

THE PARK HILLS CITY COUNCIL HELD A CAUCUS MEETING ON MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2023, AT 7:00 PM. AT THE GARDENS OF PARK HILLS, 1622 DIXIE HIGHWAY WITH MAYOR, KATHY ZEMBRODT PRESIDING.
COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: DR. JOE DAUGHERTY, SARAH FROELICH, PAM SPOOR, JOE SHIELDS, AND STEVE ELKINS
ABSENT: COUNCIL MEMBER, MONTY O'HARA AND CITY ATTORNEY, DANIEL BRAUN

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF PROPERTY

Ms. Spoor began the meeting by saying, per the city attorney, everyone should refrain from specifics of the purchase such as names, price and location.

She went on to say, the Financial Oversight Committee met and discussed some of the rumors that are going around. She would like to make it clear that:

1. At no time has anyone considered selling our city building. Regardless of what happens, the building will continue to be occupied by the FD, city clerk and Public Works. We will also continue to use the upstairs chamber.
2. There will be no dissolution of our FD as they are a crucial part of the city.
3. As for the relationship between the seller and the Mayor, our Ethics Code is online and reads: FAMILY MEMBER. A spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild. She believes it is important to keep the facts straight.

I. What are the needs of the city in terms of space and how would the possible purchase of this property solve those needs:

- a. Police Department – currently in cramped quarters, lack lockers, office space, interview space and showers (needed for decontamination)
- b. Council Chamber that is accessible – we have rented for 12 years and have moved 6 times – Council must meet within the city limits.

II. Are there better options

III. Clarify goals and plan and present.

Ms. Spoor stated that the final discussion was about what our sister cities do. She spoke to several local city administrators and learned the following:

In 2020, Lakeside Park spent \$1,100,000 on a new city building to house the city clerk, council chambers and Public Works. They contract for their FD and PD.

In 2015, Ft. Mitchell spent \$3.5 million on their new city building. Elsmere's city building is currently under construction and expected to cost \$6.6 million. Ft. Wright built their building in 1991 at a cost of \$2.3 million. Taylor Mill is considering a new fire house which is now estimated to cost \$9,230,000. Ms. Spoor added that the inflation we have been experiencing makes the pre 2020 numbers less meaningful in our analysis.

Mr. Shields asked if the committee had a sense of budget numbers. Ms. Froelich replied that they are not into numbers yet. They still need a plan/vision for what we are doing. She would like to continue to build on this information and have a clear vision of how priority ranks by also considering the roads, sidewalks, etc. Also, include resident participation. Mr. Shields would also like to see the Economic Development committee included in the discussion.

Bringing up the Capital Improvement Plan, Ms. Spoor noted that through the prudence of Chief Rigney and Mr. VonHandorf, there were two big items taken off of the plan. The FD purchased a fire truck at a reasonable cost as did Public Works. Ms. Froelich believes including the FD in this discussion is important. She stated she and Dr. Daugherty attended the City Official's Academy in Lexington. While there, she said, she was told that the life of a fire truck is around 7-10 years. We need to know their needs for the future.

Mr. Elkins agrees that we keep the PD and FD here locally. He also agrees that more space is needed and wants to look at all options on how to go about getting it.

Ms. Spoor believes one option to consider is the expansion of the current city building. The original building was built around 1937. The back was added in 1954 with the rest done in 1979. After looking into building another floor onto the back, the city was told it was not structurally sound to do. The entire back would have to be torn down and rebuilt costing over \$1 million.

Mayor Zembrodt stated she began looking for a place when she became Mayor 4 years ago.

Ms. Spoor stated Council used to meet in the city building's upstairs chambers but relocated since it could only hold up to 30 people and the stairs getting there are steep. She reminded everyone that the Council can rent, the PD cannot.

Ms. Froelich wants to begin by working on the Capital Improvement Plan in the budget and find out the needs of the different departments.

Mayor Zembrodt asked Chief Stanley to come up and tell everyone the biggest needs of the PD. Chief Stanley began by saying, when he was hired in 2011, the PD was downstairs and was recently remodeled. The department had pretty much everything they needed. The Mayor at that time asked him if he would move upstairs as the difficulty of the stairs made it harder for residents to access the clerk's office. Chief Stanley stated that he was told by the Mayor that all his needs would be addressed with the move upstairs. The Chief stated that he has voiced his concerns for the last 7-8 years. He said they have very limited storage and have to use his closet to store sensitive material; this is the same closet where the phone/internet access is located. It is expensive to store offsite and often

times they would not have immediate access to their files. They have no place to set up video equipment or a place to secure an arrested suspect. The evidence room is located downstairs which is inconvenient. The bathroom is very small, which can be a problem when you have a lot of equipment on. There are no showers for decontamination, no training room and several 'dead spots' where cell phone service can be lost. The kitchenette is very small with no table to eat at. Chief Stanley stated the only ding they got on their accreditation was for the non-compliance of the PD offices. There is not adequate space to store weapons. He believes the PD department should be centrally located on Dixie Highway where it would be easy to find and close to the schools. Ms. Froelich believes the PD has serious needs and we need to have a plan for how to fix these needs. She doesn't know if purchasing this property is the solution right now. Mayor Zembrodt stated the PD could use the chamber room but the ceilings are sloped making it hard to install lockers and/or cubicles. Ms. Froelich would like to get some ideas on paper from professionals to see if we can fix what we have now. Ms. Spoor agrees that it is a good idea to bring in some contractors for estimates. She also reminded Council though to be mindful of timing as opportunities don't last forever. Dr. Daugherty stated that the city has the possibility of a good-sized building with parking and is ADA compliant. He says this has been discussed for 11 years and that the city should take this opportunity. This is a clear solution to our problem, he added. Ms. Froelich said we would still have to make the new building PD ready. Mayor Zembrodt would like to vote at the next meeting to get estimates to improve the existing building.

Petitioners:

David and Jasmine Costas, 3-year residents of Park Hills, were present at the meeting to discuss the potential property purchase. Mr. Costas asked the Mayor her relationship to the seller of 1500 Dixie Highway. The Mayor explained she is second cousin and that there is no conflict. She does speak to him at functions that they are both invited to. Other than that, she has no other connection to him financially or otherwise. Mr. Costas asked how the Mayor knew the property was for sale since it was not listed. She stated when she was partners with a builder and would look for properties to rehab or construct on, she would knock on doors and ask if they were interested in selling. Mr. Costas asked if she spoke to others that day. The Mayor said she had spoken to plenty of owners on Dixie Highway over a period of time. Mr. Costas asked why residents don't get a say in the matter. The Mayor stated that it is up to the Mayor and Council.

Ms. Jasmine Costas stated that she has a background in economic and business development. She believes that when this was first brought up, there was little discussion with the rest of Council. She would like to know how much payroll, or other taxes, are generated from the tenants within the past 5 -10 years. Also, how much property tax is paid. If the city borrows money, she would like the city to look at interest rates, term, etc. She asked how the city would plan for the lost revenue of the building. The Mayor stated that these would be questions for the accountant. She added that even if the agreement is signed, there is no urgency and the city can take time to investigate these questions. The

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city, she said, has a solid budget, including reserve cash and a CD with a good interest rate. We have little debt and a road loan that will be paid off early.

Ms. Spoor thanked everyone for coming and encouraged those with questions to email Council instead of relying on rumors from social media. Ms. Spoor added that the city will be getting RFPs to make analysis and find the best way to resolve the city's needs. Ms. Spoor addressed an audience member asking if the RFPs would be made public. She replied they would. Another resident asked how long the city has been renting and how much we pay. Ms. Spoor replied that we have rented for 12 years. The Mayor stated that the city pays \$200 per meeting. To keep a permanent set up at this location would cost \$2,000 per month. Ms. Spoor stated that we have been asked to leave other locations as their needs for their space may change. Our options are shrinking as we need a space within the city limits. She also stated that we could meet in our city's chambers, although not ideal. The stairs can cause hardship for some and only has the capacity for 30 people. Ms. Froelich also believes it is worth noting that the chamber does not have a great audio/visual system. Would like something we don't have to set up and take down every meeting.

8:12 Motion to adjourn.

Mayor, Kathy Zembrodt

ATTEST:

City Clerk