

North Powder City Council Special Meeting
November 12, 2020
6:30 PM Wolf Creek Grange

Attendance: Mayor Mike Wisdom, Councilors Joyce Lawyer, David (Shorty) Schwehr, Dennis Lefever, Mike (Big Mike) Morse, Logan McCrae, & Jeff Grende, City Recorder Beth Wendt
Others: Carolyn Flynn, Walt Brookshire, Justin Wright, Vicki Townsend, George Marston

Mayor Mike called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Mayor Mike opened the meeting to discuss the inspection report on the Stanford property and hopefully make a decision regarding the property. Joyce thought the report showed that the building was in pretty good shape structurally but needed a lot of improvements. Mayor Mike felt it confirmed the report from the structural engineers that the buildings were in good shape for their age. After talking with a contractor, Jeff expressed concern about support beams on the concrete in the Oddfellows side that have sunk over time and have caused some sagging. That really needs to be looked. He also mentioned there is a crack that goes up the entire side on the hardware building and you can see daylight thru the roof in the attic. The building was built in two sections. Mayor Mike commented that the inspector marked the crack as something to monitor and the foundation may have settled in the past but it is likely to have finished moving by now but it would be good to seal the gap. Logan agreed that it seems the building is structurally very sound and will probably stand forever. He thought the report recommended re-tarring the roof to get extra years and wondered what the life span of the roof looked like. The inspector didn't hit on the flooding in the back of the hardware store. Logan thought someone said it got about a foot of water every spring. The ground grades toward the building on the west end and the north side. That is never a good thing. The plumbing looked to be in rough shape or non-existent and there is no bathroom on the hardware side. The report also noted that the waste plumbing had a blockage about 50' out that indicates there may be a crushed pipe. If that is outside the building, it isn't a big deal but if it's under the building, that is a different matter. He thought at this point that meant there is zero working plumbing in the building for wastewater. The Oddfellows building had a fuse box and the hardware store had a breaker box. George Marston corrected that there is a breaker box on both sides. Walt thought there was a fuse box in the hallway going upstairs, but nobody knew for sure if it was still hot. Logan thought there were bigger issues that were not noted as important in the inspection report like no working plumbing and no functioning waste plumbing leaving the building. Joyce commented that there were 2 bathrooms in the Oddfellows side and she thought one of them was working. George added that he was the one to run a power snake down the sewer line. He didn't think the blockage was not under the building. Walt remarked that if it's an old sewer line, it could be clay. George said the blockage could also be from roots. Joyce suggested using the existing bathrooms as storage and putting in two new bathrooms. George added that there is concrete flooring on the Oddfellows side and new plumbing could be run on the hardware side. He thought it came out the front of the building. Logan asked what George knew about the flooding issue in the back. George said it was damp and occasionally there was an inch or two of water but that end of the building is about 3' lower than the main part. That might be a good thing because everything drains back into there instead of under the hardware part of the building. Jeff thought it was coming from the furnace side. Joyce wondered if we could put in a drainage pipe. George thought it needed a curtain drain on one side and in the back. Dennis noted there is a pipe coming out of the ground on the north

side of the hardware building and wondered if it could be from an old oil tank for a furnace. George thought it was more likely to be a vent pipe. There was nothing there for an oil tank. Jeff remarked that the hardware side looked like it was built in 2 sections. Walt noted that the engineer thought they were built at the same time but with different boards and different concrete. Joyce suggested we could tear out a part of the sidewalk and put in a drain pipe to take water to the curb. George noted that there is a lot of water that drains to that side of town. Jeff added that he had to put in new floor joists in his building because there is so much moisture in that part of town. Dennis commented that the inspector wasn't able to get back into that area to do a thorough inspection. Joyce noted that the floor should be taken out anyway. Vicki Townsend thought there used to be a lot of artesian springs around town. She wondered if the ditch below the Oddfellows building was spring fed. George thought it came from the old ditch that went under the freeway and viaduct. Jeff added that the ditch behind the recycle center has water most of the time. Joyce remarked that we need to know what electrical is needed before we can get a cost estimate. Jeff thought all the electrical would need to be upgraded. George pointed out that there is a 200 amp electrical panel behind the false wall so there should be enough power. Jeff reiterated that it needs to be up to code.

Shorty pointed out that the "urgent" issues were mainly about the roof. He wondered if that shouldn't be taken care of by the current owner. Logan noted that the offer was "as is". Shorty wondered if we could amend our offer. Walt explained that things that are marked "urgent" are the things that are recommended to be taken care of first in order to stabilize the issues. He added that the City could send an alternative offer, but he made no guarantees. Shorty commented that many times things in the inspection report are listed as part of the closing cost. Logan thought that was the case if you were getting a home loan. Walt agreed that commercial is quite a bit different than residential. Mayor Mike agreed that things that are marked "urgent" should be taken care of immediately. Some things are pretty simple, such as hammering nails on the roof. One of the safety issues would be the fire escape on the Oddfellows side. He hoped everyone was looking at this as a two part or multiple stage format. The majority of the "urgents" dealt with sealing or replacing nails. He reminded that these are two older buildings and this won't be a quick fix. Jeff noted there was mention of exterior rock deterioration. Walt said there is a mason from Idaho who has done some local jobs and has done a really good job at a fair price. Jeff wondered if it was something a mason would have to do. Walt thought it would be time consuming and you should know what you are doing. Joyce commented that Ron Nesser did some work on the back of the grange. Mayor Mike reiterated that the building has been found to be structurally sound and the masonry work would basically be a facelift. Dennis remarked that there is a lot of information in the report. It will take a lot of work and time. George noted that it wasn't mentioned in the report that there is rotunda with pressed tin in the middle of the hardware store under the false ceiling. That is very unique. Jeff and Logan thought the tin had been removed. George added that while searching for grants for the playground, he has come across numerous grants for restoring historic buildings. Big Mike wondered if the City really wanted to take the time and effort to restore historic buildings, or do we want to buy some property and build a new City Hall to our specifications. In his experience, it is hard to get something back to its original specifications. Mayor Mike noted that SHPO is the overseer of a project. Walt interjected that they want it to look the period but realize that you can't always use the same materials. They allow you to use newer more efficient materials as long as you get the look of the historic period.

Mayor Mike asked if the inspection report had shifted anybody's opinion. Big Mike felt it would be less expensive to design what we want. Dennis felt he had an open mind but he thought it would be at least another 10 to 15 years to finish the entire project. He tended to agree with Bike Mike or go with the fire station. Even though we would spend about \$100,000 for the RFD half of the fire station, it would be more suitable. It wouldn't add extra work for the Public Works employees to take care of more land.

Joyce was still of the opinion that we could make the Stanford property work. Even though there is a lot to do, there was nothing major. She thought Dale Mammon said it could be done in 2 years. Logan thought Dale said the whole project would take 5 to 10 years. Jeff said it would have helped him to make a decision if we had an agreement of what we want to do with the property and if we had a cost estimate. Essentially a lot of the cost will have to be City money but some of it would hopefully be reimbursed on the hardware side. But not knowing what it will actually cost is the issue. We don't have a concrete plan. The report just re-confirmed Shorty's opinion. He liked that the idea of the historical value that would be brought forth. He thought we could be into the buildings in a couple of years. Nothing changed for Logan. He was not surprised by anything in the inspection report. However, there were fewer serious issues than he expected. He agreed with Jeff that the one thing we haven't really talked about was what it would take to add a bathroom, update the electrical, replace doors, windows, fix the plumbing, etc. If we had a team of people like George to take this project on, it might be different. But he didn't feel it was a good project for the City. Mayor Mike was disappointed with the example about floor plans because everybody was asked to submit ideas for floor plans and only two were submitted in the last 4 months. Shorty provided a template, to scale, for each councilor to provide ideas for both the Stanford property and the fire station. As for cost, Mayor Mike noted that we were waiting on the inspection because he was told, by a contractor, that until we knew what needs to be done, we can't get an estimate. Mayor Mike reiterated that there is a lot of grant money available to help get both the Oddfellows and hardware buildings back into shape. Joyce like the idea of turning the hardware store into a Library because there would be room for an adult section and a children's section as well as room to display some historic pieces. The Oddfellows side could have a recorder office and a mayor's office as well as have room for a meeting room. If we settle for a smaller space, we won't ever be able to expand without starting all over. She didn't feel it would take a lot of extra work to maintain the grounds. North Powder needs a boost and if the City were to restore this, it might encourage other property owners to do something, too. The City hasn't seen any growth in a long time and this might help. George interjected that there are a lot of grants for museums. Walt commented that the property was not just the buildings. There is a nice commercial lot that goes with it and it would allow the City to have control over what happens with it. There is also an industrial piece that somebody could do something with. Mayor Mike noted that it was mentioned in another meeting that the industrial lots would have sold by now if they were ever going to. But the question should be, how were they marketed and what kind of price was placed on them. Walt thought the breakdown on the Stanford property was \$70,000 for the building and \$20,000 for each lot.

Joyce asked about the surveys. Beth said the actual count came to 18 in favor of purchasing the RFD half of the fire station and 24 in favor of purchasing the Stanford property. There were a few in favor of just using the City's part of the fire station or fixing up the current building. Mayor Mike wondered how much the survey should weigh into the decision. Carolyn wondered what was the point of the survey if it doesn't count? Mayor Mike wanted it to show that there was honest interest in what the Council was trying to do. He felt if the numbers had leaned very heavily one way over the other, it should make a difference. But we didn't really have that. So it comes back to the City Council to make a decision. We can't send a survey for every decision but this is a big one. Joyce wondered if we could have another meeting with cost estimates. Mayor Mike didn't think we could get a contractor to even look at the buildings until after the Holidays and we have until November 17th to decide. He didn't know if we could get another time extension.

Jeff asked Joyce how much she would feel comfortable spending of city funds, to get the hardware side to a useable state. Joyce thought about \$5000 would get us started until we could get grants. Shorty was willing to spend up to \$60,000.

Mayor Mike asked if the Council was ready for a motion. Shorty made a motion to go ahead with what is on the table and purchase the (Stanford) property. Joyce seconded. Mayor Mike asked if there were any more comments. Joyce reiterated that she is looking toward the future more than right now. Beth repeated the motion. Motion was denied, 2 to 4, with Shorty and Joyce voting in favor and Big Mike, Jeff, Logan and Dennis voting against. Mayor Mike will get with the realtors to withdraw the offer.

Meeting adjourned at 8PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Beth Wendt
City Recorder