

PRESCOTT CITY COUNCIL
JOINT SPECIAL MEETING WITH
PRESCOTT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2008
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

MINUTES of the Prescott City Council Joint Special Meeting with Prescott Unified School District Board held on December 16, 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 2:05 p.m.

2. Roll Call

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

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

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

None

President Navarro stated that all members of the Board were present; it was later clarified that Member Newton was not present.

3. Update by the Prescott Unified School District on a potential new High School.

President Navarro said that the School Board has had four forums on the issue of a new high school and has received a lot of input. She said that they would now like to go communitywide as they felt that 100 people was not a cross-section.

Mr. Kapp said that they have also received 100-150 comments via e-mail and the comments have been very interesting. He said that there are lots of ideas, but the majority of the comments were more supportive of revitalizing the current site.

Councilwoman Suttles asked how they plan to get communitywide feedback. President Navarro said that they are looking at sending out a survey. They are

still trying to determine whether they will do it in-house or hire a consultant. She said that it may be either a mail-in or possibly a newspaper cut-out. They may also send it home with the children. She said that will be done after the first of the year. Mr. Kapp said that they may also send home a postcard with an invitation to go to the website to fill out the survey.

Councilman Luzius said that he thought he heard Member Staley state that they could not stay at the current site because they do not meet the Federal guidelines for Title IX, and asked if that has changed. Member Staley said that the Title IX issue still remains, which requires equal facilities for men and women.

President Navarro said that since that first came up they have met with DLR Group, who is working with the architect and they have shown them how the facility might work. They are looking at all options right now.

Member Fleming said that the architect has submitted some plans for remodeling. Most of the input has been to stay at the same school, because the parents went to school there. Even if they move the high school, they will keep the property and possibly move Northpoint to that location, or move the district offices and sell the district office property downtown. She said that there are a lot of options to be considered.

Councilman Roecker asked what the School District wants from the City at this time. Member Staley said that he thought the meeting was going to be about the land, not what was going to happen with the high school. Mayor Wilson said they can still discuss the land, as long as they stay within the agenda item.

Member Staley said that he believes that they will not be able to comply with Title IX at the current location. Another issue is parking at the current site and the traffic on Ruth Street. No matter how far up the structure goes up, it will not solve the last two issues. He thinks that going to a new location would be the best way to go.

He said that there have been three plans discussed: 1) build on a limited basis at the High School (\$27 million); 2) remodel the current site, on a much larger scale (\$47 million); and 3) a “gestimate” by Mike Taylor to move to the 80 acres (\$57 million). By moving they could have brand new everything—they would come into compliance with Title IX, they would have all the parking space needed and it would relieve the traffic on Ruth Street.

Member Staley said that another thought was to move Northpoint on the one side of the 80 acres and share facilities, such as science rooms, art, etc.

Member Staley said that if they were going to move the question was what the best way was to do it and because they are working with the same taxpayers, it made sense to get the land for nothing. He said that his understanding is that

many years ago the BLM gave the land to the County and they had an agreement. At some point the County gave 500 acres to the City. He said that at the last meeting they were told that the City had no immediate use for the acreage and even if they gave the School District 80 acres, they would still have 420 acres that could possibly be used for an aquatic center.

Mayor Wilson questioned why they were discussing the land if they had not decided if the high school was going to move. President Navarro said that staff was asked to come up with some options for the land, and asked Mr. Kapp to review those.

Mr. Kapp said that he and Mr. Norwood discussed 1) the City releasing no more than 80 acres to the School District; 2) the City and School District have the land appraised and the City would receive 50% of the value, which would be used for improvements for recreational facilities such as ramadas, jogging trails; 3) build an aquatic center with 50/50 cost sharing down the road; 4) continue working on all recreational facilities and land owned by PUSD and update the IGA's.

President Navarro said that if they do not have the land, they cannot determine it is an option. Mayor Wilson said that the land may be available, but he would not support giving it away completely. He would like to see more information from the survey.

Councilman Roecker asked if the survey would include wording to address the land from the City. President Navarro said that the survey was going to be about whether to stay or go north.

Mr. Kapp said that he has written some bad surveys in his career, but he has learned it is best to keep them simple. One he drafted had the questions a) stay at current location (with bullets on what that would mean and a price tag of \$47 million), or b) move out of town (with a price tag of \$57 million). Councilman Roecker asked if the \$57 million was including the price of the property. Mr. Kapp said that it did not.

Member Campbell said that part of the issue for the School District was to get a sense of whether the City Council would consider it. If they saw a strong sense to go elsewhere, it would be nice for the School Board to know they can make that decision, knowing they have a relationship with the City to work on it.

Mayor Wilson said that he thought the City was willing to work on an arrangement, but it will not take a black and white approach. They need to show that they have done their due diligence.

Member Staley said that in order for the School Board to make a decision, they need to know if that option is available and if so, they would have more than one option. If the City says that they are willing to relinquish in the event that the

School District votes to go that direction, he does not have a problem with that. He was not asking for the property without a decision being made on moving the school. Mayor Wilson said that the term “give” was unacceptable to him, but the City is willing to work with the Board.

Councilwoman Lopas asked if the \$57 million was just for the high school and not Northpoint. Mr. Kapp said that was correct; it did not including building new buildings for Northpoint.

Mayor Wilson said that he, too, admits to the same failings in writing bad surveys. He said that they are talking about a monumental decision, and they may be making a mistake by not getting a consultant. Member Fleming said that they have discussed that there is an art to the surveys. She added that even if staff started one, they could check it with a professional.

Councilman Lamerson said that he agreed with a lot of what has been said. He has not heard any elected officials saying they are not concerned with the best interests of the taxpayers and no one is jumping up and down to do anything with the property. He has heard a small sense of what the community’s feeling is. He agrees that they are not prepared to say they will give away the property, but they need for information from the community.

Councilman Roecker asked Mr. Olsen if Tom Staley’s history was correct on the transfer of the property. Mr. Olsen said that there was no money exchanged. The property was passed from the Corps of Engineers to the BLM, and was going to go to the State, but the County intervened and got it for themselves. Several transactions came about, and BLM put caveats on the use of the land. In the meantime, it seemed proper that the City should have half of the property, so there was some negotiation. In the event of anything changing hands, it will have to be run by the BLM.

Mayor Wilson asked Mr. Kidd to investigate that with the BLM and report back to the Council.

Councilman Roecker said that the survey could figure out a commonality of building and property use. He said that they should give out a broad perspective, how it could work with the school and parks and recreation, and he thinks they would see a different reaction from both the community and the Council.

Councilwoman Suttles asked if the School Board was ready to do some negotiations regarding the property. President Navarro said she believed that was where they wanted to go; to get together for a partnership. She is having a problem with making a decision on type of school, etc. without knowing if the property is a possibility. Councilwoman Suttles said that there will need to be some give and take; President Navarro said she had no problem with that. That is the way she has always seen it, but it felt confrontational and she was not

comfortable with the way it was going. She liked Councilman Roecker's idea of working together on the survey. Mayor Wilson said that he liked that idea too as it takes them in the right direction, away from confrontation. He suggested that the Parks and Recreation Director work with the School Board on the survey.

Member Staley said that he was not asking to be confrontational, but they need to be clear on whether the City was willing to work with the school and up front on costs that may be involved.

Councilwoman Lopas said that one thing that has not been discussed is that Circle Trail runs through the middle of the property so they need to keep in mind there would be an expense of moving that trail. President Navarro said that was brought up at one of the forums. Councilwoman Lopas said that she sees this as an opportunity for a partnership with schools and recreational facilities, and she liked the idea of more than one high school.

Councilman Lamerson said that part of the cooperation between the City and School Board was the Mayor directing Mr. Kidd to meet with BLM. He said that he wanted to refresh everyone's memory on the cooperative atmosphere the City had with another educational facility on Willow Creek Road, but they need to find out what the community wants to do.

President Navarro said that she wanted to remind everyone that they have the good of the community in mind, and the children. Mayor Wilson agreed that they were looking for the best for K-20 across the community.

Member Campbell said that when they left their last meeting he did not leave with a feeling that he knew if the City was willing to work with them. Today he feels much better about the situation.

4. Adjournment.

There being no further business to be discussed, the joint meeting of the Prescott City Council and Prescott Unified School District Board held on December 16, 2008, adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

JACK D. WILSON, Mayor

ATTEST:

ELIZABETH A. BURKE, City Clerk