

WORK SESSION—AUGUST 19th, 2010

Minutes of the Huntsville Town Council Work Session held in conjunction with the Huntsville Town Planning Commission, at the Huntsville Town Hall at 6:00 p.m. August 19th, 2010.

Present: Mayor James A. Truett
Council Member Max Ferre’
Council Member Steve Johnson
Council Member Alan Clapperton
Clerk/Recorder Gail Ahlstrom
Legal Council Jerald Engstrom

Commissioners: Ron Gault Doug Allen Suzanne Ferre’
Rex Harris

Excused: Commissioner Sandy Hunter CM Richard Sorensen
Commissioner Jeff Holt

Citizens: Nancy Patton Ray Bestoldi LT. Phil Howell (WCSO)
Don Linke Hazel Linke

Ron Gault called the meeting to order, and turned the time over to Nancy Patton.

Discussion on Proposed Performing Art Center Project:

Nancy Patton thanked the commission for allowing her to come present her and her husband Rip’s idea for the old school property. They purchased property in town last January and Nancy quit her job so she could pursue the idea of opening up a Performing Art Center. Nancy and Rip spoke with Mayor Truett about this proposal in July. They were looking at other properties in the Ogden Valley but not Huntsville, until Mayor Truett encouraged them to rethink that. Nancy’s proposal will be directed at the old valley school property. Nancy presented “Little Bench Arts Center at Huntsville Town Square”. They want to have a unique performance hall, the best farm to table restaurant, and a showcase for local artists and artisans. Their facility could also be a community center. Nancy proceeded to go through her power point presentation.

Nancy answered the question, why? To appreciate, protect and preserve Huntsville, build on existing community bonds, grow relationships, dedicate arts center to the teachers. The landscaping will be a natural rustic setting. People ask why it will work. Their main focal area is to have nationally acclaimed musicians come perform in the valley. The Patton’s have been long time supporters of the arts. Nancy showed pictures of different concert venues.

The next question is, how do we get people here and what type of experience will it be? You will enter a tree lined drive in a gorgeous setting; there will be a vestibule leading to the performing hall, to create an experience.

The vestibule is where you are welcomed and exposed to art before you go into the seating areas. They plan to have an intimate performing hall, indoor, year round. It's hard to get exposure to and for artists. It will be a place where visitors get exposure to local artists.

So, what will the experience be like? The vestibule doors would open at 5:45, the performance hall doors would open at 6, dinner seating between 6-7, the kitchen would close at 7:30, the concert would begin at 8, dessert at intermission, and the concerts would end at 10:00 pm. They are hoping to average 10 performances a month. They could also hold variety shows, children's events, plays and melodramas, town gatherings, fundraisers, weddings, and lecture series with Weber State. This venue will be all about the experience, for the artist, for the audience, for the community. Nancy feels that they will be able to get nationally acclaimed artists to come perform in the Ogden Valley.

They plan to serve wine and beer with dinner only, they will serve appetizers, unique salads, specialty pizzas, soups stews, homemade breads, homemade ice cream, the menu will change depending on the season and fresh local produce.

They want to have some buildings for local and visiting artisans, a place to view, purchase and teach various forms of art. Seniors would have a local venue to attend lectures, or they could participate by being greeters. They plan to have volunteer committees, a museum center, and a beautiful place to have meals, book clubs, and discussion groups.

How will others benefit? Local and valley businesses share and grow with success. There will be sponsorship opportunities, newsletters, website, restaurants, for those without dinner tickets, workers will be needed. The Patton's have bought a home here in town and they want to be involved in the community.

The Patton's would like to move forward quickly with this idea. They want to develop a teen council, sale season passes, offer town discounts, or trade for services. Nancy has put in over 500 hours of researching into this idea. Nancy presented their time line: October to November announcement with the town, a formal public announcement in Dec., break ground in Feb., and hold the Grand Opening by November next year.

Phase one of their proposal would be the carriage house and performance hall.

Doug Allen really liked this idea, but is concerned, will they be able to make this happen. Snowbasin hasn't been successful with their concert series. Huntsville can't even keep a restaurant running in town. Ron stated that this proposal is for smaller numbers, they won't need big numbers of people to make this work. Rex asked what their cover charge would be. Nancy replied they will have seating for 200 people and the cost would be \$40-\$100 per ticket, that price does not include dinner. Nancy expressed her opinion that there are characteristics that will make this successful. It will need to have the right setting, and she feels that Huntsville has that.

Ron reviewed the parking space ratios, Nancy's drawing included parking for 75. Ron mentioned that the library might be interested in purchasing or leasing part of the land for overflow parking. Mayor Truett asked what the rest of the commissioner's thought of the concept. Suzanne thought the idea would be friendly to the town, and is intrigued by this. Doug asked if the town would profit from this.

Mayor Truett stated that on August 31st the W.C. School District will hold a meeting, and after that meeting they will decide what they will do with the school property. The Mayor reported that the town was approved for a low interest loan with Zion's Bank, for the purchase of some of the property. The council has been working for months on a potential land swap with the school district, but hasn't come up with a workable swap. Rex clarified that there are two options with the property: One, the town would purchase the property then sale off sections of it, Two, let the school district sale the property in an open bid process. Originally the council was told that the school district wasn't in any hurry to sale the property, but that has changed. Gage Froerer and Drew Wilson are saying different now. There is a lot of work to be done on the property before you could build on it. Once the land is disturbed how long do you have to wait until you can put in a septic system? The town would like to have a couple acres of the school property as well. The council can't give any preliminary approval because no one owns the property. Rex commented that he likes the idea of the performance hall, but they would have to draw people from all over to attend, he didn't think the town people could support this type of thing on a regular basis. Nancy would like the community to feel that this venue is part of them and our town.

Mayor Truett mentioned that this has been the best idea he has heard so far for this property. It would add character to the town. Purchasing this property could be a big liability for the town due to the state it was left in. Ron asked Mr. Engstrom what the process would be for the town to take on debt. Mr. Engstrom replied that the town could vote on the obligation by ballot, or the town could take out revenue bonds, but the town would have to prove it had the revenue to pay.

Ron thanked Nancy for coming to the meeting to share her proposal with the council and commissioners.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Gail Ahlstrom, Clerk/Recorder

James A. Truett, Mayor