is the total cost of renovating the Trinity Building. So, from a financial perspective, he believed the more prudent decision was to spend a total of \$18 million on two buildings that could be populated by various City departments. Because if you build a new facility there's still the issue of what to do with these old buildings.

Ms. Gilbertson stated the cost of building a new Police Station was the first study conducted by Trivers a couple of years ago. And when that cost was compared to renovating the Annex, the cost-estimator showed that the renovation was less expensive. However, before proceeding they completed the next step, which was to see if the Police would be the best fit. She stated the \$18 million price tag has not been escalated, whereas the \$15 million has been updated with each study to current-day pricing.

Mayor Crow stated he certainly does not want to spend \$10 million just to have more office space and then have to build a new Police Station. And at this point, he has no idea who would bear the responsibility of coming up with other ideas for the Annex, especially when there is a Space Needs Study that says we don't have other needs for it.

He then asked where the other \$9 million would come from if the recommendation is to bond \$20 million of the \$29 million total project cost? Mr. Rose stated the \$9 million would be included in the Capital Improvement Program on a pay-as-you-go type of plan. However, some of the suggestions, like the One-Stop-Shop, which would be nice to have but not vitally important at this time, will be evaluated as staff develops the Capital Improvement Program each year.

Mayor Crow asked if the rates supplied by Stifel Nicolas were current? Mr. Rose stated they are from the last six months.

He stated he does not believe there will be a need for anything related to an election in either August or November, so this might be a single-issue ballot item. And if that is the case, staff may want to inquire as to whether the City will have to pay to place this bond issue on the ballot.

Councilmember Cusick asked Mr. Rose if he knew when MSD's bond proposal will be on the ballot? Mr. Rose stated that's a question staff could ask MSD when they make their presentation tonight.

Mayor Crow stated based on the conversations he's had with his colleagues, and the fact that we're talking about spending \$15 million on the renovation of an old building, he thinks it may clear up some uncertainties if Council could see a schematic video of exactly what the inside of the Annex will look like as a Police Station.,

Mr. Rose stated Sinan has reached out to Ms. Gilbertson about producing some renderings that would provide that type of insight. And while Trivers has acknowledged that they can provide such a product, he is unsure how long it will take them to put it together and the cost.

Mayor Crow stated his preference is that they produce a video rather than drawings.

Ms. Gilbertson stated that is kind of the next step in this study. So, she will work with staff on the production and timing for a video walk-through of the new design. She stated HOK was also involved in the Clayton and Creve Coeur projects and the cost per square foot numbers and pricing for the Annex include those same types of finishes and expectations.

Mayor Crow stated based on the timeline laid out by Mr. Rose Council will probably be asked to take a vote on this in the very near future. So, if this is something his colleagues would like to see happen or if there is any additional information they need, he would ask that they make their requests known to the City Manager.

Councilmember Clay stated previously there was talk about a secondary Police Station but since it's not listed in the projects should he assume that it is no longer on the table? Mr. Rose stated about three years ago there was a desire to have a small substation in the northeast section of the City. And even though it was not included in the projects recommended by the Space Needs Study he would not say that it has been completely eliminated. It's merely an issue of priority, which at this time is to find a headquarters for the Police because they cannot continue to reside in a temporary facility.

Councilmember Clay stated while he realizes this is not a topic of discussion today if the cost is an issue, renovation of the Annex plus a secondary facility would equal, at minimum, or exceed the cost of a new facility. So, from his perspective this concept; even though he's not sure it gained the support needed at the time, would be very challenging.

Mayor Crow stated while he is always willing to talk about this issue, based on the conversations he recalls Council having some time ago, it did not seem to have the support needed, particularly from the members of Council in that Ward. But on the other hand, consideration should be given to the fact that there are two new developments in the works that might have Police Substations in them.

Councilmember Hales concurred with the Mayor's recollection about the process Council went through, which never elevated into a discussion about any of the details. Nevertheless, a substation still will not address the issues associated with the City's current infrastructure that needs immediate maintenance and attention.

He stated he thinks the suggestion to provide a video walk-through would be great for Council, as well as the City's residents and public safety officers. And while he trusts that the renovation numbers for the Annex and Trinity buildings effectively include all new plumbing, electric, HVAC, and interior partition walls, from a technical standpoint, it's probably a question that should be asked.

Ms. Gilbertson stated even though this will be a complete gut of each building when they study them from a historic perspective, they try to keep priority areas like the building envelope and some of the historic designs. So, if their layouts indicate that something can be salvaged; for example, stairs, they will remain as long as the feature does not impact the cost of providing the layouts and programs that are needed.

Ms. Truemper stated while the historic main stairs will remain in the Annex, there will also be the addition of new stairs to meet egress requirements. Trinity will retain its main reading room and original front door even though the entry is being relocated to the rear. So, while Trivers views these as historically sensitive gut renovations, there's really not much historic value to old restrooms and kitchens, which will be carved out for elevators and stairs that provide accessibility and the required egress.

Councilmember Klein stated she does not believe Council can earnestly make a decision about the Police Department without considering the historic buildings in Civic Plaza. If you could take them out of the equation then perhaps, it would be a completely different decision. But residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of protecting these buildings, which in her mind, sends a message to Council that maximizing their benefit is important to this community. Therefore, they should not be taken out of the equation.

She stated she also does not think this decision should be framed as an attempt to keep everything the way it was or how things were envisioned in the past, but rather as expanding Council's vision of this City.

Councilmember Klein stated by protecting Civic Plaza and being economically efficient in the way our government is managed, Council and this administration will have the opportunity to attain additional resources that can be utilized to benefit the entire City. And she believes the decision this Council makes should encompass all of these factors.

Mayor Crow and Mr. Rose thanked Amy and Amanda for their participation in this discussion.

4. POLICY ON WAIVING OF SOLID WASTE (REFUSE) INTEREST AND PENALTIES

Mr. Rose stated the Finance Department received an inquiry from a resident regarding the City's willingness to waive the penalty and interest fees on their Solid Waste bill. That led to some research which disclosed that neither he nor the Director of Finance had the authority to make such a decision without the approval of Council. However, since this seems more like an administrative matter, Mr. Rose stated he would like to propose an amendment to the Ordinance that would allow the Director of Finance to waive these fees on Solid Waste bills with the approval of the City Manager.

Mr. Mulligan clarified that the proposed amendment is to restore the previous practice related to the waiver of penalties and interest only, and not the basic charges for this service.

He stated Section 230.130 of the Code which addresses delinquent fees and the City's collection policies was amended several years ago to authorize City Council to waive penalties and interest in the form of an amnesty program. Although he does not believe this specific amendment was ever considered by Council. Mr. Mulligan stated prior to that amendment the City Manager made those decisions as a part of their administrative duties.

Mayor Crow stated while he can't speak for his colleagues, his guess is that they really don't want to be involved in this type of decision. And in a Council-City Manager form of government, it sounds like this might be a process that over the years, has slipped through the cracks.

Mr. Rose stated his intent is to create guidelines for the potential waiving of interest and penalties so Council would be aware of the standards being used.

Councilmember Hales asked Mr. Rose if either he or Mr. Cole knew what the largest dollar amount of outstanding interest and fees consisted of? Mr. Cole stated there is roughly over \$800,000 owed in interest and penalties. Councilmember Hales asked Mr. Cole if he had a guesstimate on how much of this amount was owed by landlords with multiple rental properties?

Mr. Rose stated staff would have to conduct some additional research and provide him with the answer to that question at a later time.

Councilmember Smotherson stated while agrees this should be an administrative decision, he would like to see the established guidelines once they are drafted.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Crow adjourned the Study Session at 6:20 p.m.

LaRette Reese
City Clerk

