

Special Ketchikan City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Williams at 7:01 p.m., May 13, 2010, with the following members present: Dick Coose, Jason Harris (via teleconference), Kj Harris, Matthew Olsen, Jack Shay, Robert Sivertsen (via teleconference) and Marty West (via teleconference).

The Pledge of Allegiance was given by all persons in the Chambers.

Staff present were Manager Amylon, Assistant Manager Martin, Police Chief Talik and City Clerk Suiter.

COMMUNICATIONS

Included in the packet material was a letter from Maureen Roth regarding the location of the new library.

Mayor Williams said there was a memorandum from the manager laid on the table commenting on the Copper Ridge site, and information from Councilmember Coose regarding selected new library sites.

PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Chris Parks, representing Tongass Trading, spoke regarding the Heckman Street site owned by Tongass Trading. He emphasized they are willing to negotiate, stating the price is more than Copper Ridge but the property is more valuable. He discussed some of the figures and what they represent, noting that Tongass is willing to finance part of the cost of a period of time. In response to Councilmember Olsen, he stated they are looking to dispose of the entire site.

Mr. Parks continued, speaking as a citizen, by stating the downtown is not vibrant like it once was especially in the winter. He didn't feel a library in the downtown would make a lot of difference for businesses. He expressed various reasons why the Heckman site was the best site. He answered questions from the Council.

Pat Jirschele handed out a conceptual drawing of a potential expansion of the current library building, with a new section extending over Ketchikan Creek. He refuted concerns that have been expressed regarding the current site, including state funding, DNR issues, code violations, and seismic issues related to a second story. Mr. Jirschele requested information regarding studies and/or engineering reports regarding addition of a second story to the structure; minutes and recordings of meetings held by Friends of the Ketchikan Public Library and the Ketchikan Advisory Board from December 1, 2009 to the present; and costs, agreements, and payments related to the consulting, engineering and/or architectural services provided by the Foraker Group, its associates and employees. He addressed parking, noting the location being recommended is difficult to access by those on foot, and he would like to see it on the flat where it is more accessible to people.

Dick Allen spoke against having a new library at the Copper Ridge site, citing industrial activity in the area, a landfill in the back of the site, blasting, traffic accidents on the bypass, rock crushing and the proximity of the jail. He agreed with the city manager on his evaluation of the Heckman Street site, but he felt the majority of people who have come to the meetings want it downtown.

Judy Arteaga stated a new library has been needed for 25 years, and it was time to choose a site. She endorsed the recommendations of the Library Feasibility Committee and the Foraker Group, stating there has been plenty of time for input from the community during the last seven years. She cited the attributes of the Copper Ridge site, noting there is a lot of activity in the area, it is convenient, has good access and a beautiful view.

Tammy Howard urged the Council to select a site and take advantage of the funding opportunity. She cited problems related to the current library, and felt a new library should be usable, functional and comfortable for both patrons and staff.

Harvey Smith felt Foraker did a lousy job, noting the size of the proposed library automatically excluded it from the downtown area. He addressed the open meetings act, and felt public input has not swayed the committee at all. He pointed out some of the infrastructure costs of the selected site have not been considered. He said if the Council must choose one of the recommended sites, the Heckman property would be the best choice. He felt the downtown businesses provide an important community service, and felt the Borough planner has not been asked to help resolve issues. He stressed parking is not the boogey man.

Councilmember Olsen said the Foraker Group is a non-profit agency that specifically is charged by the major funders in this state to go and help people get to a development stage. He explained it is like a pre-approval process, because then the Rasmusen Foundation and the Denali Commission look at what Foraker did with your group, and they ask Foraker if the group is good to go, and Foraker says yes. He felt that public bashing of the Foraker group probably isn't in the community's best interest.

Heidi Ekstrand, representing Friends of the Library Feasibility Committee, said they remain committed to the three proposals that were brought forward to the Council in April, with Copper Ridge the favored selection. She handed out a conceptual sketch of the new library on the site, and shared its attributes. She pointed out the site was on the review list in 2004 and 2007, and she went over some costs that were provided by a local engineering firm for the Heckman and Copper Ridge sites. She informed a proposal was submitted by Dawson for an addition to the White Cliff Building. She said property ownership was a major factor in the decision not to pursue this option, since it is currently owned by Dawson and leased to the Borough. She also addressed renovating the Centennial Building, stating the Committee recognizes the connection to the building but cannot find a downtown site that is justified. She explained the state funding process, stating if Ketchikan can get to the 35% design completion by February, we are poised in

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the second block of projects that includes Anchorage, Kodiak and two projects in Fairbanks. She concluded the math, the calendar and the Council's leadership solidly support the opportunity for this community to finally build a library.

Heather Muench opined the Grant Street site is too expensive, and she explained some of the costs that would add to the price of a library on that site. She said the existing building is not logical nor practical. She said it needs to be a one-story building on a flat lot, with room for expansion. She felt the Council needed to go with one of the Committee's recommendations, and the bottom line is to just pick something.

Susan Peters and Diane Naab handed out a signed petition about keeping the library in the downtown area. They also handed out accident reports that occur on the Schoenbar Bypass Road near the Copper Ridge location. They felt proper planning was imperative, and urged the Council to listen to the public comment they received. They favored the Main School site, suggesting the City deal with the old hospital building to help increase parking. They cited attributes of the site, stating it is ready to go.

Bill Rotecki expressed appreciation for the work done by the Friends of the Library Feasibility Committee, recommending the Main School site as the best location. He questioned whether the other sites can be developed within the time frame, as well as unknown costs.

Leigh Gerber, representing the Chamber of Commerce, noted the Chamber passed a resolution in support of a new public library in 2008, and said this position has not changed. He said the process has been going on for seven years, and the Committee is recommending three sites. He asked the Council trust the process that was put in place to select a site and be good stewards of taxpayers' money by bringing in a site that is buildable and affordable. He urged the Council to choose a site.

Joe Johnston pointed out two-thirds of Ketchikan's population lives north of the tunnel. He urged support of either the Copper Ridge site or the Heckman site. He felt 22 parking spots was not enough, as utilization of a new library will cause parking to increase. He said a lot of people do not go to the library because they cannot find parking nearby.

Kali Bowers said she lives on the Edmonds Street stairway, and that she would not like the library at the Main School location. She addressed inadequate parking for residents as well as those who work downtown or have jury duty; the difficulty of traversing Grant and Bawden Streets as two vehicles going the opposite direction cannot pass each other on these streets; winter weather issues for these steep streets; and additional staff that would be required to operate a two-story building, after the Council let two staff members go in January due to budget cuts. She urged the Council to pick one of the sites the Committee recommended, citing Copper Ridge as her favorite. She said the downtown area is very congested especially in the summer.

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John Pearson pointed out his library card and said the site selection has been going on for a long time. He said the Committee has reduced the original list of approximately 25 sites down to sites that will enable the construction of an adequate library at a reasonable cost. He said state funding and private grants are in the works, but they require action from the Council. He urged the Council to choose one of the three recommended sites.

LoAnn Swanson said she has been in Ketchikan a long time and loves the library in the downtown area. She felt it added spirit and soul that is needed.

Lois Foster felt strongly the Council should take the library to where the public is. She felt if Copper Ridge was downtown it would be fine, but it is hidden and not where it was inviting anyone to check it out. She related the story of a library relocation in one of the communities she was raised in.

Amanda Kiely said the process has been ongoing for almost seven years and she urged the Council to keep the negatives of the Main School site in mind when making their decision. She said the Council needs to act, and wherever the library goes she will follow. She hoped the Council would accept the Committee's recommendation. She felt the opportunity to get funding was amazing and we have to act.

Linda Millard encouraged the Council to consider the Main School site, as it would allow the Council to meet 35% design by February. She urged the Council to be good stewards of our town and taxes. She felt a lot of economic opportunities would be missed by removing it from the downtown.

Samuel Bergeron said he loves downtown Ketchikan. He felt the City has done nothing for uplands development, and one of the best planning decisions to be made would be to have the library at the Main School site. He spoke to the view available in the location. He demanded the Council make the most economical and timely choice.

Kelly Johnson expressed Copper Ridge is just as much a part of Ketchikan as any other part. She urged the Council to give a new community library the space, parking and room to grow that it needs.

Bobbie McCreary said she is in favor of picking something and of needing more space. She encouraged, if parking is an issue, take the money saved from the Main School site and tear down the old hospital building for parking. She felt if the Council used the Centennial Building, the museum could in the meantime use empty storefronts for exhibits and different places for storage or artifacts. She stated it has not been discussed enough about the zone where it would be located at Copper Ridge. She encouraged the Council to pick something, think carefully about how to spend the money, and she spoke adamantly against Copper Ridge.

John Stewart spoke in favor leaving the library downtown. He suggested several comparisons, including: the cost of the land, stability of the land; cost of the building;

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access; parking; and operations and maintenance costs. He felt it makes the most sense to utilize what the City already has, and he posed several other questions regarding the site selection.

John Hill said he favors a downtown solution, noting there seems to be a mixed message to the community. He encouraged the Council to look at the downtown as they want it in 20 years, noting the library is an anchor tenant. He spoke to the Borough downtown revitalization effort, expressing the City was at cross-purposes with this effort. He thought if the library was taken out of the downtown, it wouldn't be a very popular decision. He addressed Phase I environmental analyses and other possible permitting issues that may be required.

Mike Curran spoke as a user of the library, stating he and his wife would like to see a larger library with more modern facilities, maximum usable square footage, ample parking, easy access, a safe area with ample lighting, well patrolled and no drunks. He stated a new library on the Main School site would mean continued inadequate parking, poor access, safety issues, drunks, and excessive congestion in the summer. He urged the Council to choose either the Heckman or Copper Ridge sites in a timely manner.

Lonnie Hill felt it was shocking that being across from the police station wouldn't be safe. She noted the parking analysis has been done for Main School site, and she would avoid the Heckman site because it is so congested during the summer.

Kyan Reeve reminded the Council of its investment in the docks, noting there have been no upland improvements. He felt there was a huge parking resource not being utilized, and he felt some of these issues should be dealt with before deciding where the library should be located. He urged the Council to consider the long-term sustainability of the visitor industry, and he reminded this Council cannot commit a future Council to budgetary decisions. He felt there would be an opportunity for CPV funding if the library were to remain downtown, and he pointed out the new library should be a "social" center. He expressed support for the Main Street location.

The council took a short break at 9:12 p.m. and reconvened at 9:20 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Site Recommendations for the Construction of a New Ketchikan Public Library – Library Feasibility Committee/Foraker Group – Deferred from April 21, 2010

The motion before the Council was:

Moved by Olsen, seconded by Sivertsen the City Council concur with the recommendation of the Library Feasibility Committee and the Foraker Group regarding

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site selection for the construction of a new Ketchikan Public Library and direct the city manager to commence negotiations for the acquisition of Lot 1, Copper Ridge, said purchase agreement to be submitted to the City Council for formal consideration and approval.

Moved by Coose, seconded by Kj Harris to amend by striking the word “the” and inserting the word “a” before the word “recommendation,” and striking the Copper Ridge site and inserting the Tongass/Heckman site.

Motion to amend failed with Coose, Jason Harris and Kj Harris voting yea; West, Sivertsen, Olsen and Shay voting nay.

Moved by Shay, seconded by West to amend the motion to read: The City Council does not concur with the recommendation of the Library Feasibility Committee and the Foraker Group regarding site selection for the construction of a Ketchikan Public Library, and directs the city manager to commence work on pursuing state funding for the development of the Grant Street/Main School site for the library.

Motion to amend failed with Shay and West voting yea; Jason Harris, Sivertsen, Olsen, Coose and Kj Harris voting nay.

Motion passed with Coose, Sivertsen, West and Olsen voting yea; Kj Harris, Shay and Jason Harris voting nay.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Coose said let’s get it built.

Councilmember Olsen said it was a lot of hard work and he is glad we’re moving forward.

Councilmember Shay said he is committed to help out everything he can with this, and he thanked everyone who has been involved. He asked to be on the next agenda regarding a report at the Alaska Municipal League meeting in Anchorage.

Councilmember Sivertsen said let’s move forward and may we do the best job we can for the community of Ketchikan.

Councilmember Jason Harris thanked everyone for the hard work and tears put into this. He also thanked the downtown group for all their efforts, as he knows they put a lot of personal time and effort into the presentations. He reiterated it is amazing to see how many people have come out with an opinion on this project. He said now that the Council knows the community can do that, it would not be an unrealistic expectation that when there are big things going on in the community, the Council will hear from folks. He

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challenged the community to let their representatives know what they want for their community.

Councilmember West said it was a difficult choice, and as several people said there was no obvious great choice. She expressed it wasn't her first choice, but it is something she can live with. She appreciated all the hard work that went into it.

Mayor Williams thanked everyone for their time and effort. He reminded there is a meeting next Thursday.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, the Council adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Lew Williams III, Mayor

ATTEST:

Katherine M. Suiter
City Clerk