

WORK SESSION #1---AUGUST 4th, 2011

Minutes of the Huntsville Town Council Work Session, at the Huntsville Town Hall at 5:30 p.m. August 4th, 2011.

Present: Mayor James Truett
Council Member Richard Sorensen (Via Conference Call)
Council Member Alan Clapperton
Council Member Laurie Allen
Council Member Max Ferre'
Legal Council Jerald Engstrom
Clerk/Recorder Gail Ahlstrom

Citizens: Doug Allen Linda Wangsgard Karen Burton
Lewis Johnson

Mayor Truett called the meeting to order. Linda Wangsgard was asked to come tonight so the council could update her on where the town was with the school property and what the town is planning for the future. Mayor Truett explained that the town is concerned about attendance at the Ogden Valley Library. He commented that when the town originally applied for the 2011 CDBG grant, we were looking at purchasing Cory Thompson's property with the big shed on it for the purpose of relocating the town's maintenance sheds. The town would then demolish our current sheds. The town received the CDBG grant in the amount of \$261,000. The town has been working arduously with the Weber School Board for over two years on coming to an agreement in regards to a land trade. Mayor Truett finally called Gage Froerer, who represents the school board as their realtor, and told him that the town is tired of being yanked around. The school board finally decided to sell the property to the town, which is what the town wanted them to do in the first place. The school board wanted to sit on the property until the economy came back around so they could get more money out of it. The council was troubled by this because the school property was basically donated by the town and town residents when the school was originally built.

The library was put where it was so it could be adjacent to the elementary school, and now the school district has moved the school to Eden. This has greatly impacted the numbers at the library. When the town found out the school board would sell the property, there was a MIA appraisal done with an appraised price of \$385,000. The town was able to negotiate the price down to \$350,000 due to the fact that ten acres of land outside of town was selling for that much. The town was pre-approved for a loan on this property with Zion's Bank. The town was prepared to pay cash for the property so the price was negotiated down to \$325,000. The town just recently found out that we can use the CDBG grant money to go towards the purchase of the school property. Instead of the town going into debt for \$325,000 debt, the loan will be \$65,000. The town hopes to close on the property in the next couple of weeks.

The town is still going through the brainstorming process, but whatever goes on the property needs to benefit the town, the library, and the park. The town's plan is to help enhance the numbers at the library; we want to keep the library in the valley. One idea the town had was to demolish and level the existing town sheds and work something out with the library for parking. Linda stated that parking is the library's biggest issue. Mayor Truett responded by saying that the town is in a position now to work with them to help figure out more parking on the west side of their building.

Linda stated that some of the council was around when the land was donated to the library. The location of the library was a hot issue, because everyone wanted the library in their community. They selected the Huntsville property because it was by the elementary school. They had specific criteria for site selection, and while the Huntsville property was close to school there wasn't enough parking. So the town agreed to vacate the street and put in 30 parking spaces in front of the building. The agreement was that this would be a temporary fix for the library parking and that the town was going to move the sheds to another location, so that the library would have a full service site. If you notice the design of the library the return book drop and main entrance is on the west side of the library. The library board realizes that the town doesn't have a lot of options or resources and have appreciated the partnership that has existed. Linda stated that even though they use the school property for parking on 7500 E. it is inadequate because people have trouble negotiating the street, especially in the winter. The county has liability inviting people to the library with no way to access it. Immediately after the school moved out the cost of providing library services rose to 5-6 times as much per person, as it would cost in West Ogden. Linda stated that it's not the commissioners who are driving the responsibility of the library board to put two new facilities in West Ogden. It's the fact that there is a large population in West Ogden who have been paying library taxes since 1965 and have nothing to show for it.

Linda has a love for the Huntsville facilities, she helped design it. She is having a difficult time recommending keeping this library operating as it is when there are other communities with needs. The library has its own tax rate, which is quite low, compared with other urban libraries along the Wasatch Front. The board doesn't want to lose its footprint in the Ogden Valley. They have also been brainstorming to somehow reinvent the library here and keep it operational and help support the town while we wait for growth on the south end of the valley to take place. They decided to reinvent the library and add infrastructure needed for the facility to serve as a small conference and training center. Linda handed out a draft of a brochure that they are planning to use to market the library. (See Attachment #1) Parking is critical for them. Linda is excited to hear about the opportunity for parking space on the west side of the library.

Mayor Truett commented that the town hasn't been dragging their feet, but has been working on this issue for a while. The Mayor mentioned that there might be a possibility of the town leasing some of the Thompson's building and tear the sheds down to provide parking for the library. Linda said to keep in mind that they need 800 people a day to visit the library. Doug Allen asked what would happen if they shut the library down. Linda replied that she hasn't been thinking about that, she is focusing on keeping it running.

They could close the building and moth ball it. They aren't really exploring that because that's not what they want to do. They want to keep the library open. The library board just invested in creating a state of the art cinema center, training center, with a commercial kitchen area for hosting receptions, and an outdoor space for concerts. Linda said that if they are going to have a presence as a library they need public meeting rooms. Linda will have a hard time recommending maintaining the library with computers and books. If they can schedule a couple of events each week, the library will become an income producer.

It doesn't bother the library board to have the Ogden Valley library cost 2-3 times more to operate because there isn't the population to justify it being as efficient as North Ogden. There used to be 400-500 people visit the library a day, because of the school. Mr. Engstrom asked if the shops were demolished and the property paved would that be enough parking. Linda said yes. All the electrical is already stubbed for parking lighting on the west side. They will still want to maintain parking on the east side of the library for handicapped access. Doug said the town donated the land for the library, if we enter negotiations for the parking area what happens if the library closes and pulls out, what's in it for the town. All this land was donated and then it's sold off to someone, will the town get its money back.

Linda replied that the property can be given with a stipulation that it's a parking lot for the library, but if the property is sold it reverts back to the town. Mayor Truett said that allowing the library to have the property will cause the town to move the equipment and demolish the sheds. The town doesn't have anywhere else to store their equipment. Linda asked how much it would cost for the town to lease space from the Thompson's. Mayor Truett stated that the town doesn't want to lose the library and is willing to try to work something out with the library. He suggested that the library pay the amount it would cost for the town to lease space from the Thompsons in exchange for the parking lot. The county can't operate a facility if there isn't a return on the tax payer's investment. Linda said it's nice to be in the town, they have enjoyed their association with the town. Anything that happens with the library has to be in the mutual interest of both parties or it's not a fair deal.

Gail asked if all the libraries are seeing a decrease in numbers due to e-readers, people are downloading books to their electronic devices instead of checking books out. Linda answered that there was also a concern about decreased numbers when the internet was introduced, but that seemed to bring in a different type of library user. The libraries biggest issue is parking and attendance. Karen Burton said their circulation has stabilized, and seems to be on the increase because the community is trying to keep the library here. CM Allen stated that people need to realize that if Huntsville loses the library the whole valley loses it, there will be no relocation in the Ogden Valley. There is a lot of growth in the west areas of Ogden. Mayor Truett asked if someone donates land in west Ogden, will they pull inventory from the valley library. Linda replied no, this is not what they are planning to do. The library board is pursuing grants to bus school students over to the library at least once a year. The library needs to come up with something that brings people in, but also creates some income.

CM Ferre' said he didn't see a problem with the town vacating the old shed property and moving equipment temporarily into the Thompson's shed. The Mayor is concerned that the town would take a hit for this financially. CM Allen asked if their plans with marketing the library as a conference center did well could the library lease the property from the town as long as the town was leasing property to store their equipment. Linda recommended that the town find out if renting space from the Thompson's is even an option and what the projected costs would be. The library is already bringing in groups. Linda will bring up their property manager to look at the property. The library would be responsible for leveling, asphalt, stripping, putting in curb and gutter, and maintaining the parking lot. If the library ever did close the property would come back to the town.

Linda suggested that the library and the town work together to sponsor different events at the library to help increase numbers. Mayor Truett said he would get back to Linda with some figures in a week or two.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Gail Ahlstrom, Clerk/Recorder

James A. Truett, Mayor