

Citizens Oversight Committee (COC)
Meeting Minutes
April 5, 2007

Ron Salem called the meeting to order at approximately 6:15 pm.

Mayor welcomed the group and explained that since the presentation topic was the courthouse, he would not give any other remarks to save all the time for the presentation and questions.

Mayor then introduced Dave Schneider, project manager overseeing the courthouse.

Mr. Schneider briefly noted the attendance of many members of the project team Auchter-Perry McCall-Rink-DLR and proceeded to give the presentation:

Council bill 2004-1339 reorganized the courthouse program to set a budget of \$263.5 million and establish a phased approach, with a criminal facility to be built first and civil facility at a future date.

In the summer of 2006, Mayor Peyton issued a new Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a design-build (D/B) team to implement the new program. Auchter-Perry McCall-Rink-DLR was selected in a qualifications-based process.

The initial assignment to the new D/B team was to develop a master plan, not only for the “ordinance” plan, as it had become known, but also for a consolidated court. Four master plans were proposed:

- Option 1) Ordinance Plan (split court)
- Option 2) 2015 Unified Plan
- Option 3) 2020 Unified Plan
- Option 4) 2025 Unified Plan

Option 1 met requirements of Ordinance 2004-1339, and included:

- 388,000 Square Feet
- Split Courts into two separate units:
 - Civil and Family on Bay Street
 - Criminal in new building

Schneider noted that while many jurisdictions employ this model, Duval users did not support this model as it had several separation and operational issues.

Option 2 involved a unified court, but users did not support it, either, as it would require an additional building just 5 years after it opened. It proposed a 488,000 square foot facility and had an estimated cost of \$292 million.

Option 3 was the second of the unified court options:

- 36 Courtrooms in 2010, 44 in 2020
- 611,000 sq. ft.
- \$316 million
- Requires additional building in 2020

Option 4 was the third of the unified court options:

- 48 Courtrooms in 2010
- 721,000 sq. ft.
- \$347,041,000
- Requires Additional Building in 2025

This option was deemed unfeasible because the cost was beyond what the city could fund. Therefore, Option 3 was selected as the best choice – though it required additional funding, it met the needs of the users and would allow the city to significantly reduce the operating and maintenance costs of two separate facilities and vacate the valuable riverfront property.

Details on Option 3:

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|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Program Cost (year 2020) | \$316 million |
| • Additional Funding Required | \$52.5 million |
| • Gross Square Feet | 611,000 sq. ft. |
| • Shelled Space | 102,000 sq. ft. |
| • # Courtrooms | 44 – 8 Shelled |
| • # Judge’s Office/Chambers | 56 – 4 Shelled |
| • Inmate Handling Capacity | 615 inmates |

Option 3 had no impact on the State Attorney or Public Defender – the plan for those offices remained the same. State Attorney would be housed in the Old Federal Courthouse, and the Public Defender was planned for two floors of the Ed Ball Building. The Clerk of Court space would be included in the new facility.

The master planning also included a look out to 2035. Each option would have required another facility in 2035 to handle the expanding system. The most logical split-out involved the Family Courts – it’s expected to be the fastest growing of the system and would be the easiest to break off from the rest of the courts.

However, since Option 3 didn’t match the program outlined in the 2004-1339 ordinance, a new ordinance was needed to allow this option to move forward. The Mayor’s Office submitted that legislation to be introduced at the April 10th Council meeting.

The next steps, pending Council approval, involve proceeding with schematic design, approval by the Courthouse Architectural Design Committee to reach a groundbreaking by late summer.

The floor was opened for questions:

Have you been working with City Council?

Yes, we have met with almost every member to discuss the plan, and most approve of it in concept. A couple of them had questions.

If you borrow \$52 million, with our budget being so tight, what does that do to our bond capacity?

Without the Mayor or Alan Mosley in attendance, can't answer that question. Can say that the plan was developed with their input and knowledge, so assume we are fiscally able to move forward with the plan.

Why Option 3?

It offered the best combination of money and timing. If the judges had their way, we'd go with Option 4. We had to compromise based on that with which we felt comfortable.

Explain the Family Court split-out.

Over the past several years the Family Court has become its own entity. All the users support it moving into its own space at some point.

What about the jail space? It sounds like too much.

The 615 figure represents the maximum number of defendants expected on any given day. They will not be housed there overnight, but do need a place to stay until their hearings.

What will be the interaction with victims?

Like the Cannon plan, these concepts offer separate circulation for judges, the public and the defendants. They won't meet up until they reach the courtroom.

Discussion following this question involved the transport of prisoners from the pre-trial center to the courthouse and whether the extended drive to the new courthouse would present problems. A new pre-trial facility on the LaVilla site was mentioned, perhaps in lieu of the family court or the large holding space planned for the new facility. It was noted that no matter where the pre-trial facility was located, the court facility would still need holding space; also noted that the JSO has been an active participant in developing the concepts and they approved of Option 3. Group wanted to know more about the future of a new pre-trial detention facility to replace the one on Bay Street.

Why does this facility have to cost so much per square foot? The property is valuable; why do we have to use so much of it?

This plan uses less of the space than the Cannon design did – we did go vertical, but can only do so much. Providing adequate circulation for three different groups is difficult

and costly. The Option 3 plan does include a curve on Monroe Street to maximize space and provide traffic calming.

If the plan is tweaked, does that change the cost?

With design/build, we hope to avoid that. The schematic design will come out first, which will basically set the shape and size of the building. As we move forward with the design of the interior, we'll be able to see how the construction is going. We have also included contingency in our budget.

How many floors will this have?

Right now we're projecting 16 floors. This is about 80% the size of the Cannon concept.

How can we stay abreast of changes and make sure no one slips something by?

Perhaps identify a member to act as a liaison to attend the users meetings. Several members expressed interest.

Should we write a letter to the Mayor or the paper in support of the courthouse plan?

Committee generally agreed that they should wait until the plan develops further before formally supporting the project.

The evening concluded with no firm topic set for the next meeting. Chairman Salem adjourned the meeting at 7:10 pm.