

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE MINUTES

October 27, 2009

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in conference at 5:20 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 27th day of October, 2009, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Atkins, Butler, Dillingham,
Griffith, Quinn, Mayor Pro Tem Cubberley

ABSENT: Councilmembers Ezzell, Kovach, Mayor
Rosenthal

DISCUSSION REGARDING CHANGE ORDER NO. ONE TO CONTRACT NO. K-0910-104 WITH SUN CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, INC., INCREASING THE CONTRACT AMOUNT BY \$446.50 FOR MUNICIPAL BUILDING C RENOVATION PROJECT.

Mr. Patrick Copeland, Manager, Development Services Division, said the Municipal Building C Renovation Project includes the removal and replacement of the entire roof; replacement of the heating and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment; replacement of the carpet; and remodeling of the Human Resources Department. Bids were received on September 29, 2009, and the lowest bid was received from Sun Construction in the amount of \$888,226. Subsequent to the bid opening, staff identified five areas where it would be best if the proposed flooring (carpet) was changed to a different material. The changes resulted in an increase of \$446.50 and Change Order No. One provides for the proposed changes in flooring specifications.

The change order will be considered on Council's regular agenda later this evening.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated October 13, 2009, from Patrick Copeland, AICP, CFM, Manager, Development Services Division, to Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers
2. Change Order No. One to Contract No. K-0910-104

DISCUSSION REGARDING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE HISTORIC DISTRICT ORDINANCE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION GUIDELINES.

Ms. Susan Atkinson, Historic Preservation Officer, highlighted the proposed amendments to the Historic District Ordinance. She said the proposed amendments are the result of a review process through the Council Planning and Community Development Committee (PCDC) and a survey conducted by Councilmember Dillingham in the two historic districts. She said the amendments as proposed by the Committee would better define the visibility of changes to historic structures regulated by the Historic District Commission and make expectations clearer to property owners.

Ms. Atkinson said the Committee agreed visibility of changes to historic structures should be regulated from any public right-of-way, excluding alleys, but corner properties would be regarded as having two primary facades due to increased visibility. The proposed amendments define primary and secondary elevations in historic structures; identifies fronts, sides, and the rear of historic districts; and clarifies the rear elevation of a historic structure is a secondary elevation, less important than the primary, and will be regulated to a lower standard. She said the proposed language puts into practice what has been an unwritten policy in Norman's Historic Preservation Program since its inception.

The second proposed amendment is related to the structure of the Historic District Commission. Ms. Atkinson said a recent survey of historic district property owners indicated a majority of the Historic District Commissioners should own property in the historic districts and a majority of property owners/commissioners should also live within one of the City's two historic districts. A majority of the respondents also expressed a desire to continue the City's participation in the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program. The CLG

Program participation requires a proportional representation of commission members with professional background in preservation or related disciplines. In order to meet both obligations the PCDC recommended the ordinance be amended to state five members of the Commission shall own property in the historic districts and at least three of the five shall be residents. Additionally, in order to allow for the possibility of an at-large member, the PCDC proposed if all residency and professional/technical requirements are met, remaining seats on the Historic District Commission could be filled by at-large Norman residents who have some demonstrated knowledge, experience, or expertise in historic preservation.

Ms. Atkinson provided an overview of proposed amendments to the Historic Preservation Guidelines. She said a guideline on chain link fences was previously omitted from the Historic Preservation Guidelines which states chain link fencing may be used in the rear yards of interior lots. Other amendments revise definitions for elevation and facades.

Ms. Atkinson said with Council's concurrence the proposed amendments will be forwarded to the Planning Commission before being placed on Council's agenda for formal consideration. It was the consensus of Council to move forward with the amendments.

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated October 20, 2009, from Susan Owen Atkinson, Historic Preservation Officer, to Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council with Attachment A, Proposed Ordinance No. O-0910-12, and Attachment B, proposed amendments to Historic Preservation Guidelines

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE OUTDOOR WARNING SYSTEM REPLACEMENT PROJECT AND ACTIVATION POLICY.

Fire Chief James Fullingim said the purpose of this discussion is to provide an information briefing on the City's Outdoor Warning System and Activation Policy. He said an outdoor warning system normally consists of sirens designed to alert citizens that are outside of approaching or existing hazardous conditions, which require immediate protective actions in order to save lives and property. He said they are not intended to be heard inside a home or building. He provided an overview of Norman's 37 outdoor warning sirens. He said Norman has 21 Federal signals ranging in age from 35-40 years, all of which are no longer in production. He said parts are salvaged from units that are no longer functioning to keep the system going. There are 17 American signals ranging in age from six to 12 years old, three of which are owned by the University of Oklahoma. He said the system is activated manually and is a one way signal without computer control or geographical activation zone capabilities. He said the signals are designed to be heard within a two mile radius, but topography and trees will shorten the length in which signals may be heard. Fifty percent of the sirens have exceeded their life span and most are obsolete and staff can no longer purchase replacement parts for them. He said 80% of the sirens activate on any given attempt; however, those that activate and function when tested may not activate when tested the next time. The current system does not cover the entire City limits and are more densely located in the urban area where there is higher population.

Chief Fullingim provided an overview of the current Outdoor Warning System Activation Policy and said currently, the Emergency Management Director makes the decision to activate the sirens based upon notification of approaching severe weather from the National Weather Service or storm watch personnel. If communications with the Emergency Management Director or Emergency Management Coordinator cannot be established, Fire Department Shift Commanders are authorized to sound the warning sirens. As previously discussed when the outdoor warning sirens are activated, the entire system has to be activated. It does not have the capabilities of being activated by zones.

Chief Fullingim said staff began a policy review process and received input from all stakeholder areas; i.e., National Weather Service, local professionals, University of Oklahoma, emergency management partners, and

elected officials. Staff reviewed best practices and other policies in the metro area and developed a draft policy, which was circulated to the stakeholders for their comments and input. The overall consensus of the stakeholders was the policy should maintain consistency and should include multiple means for releasing warnings. Under the proposed policy, the Emergency Management Director will make the determination to activate the outdoor warning sirens. A tornado warning issued from the National Weather Service with a polygon including any portion of the City of Norman shall be cause for outdoor warning siren activation. If communications with the Emergency Management Director or Emergency Management Coordinator cannot be established, Fire Department Shift Commanders or Emergency Communications Supervisor are authorized to sound the outdoor warning sirens.

City Manager Lewis said if Council so desires, the policy can be highlighted in the form of a resolution for formal adopted by Council and Council agreed it would be a good way to educate the public and create awareness throughout the community. The resolution will be submitted for Council's consideration next spring prior to tornado season.

Chief Fullingim highlighted the features of the recommended Outdoor Warning Replacement System as follows:

- Proposed system will have local and remote activation capabilities;
- Proposed system will have a computer monitoring control station, which will allow for silent monitoring to be conducted as often as desired;
- Proposed system will have voice capability in high impact locations such as parks, near schools, around Lake Thunderbird, etc., which will allow for audible instructions to be relayed to those within range on potential storms or other emergency situations;
- Proposed system will have weather monitoring capability in quadrants of the City to measure wind, humidity, and temperature; and
- Proposed system will have activation zoning capabilities, which will allow staff to activate specific areas of Norman that are subject to the potential emergency. The current system must be activated City wide and when parts of the City are not at risk it causes confusion.

The proposed system is estimated to cost \$2,115,500, which includes 60 new sirens (to cover the entire City limits), modification and relocation of 17 existing sirens, three control stations, and site acquisition and right-of-way costs. The batteries for the system have a three year life space and annual maintenance and repair costs are estimated at \$102,000, half of which is already included in the Fire Department's current operations and maintenance budget.

Chief Fullingim said the outdoor warning sirens are just one tool to notify the public of a potential danger or emergency. Another method of notification is known as Reverse 9-1-1, which sends a recorded message to individual telephone numbers of a potential emergency and provides guidance on what steps to take to find shelter. He said this is done through the telephone system and can be activated citywide or just in specific targeted areas. The cost for this system is estimated at \$48,875 annually.

City Manager Steve Lewis said the Outdoor Warning System Replacement Project is a good candidate for General Obligation (G.O.) Bond financing, which is one method for funding the improvements. Other funding options include Capital Fund, temporary sales tax increase, and the Public Safety Sales Tax. In order to use the Public Safety Sales Tax all items promised in the election that established the tax would have to be accomplished before new items were added and it would not be known until year five or six of the seven year temporary tax whether funds would be available. The current system is a balancing act each year to keep sirens working and waiting several years is not practical. Mr. Anthony Francisco, Finance Director, said a five year G.O. Bond for a \$100,000 home would cost approximately \$.61 per month, \$.95 per month for a \$150,000 home, and \$1.28 per month for a \$200,000 home.

Councilmembers discussed the various funding options and it was the consensus of Council to move forward with a five year General Obligation Bond election in March, 2010. Councilmember Cubberley asked if the voters approved the system in March, how long would it take to implement the project. Chief Fullingim said, if approved, the system should be in place by the spring of 2011.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation for the Outdoor Warning System Project and Activation Policy

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor