

PRESCOTT CITY COUNCIL  
JOINT SPECIAL MEETING WITH  
PRESCOTT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2008  
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

MINUTES of the Prescott City Council Joint Special Meeting with Prescott Unified School District Board held on August 26, 2008 in the Lower Level Conference Room at Prescott City Hall, 201 South Cortez, Prescott, Arizona.

1. Call to Order - Mayor Wilson, City of Prescott  
- President Navarro, Prescott Unified School District Board

Mayor Wilson and President Navarro called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call - Liz Burke, City of Prescott

Ms. Burke took roll of the Prescott City Council, as follows:

PRESENT:

Mayor Wilson  
Councilman Bell  
Councilman Lamerson  
Councilwoman Lopas  
Councilman Luzius  
Councilman Roecker  
Councilwoman Suttles

ABSENT:

None

- Andi Mayer, Prescott Unified School District

Ms. Mayer took roll for the Prescott Unified School District Board, as follows:

PRESENT:

President Navarro  
Member Fleming  
Member Campbell  
Member Staley  
Member Newton

ABSENT:

None

3. Discussion with regard to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property currently leased by the City of Prescott as a possible site for a new PUSD High School.

President Navarro said that the School Board has been considering five different sites recommended through Mike Taylor, one of which is the BLM land which the City of Prescott leases around Pioneer Park (Parcel #3). She then reviewed the other locations as well, indicating them on a map.

Mr. Norwood said that he and Mr. Kapp have discussed this for a long time, but there wasn't a lot of discussion until the Fann annexation came forward, in which there was a 50-60 acre parcel carved out for a potential high school site. He said that there were further discussions about the potential of the City relinquishing some of their land, as they have 400-500 acres in Pioneer Park, so they felt there may be an opportunity there. They had also discussed some type of an appraisal for the property, but no formal discussions, appraisals, etc. have occurred.

Mr. Norwood said that he knew that the School Board was going through the process of considering remodeling the existing high school, or possibly building a new high school at another location.

Member Campbell said that one of the things that made the BLM land appealing was their hope of being able to acquire the site without a large expense, as it is leased by the City for a few dollars a year per acre. He said that there was some talk about appraising it to place a value on it, but he does not know how that would work. Their hope was that the City of Prescott would relinquish the acreage and allow the School Board to apply to BLM to lease the property without having to pay anything.

He said that the other parcels do take some money, and the State Land would have to go to auction. He said that by building a high school on the BLM land it would provide additional amenities for recreational facilities, such as gyms and fields, which would be available for public use. He said that, additionally, it would relieve a lot of the pressure at the Ruth Street location if they used it for those things with less activity.

Mayor Wilson asked the School Board what they paid for the Nature Center land. Member Campbell said that he did not know. Mr. Kapp said that he did some homework and found that in August of 1974 the Brown Family sold the parcel where Abia Judd is located, which included the Nature Center, consisting of approximately 50-60 acres to the School District for \$10. Then, some time after that the superintendent, Abia Judd, gave the City the corner property for a fire station. The City later purchased the Nature Center for \$1.8 million.

Mayor Wilson said that his position personally is that if the School Board charged the City for the Nature Center property, the City should charge for the BLM land.

President Navarro clarified that the BLM land belongs to the BLM; the other land was given to the School District for its use.

Member Staley asked the City what they paid for the BLM land. Mayor Wilson said that the City paid nothing; they lease the land from BLM. Member Staley said that he agreed with President Navarro that they are comparing apples to oranges.

Councilwoman Suttles asked why the School District has to come to the City for BLM land. Member Newton said that there are only certain things that can be done with BLM land. It can be used for recreation, schools, parks, etc. but they couldn't put a Wal-Mart on it, for example. He said that they did not know if the City had plans for that property. Member Campbell said that the City holds the lease on the property; they would have to relinquish a portion of the property in order for the school to apply for its use from BLM. Mr. Norwood noted that the lease was just renewed last year.

Member Staley asked if the City had a planned use for the land. He said that the School District is asking for 110 acres, which seems minor out of the 400-500 acres leased by the City. He said that they are all working for the same taxpayers. He said that they have talked about a joint venture, possibly doing the aquatic center out there.

Member Fleming asked Mr. Kidd if it was legal for the City to ask for money from the School District for the BLM land. Mr. Kidd said that it is; it is an option they would have.

Councilman Lamerson said that he concurred with Member Staley; they are all elected officials working for the same taxpayers. Their job is to look at what is best for the taxpayers.

President Navarro said that the School Board has decided, unanimously, that they need a new high school. The next process is to decide where to put it.

Member Staley concurred with Councilman Lamerson; they should be working together. He asked Mr. Kidd if the City has the ability to say no if the School Board wants to go to BLM. Mr. Kidd said that it is up to the City as to whether they relinquish the property, regardless of whether they have use for the property at that time. It is a policy call rather than a legal call.

Councilwoman Suttles asked if the other sites have any monetary interest. President Navarro said that the Deep Well Ranch (Parcel #1) said that they would sell the property for half of the appraised value. Parcels 4 and 5 are both trust land and they would have to bid, and Parcel #2 is quite some distance away.

Councilman Roecker asked how far along the plans were for the new high school and if they included the cost of purchasing real estate. President Navarro said that right now they are in the process of determining whether to sell or keep the high school. They may decide to sell the current high school and purchase some land. They are trying to make those decisions soon.

Mayor Wilson said that when he first heard of this they were talking about 60-80 acres, and today Member Staley and put out 110 acres. He asked where the differences in acreage are from. Member Staley said that the original 80 was for one high school. If the School Facilities builds it uses around 50 acres. They felt that 80 acres is what they would like to have. When they expanded the idea of including Northpoint at the same location and sharing classrooms, they started thinking of 110 acres. He said that they could use some of the same buildings, science labs, fields, etc. And, they thought the City might want to add the aquatic center as well. Then everyone could use the center, including the high school swim team.

Councilwoman Lopas asked if that meant there would be no high school in town. President Navarro said that is a different issue; they are still in the process of making that decision. She said that they were holding a public forum later in the evening to discuss that issue further.

Councilwoman Lopas asked if they have worked with any groups that do planning—such as school/city planning together, looking at demographics, driving, etc. She said that there are more questions than just the land for her at this point.

Councilman Luzius said that the thing that interests him is the aquatic center as it is something the town needs. If they could work that in with the Board of Education it would be a win-win. He said that they need to know which way the School Board is going.

Councilman Lamerson said that he would be concerned with the location of a new school being so far from the center of town. Member Fleming noted that when the current high school was built it was considered at the edge of town. She said that it seems logical that they would go north as that is where future growth will occur.

Member Campbell said that the current high school sits on 30 acres. It would be a huge challenge to remodel that facility and continue its operation at the same time. As it is, they still would not have enough fields and parking. Member Fleming added that she believes they are not in compliance with Title IX, which requires equal facilities for girls and boys.

Mr. Kapp said that the governing board has a series of public forums followed by potential decision making. Tonight at the High School they will discuss whether to

keep the present campus if and when a new one is built, and in September the School Board will deal with that issue. The following month the forum will discuss what they do with the remaining bond monies.

Mr. Kapp said that if the City relinquished BLM land, they would relinquish on Friday and on Monday the School Board would submit a two-page application for the land, which the BLM could not say no to.

Councilman Luzius asked what would happen to the \$6 million in bond monies if they didn't stay at the existing facility. Mr. Kapp said that with the way the bond was approved, it has to stay in the category of remodel; it would have to be used at Prescott High School. It would have to go back to the voters as he does not think they could move it to a new high school.

Councilman Luzius said that he is a graduate of Prescott High School and it is well known that if there is annexation to be done in Prescott, it is to the north. He said that it is a strategic location and he would like to see a joint venture worked out, all for the good of the kids.

Member Staley said that what they did with the \$6 million is their business. When the City bought the Nature Center they did not ask what the City was going to do with it. It is the School Board's job to do the best for the schools. He said that he remembers talking to Mr. Kapp two and a half years ago about getting BLM land. The reason for this is because there is overcrowding at the Prescott High School.

Mayor Wilson said that it is the School Board's business (what happens to the \$6 million bond money), but he believes that Councilman Luzius is still a taxpayer, so it is his business also.

Councilwoman Suttles stated, in defense of what they were going to do with the Nature Center when the City purchased it, the City bought that property with Open Space funds so it was well known what was going to happen with the property.

Councilman Luzius said that it is his business, as it is for everyone in the community. All he wanted to know was what happened to it if they built a new high school. He is in favor of this.

Councilman Roecker asked if it was the position of the School Board that the BLM lease has no value. Member Staley said that they have not had an opinion. They know its worth according to what the City pays. President Navarro said that they have not discussed that.

Councilman Bell said that if the decision was to use the existing high school for Northpoint, one more year they would have a full-fledged high school. If they did that he asked if they could use the \$6 million to remodel. President Navarro said

that they would have to do that. Councilman Bell said that he thought the decision to go ahead with Northpoint was a good idea.

Member Campbell said that he has heard a number of the Council members say that they cannot make a decision without all of the information. He said that they did not come to the meeting today asking for a decision; they wanted to see if there was a general sentiment of being able to move forward because it affects where they go from there. Mayor Wilson said that he senses that the Council is interested in doing something. He said that of interest to him is an aquatic center and another issue is a joint library facility. He would like to see those put on the table as well.

Mayor Wilson suggested that further discussion drop down to a staff level. Councilwoman Lopas agreed. She said that she didn't think they have worked much together in the past, and this is a great opportunity for them to work together on collaborative issues. She said that one of the issues at the League Conference recently was regarding such joint ventures, and she would like to see something happen.

President Navarro noted that the City and School have worked together before with the fields, tennis courts, etc. Councilwoman Lopas said that they have, but not to the size of this project. She said that a lot of communities hold periodic joint meetings between city and school, and she would suggest that in the future.

Member Staley said that he appreciated Councilman Luzius's support and he may have been too narrow in his comment. What he was trying to say is that it is everybody's business and if they can get land for \$0 instead of \$10 million it is to the benefit of all. He said that they have thought it through, but the first step is to get a piece of land. He said that there are parent groups forming on both sides of the issue, but even if they remodeled at the existing location, they would still be out of compliance.

Councilman Roecker said that the property does have a ton of value to the School District. Mr. Norwood added that the City may not have any specific plans for the land, but the Prescott Circle Trail runs through there, and if they start relinquish land, they would have to buy other land in the future. He said that they have some real financial issues. They are one of the few cities in the country that is land rich, and just because they don't have it master planned today does not mean they can relinquish the land. He would like sit down with Mr. Kapp.

Member Fleming said that she has been on the School Board for 14 years and over those years they have had a few meetings with the Council. She said that they have been very productive and she would like to see more of them. She said that they need to work together as they have the same taxpayers.

Member Newton said that this is one of the sites they have considered. The sooner they have a location selected the better. If the City decided tomorrow to relinquish the land it would probably be two years for it to be given to the School. In the meantime, they have other things to do such as bonding. He said that if the City was out of the game, they would move on so they prefer to know sooner rather than later.

Mayor Wilson said that he thinks they are in the game. He said that they would have Mr. Norwood and Mr. Kapp work together, and once they get closer on issues they could have another joint meeting.

4. Adjournment.

There being no further business to be discussed at the Joint Special Meeting of the Prescott City Council and Prescott Unified School District Board held on August 26, 2008, the meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

---

JACK D. WILSON, Mayor

ATTEST:

---

ELIZABETH A. BURKE, City Clerk