

BCC Actions

Notes from Your Jefferson County Board of Commissioners Hearings & Staff Briefings

Tuesday, June 10 & 17, 2008

Staff Briefing

Facilities and Construction Management Update

Dan Brindle, Facilities and Construction Management Director, presented the BCC with an update of the operations of the division, which manages the majority of county-owned facilities and grounds and is responsible for providing safe, clean and efficient workspaces that meets the needs of tenants, employees and the general public.

In total, the Facilities and Construction Management Division has some or all management responsibility for 49 major county-owned buildings. In addition to the day-to-day facilities' operation and routine repairs, such as electrical, HVAC, plumbing, carpentry and security, the division manages a preventative maintenance program for major equipment and building components, remodels workspaces, provides assistance and consulting services to building tenants for space and furniture planning and ensures buildings meet safety, fire and ADA code requirements.

The division oversees planning, construction and renovation of county facilities, negotiates and oversees agreements for the majority of facilities leased by the county, oversees site-related property acquisition and disposal, and manages contracts for numerous services. The Construction Management activities include planning and oversight of major equipment replacement and construction projects, and the management of related contracts with architects, engineers and construction companies.

Lyons Ridge Official Development Plan

After three night hearings on the proposed rezoning, the BCC voted 2-1 to approve a resolution allowing the rezoning of 284 acres of land for future single-family residential development. The site, under the ownership of Colorado Christian University (CCU) exists near the Willowbrook and Willow Springs neighborhoods. The approval included changes to the red-marked print of the Lyons Ridge Official Development Plan (ODP).

In making the motion, Commissioner Kevin McCasky added specific language revisions to the ODP clarifying language on the clustering of residential home sites. The language is being added to ensure that, at the time of platting, the applicant demonstrates the clustering of home sites through lot layout, road design and preservation of no-build areas. He also clarified language related to a through-connection between Bellevue Avenue and Turkey Creek Road for future traffic improvements.

The case had been continued to June 10 to allow time for the applicant and staff to discuss direction set forth by McCasky at a previous hearing, that the number of residential dwelling units be reduced from the applicant's proposed 280 dwelling units to 230 dwelling units. This direction reflected a compromise between the applicant's proposal and the Planning Commission's recommendation of 215 dwelling units on the CCU-owned land. In addition, McCasky asked that more details be included on standards for clustering, open space and ridgeline preservation.

CCU partnered with Shea Properties to modify its original request to create both residential development and a new campus for CCU. CCU agreed to remove a new campus proposal and to remove the existing entitlement to build 1.9 million square feet of existing campus development in favor of a revised Planned Development for new single family development and three existing telecommunications facilities.

Business Meeting

Rezoning of Bear Claw Estates

The BCC accepted the request of an applicant who respectfully asked to withdraw the case of Bear Claw Estates Official Development Plan. The case had been continued to the June 10 hearing agenda to allow for more time to read through and study new and existing material.

The applicant owns 10 acres in the Bear Claw Estates neighborhood and had proposed to rezone from Agricultural-Two (A-2) to Planned Development (P-D) in order to allow for three single-family residential lots to be created. Neighboring residents requested denial of the ODP or rewording to minimize the development to two lots for single-family development.

Merit Badge for Eagle Scout Candidate

Ben Jackson, with Scout Troop 989 of Littleton, sat in on the Board of County Commissioners meeting as a requirement to earn his citizenship in the community merit badge. Jackson is working to earn Eagle Scout and will be conducting a project of sanding and staining bridges in Roxborough Park sometime in July.

Grant for Methamphetamine Interdiction

The BCC approved the two applications for grant funds between Jefferson County and the U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services, who are providing the grant award opportunity to assist

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Business Meeting, cont.

the Sheriff's Office and collaborative partners to support methamphetamine interdiction.

The first grant's funding will provide for a methamphetamine investigator assigned to the West Metro Drug Task Force (WMDTF), specifically for cases involving meth. It will provide much needed overtime for meth intelligence and investigations, a translator with local Mexican dialect skills for wire tap investigations and new radios to replace the outdated system currently in use. Finally, funding will support the purchase of disposable hazard protection supplies and equipment necessary. This grant award is anticipated to be \$303,973.

The second grant will fund a District Attorney Criminal Investigator for 18 months, working collaboratively with WMDTF, and provide overtime for meth investigations. This position's primary focus will be directed at identity theft and economic crimes related to methamphetamine. This grant award is anticipated to be \$111,067.

Methamphetamine production, trafficking and distribution are experiencing changes. There is production in super-labs, causing a resurgence of local clandestine labs, but also increasing production of "nexus drugs" (heroin, cocaine and marijuana).

Donation to Alderfer/Three Sisters Park

The BCC approved the recommendation made by the Open Space Advisory Committee for the Stobie property donation of two acres adjacent to the eastern boundary of Alderfer/Three Sisters Park. The owner will transfer the property to the Jeffco Open Space Foundation, which will then donate it to Jefferson County. The property will provide contiguity, buffer and potential access to the park.

Open Space Purchase

The BCC approved the recommendation of the Open Space Advisory Committee for the purchase and sale agreement with Douglas and Ronald Bombard for the acquisition of approximately 9.58 acres and for five inches of water in The Agricultural Ditch and Reservoir Company. The purchase price for the land is \$690,000 and \$27,500 for the water rights. The property located at 5445 West Ohio Avenue, which is one block west of Sheridan between Alameda and Mississippi in Lakewood, will provide additional park and open space land in an underserved neighborhood, relieve some over-use at nearby Ray Ross Park and provide a link in the planned Weir Gulch greenbelt trail.

Commissioners Give Jim Moore Vote of Confidence

The Board of County Commissioners has given County Administrator Jim Moore a strong vote of confidence, following a "360 degree" performance evaluation where they asked all county elected officials and department directors to provide input. This report is being released to the media by the request of Commissioners.

Moore has held the top administrative job since November 2005. Board chairman Kathy Hartman said in a letter to Moore that "the overall evaluation is extremely positive and reaffirms the opinions of the majority of the Board of County Commissioners regarding your work."

Speaking on behalf of the Board majority, Hartman said, "You and your team have accomplished much in the past year. You have effectively coordinated a Citizens Budget Advisory Panel and a county-wide Organizational Review Committee to put the county on the road to fiscal health. Your efforts resulted in a \$13 million (3.5%) reduction in our 2008 budget as compared to our 2007 budget, with relatively little reduction in services to our citizens."

Hartman said both elected officials and department heads rated Moore highly in many areas including building a team atmosphere by encouraging cooperation rather than competition; demonstrating leadership and the ability to negotiate agreements among people with differing opinions; treating all persons in the workplace with respect, and demonstrating a public service orientation.

Commissioner Kevin McCasky added, "Jim Moore and his team have led the county to great accomplishments in these challenging financial times. County budget processes have received recognition in national forums, including the National Association of Counties and the International City and County Management Association. We've received accolades from all over the country wanting to emulate our financial processes."

Hartman concluded by saying, "We look forward to your continued service for the citizens of Jefferson County. Thank you for all you have done."

Decision Made on Library District

Jefferson County Public Library will remain a part of Jefferson County Government. After two evening hearings on the proposed formation of a library district, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) voted 2-1 not to accept the proposal by the Jefferson County Public Library Board of Trustees to separate from the county and become a library district.

The Commissioners commended the library for the outstanding service it offers the citizens of Jefferson County and the commitment of employees and volunteers of the library. After reviewing all the information presented, the BCC felt it is in the overall best interest of the county to keep the current structure.

Commissioner Kevin McCasky commented at the time of his vote that he believes that the citizens of Jefferson County have benefited greatly from the outstanding library system and that it is a jewel in the crown of Jefferson County. He praised the committed employees and hardworking, dedicated Library Board of Trustees.

Referring to the data that had been presented by the county and library staffs, McCasky said he had heard the analyses for almost two years and been struck by the disparity of the data presented, but added "I have heard nothing to convince me that citizens will see an improvement in library services and nothing that compels me to sever the library's positive relationship with the county."

In her vote against the proposal, Commissioner Kathy Hartman said she can understand the library's desire to gain control of both administrative costs and revenues, but her concerns are with the control and accountability to the voters and taxpayers. A library district board would be appointed and not controlled by a vote of the people and, therefore would add another layer of separation. By statute, county commissioners appoint committees that then appoint library district board members unlike other special districts in Colorado where voters directly elect board members.

Hartman also is concerned about library services in the southern portion of the county. More than a 100,000 residents

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Library District, cont. from page 2

live in South Jeffco south of Highway 285 and east of C-470, yet it has only one of the county's 10 libraries. With the library giving Westminster \$500,000 a year under the inter-governmental agreement (IGA) with that city, the underserved South Jeffco area could get even less service.

Commissioner Jim Congrove cast his vote for the library to separate from the county and form a library district, but did not comment when voting.

In a presentation to the BCC made by Administrative Services Director Todd Leopold and Acting County Attorney Ellen Wakeman, the concerns of county staff regarding financial and service implications were outlined. One negative impact covered in the presentation was that although \$4.3 million of costs to the county (like payroll costs) would be transferred to the district, another \$510,000 in costs previously shared by the library will remain to be redistributed to all other county departments, affecting the budgets for all other county services.

Wakeman also discussed the IGA that Westminster would require the library to sign if it becomes a district. The IGA would require the library to pay the city \$500,000 per year, increasing in future years, without requiring Westminster to use the money to enhance library services in Jeffco.

Jefferson County Assessor Jim Everson submitted a letter outlining his concerns with the formation of a district, including phasing out county administrative services to the library over five years rather than immediately eliminating them at once; revising the IGA with Westminster to ensure that no funds from the library district would be used for anything other than new library services; and being able to demonstrate that the proposal of a new district is either neutral or positive for Jefferson County taxpayers. He concluded by saying, "I would hope that the County Commissioners would require that these issues be satisfactorily resolved prior to granting approval."

Other Jeffco elected officials also shared their thoughts via a joint letter read by District Attorney Scott Storey who said the proposed district comes at a time when the county is experiencing challenging budget issues. This joint letter had the support of Storey, Sheriff Ted Mink, Treasurer Faye Griffin and Coroner Katherine Loughrey-Stemp. They expressed the common concern that the separation of the library would increase the internal service

fund amount attributable to each of the elected official's budgets. "The bottom line is that we will be paying more for services provided by the county, and we will be forced to reduce services to maintain our target budget requirements . . . If the BCC grants the Library Board's request, the Sheriff will be forced to cut an additional \$250,000. This will result in a reduction of resources which will have a negative impact on public safety."

Storey said that two years ago when the county realized it had a budget crisis, the elected officials initially hunkered down in their own departments and had a "self-serving attitude" about how the budget crisis would affect only their own areas. But as they worked together through the Organizational Review Committee and other efforts, they developed a team spirit, stepping back and looking at things more holistically. "I look at my responsibilities not just for the DA's office, though that is my primary one, but with the well being of the county as a whole."

A grim picture was presented from the Library Board that, if the library remained as a component of the county, its expenditures would outpace revenues, draining their reserves and making the library unable to serve the citizens and eventually having to close down altogether. However, county staff pointed out that the majority of the cost-saving measures the library was proposing could be done while still within the county system. The savings of \$200,000 in cost allocations paid to the county would be more than offset by the \$500,000 payment to Westminster, so no operational benefit was inherent to a change to a district. The library provided no specific analysis that showed that creating a district alone would alleviate its budget issue.

The consensus of the Board of County Commissioners and staff, who have worked for the last two years to analyze the impact of the library separating from the county, is that the Jefferson County library system has operated very successfully as a relatively independent unit of Jefferson County government and there is no reason it can't continue to do so. The system has grown and thrived and been noted as one of the best in the state with nearly 20 awards for service and outstanding achievement.

As Jefferson County Administrator Jim Moore stated in his letter to citizens dated June 13, "We are proud of the library services provided to our citizens. Let's not mess with success."

Budget Prioritization Featured in Magazine

Jefferson County is featured on the cover of the June issue of Public Management magazine, published by the International City and County Management Association (ICMA), with the headline, "Prioritization: The New Reality in Budgeting?" The magazine's lead story, a six-page article by Jefferson County Budget Director Jon Johnson, Business Process Analyst Chris Fabian and former budget employee Scott Collins, talks about the county's prioritization process that began last year and helped avert a \$12 million budget shortfall in the general fund.

[Read the article: Getting Your Priorities Straight](#)

ICMA was the first of several national organizations to spotlight Jefferson County's budget process, focusing attention on the way the county rallied together with all elected and appointed officials, department and division directors, employees and citizens to find solutions.

Why is Jeffco's budget process so unique that governments around the country want to know more about it? It's simple. Not easy, but simple. In a message to county employees, County Administrator Jim Moore said that we all worked together. Our county commissioners enlisted the help of all the other elected officials, appointed officials and the county administrator's Leadership Team together in an Organizational Review Committee. Collectively, we looked at the services provided by the county and prioritized them according to their ability to meet the county's goals.

It was a unique, inclusive, and collaborative way of doing things. Everyone was invited to comment, to be creative and challenge the status quo. No idea was considered too offbeat for consideration.

"It is because of this working together that we were successful," Moore said. "The budget staff and I have been invited to share the lessons we have learned with other governments across the country. Jefferson County is considered a leader in this field. Every Jeffco elected official and employee should take pride in this very significant accomplishment. I look forward to working with all of you as we continue this process with the 2009 budget."

YOUR BCC

Kathy Hartman, Chair, District 3

J. Kevin McCasky, District 2

Jim Congrove, District 1