

**Special
Physical Services Committee Meeting
Held in Room #318
Putnam County Office Building
Members: Chairman Albano & Legislators Castellano & Wright**

Monday

October 19, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:00p.m. by Chairman Albano. Chairman Albano requested that Legislator Wright lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Chairman Albano and Legislators Castellano and Wright were present.

Item #3) Discussion/Revised Butterfield Lease

6:08p.m.

Chair Albano made a motion to go into Executive Session to Discuss with Legal Counsel Contractual Matters; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

6:55p.m.

Chair Albano made a motion to come out of Executive Session; Seconded by Legislator Castellano.

Chair Albano stated that no action was taken.

Chair Albano made a motion to approve and Revised Butterfield Lease; Seconded by Legislator Castellano.

Legislator Wright questioned if there is anyone present representing Commissioner Pena's Office to discuss the renovation costs for the changed Build Out.

Chair Albano stated that he did meet with Commissioner Pena on several occasions. He stated that it seems this will be a much better fit and as far as expenses there will be a savings to the County as the Center is built out. He stated based on everything he has seen, this will result in a substantial savings and much better location for the Seniors. He stated that the Legislature can invite Commissioner Pena to meet with the Legislators to provide follow up information in regards to what has been discussed.

Legislator Wright questioned Office for Senior Resources (OSR) Director Sheehy if she could explain the physical impossibility of the plan that was worked on for a year and a half in some detail, because it has never been explained to the Committee it has been eluded to. He stated that the Legislature came, in principle, to the building under the previous lease and then a couple of weeks ago there was this catastrophic failure of engineering relative to the size of the bus area. He stated that it was not explained why the first building location cannot work; or be made better so that it would work.

OSR Director Sheehy stated firstly, she is not exactly sure that a plan was worked on for a year and a half. She stated for a long time there was a lot of discussion about the concept of going

into the Butterfield Property. She stated the Lahey Pavilion which is under consideration currently, was planned to be used for doctors' offices. She stated after much discussion regarding the original site, Building #1, and the possibility of putting other County Services in there along with the Senior Center, it was decided that there was not enough space, when the common space was taken out of the square footage, reducing it to 5,000 sq. feet, to do that. She stated those discussions and decisions occurred approximately September or October of 2014.

Legislator Wright questioned if the square footage in Building #1 met the needs of the proposed Senior Center.

OSR Director Sheehy stated it was believed it would be tight, but they could make it work. She stated that there were no specific floor plans done, at that specific time. She stated that the first floor plan she saw was in August of 2015. She stated at that time she realized that the level of the direct entry into the proposed Building #1 space was on one side of the building and the level of where the buses would drop off the Seniors was in a place where the Seniors would be entering the Building #1 on the lower level, which would be one (1) floor beneath the Senior Center. She stated at that time she expressed concern with this. She stated if she had two (2) buses pull up to the drop off area there would be approximately 32 people entering the building needing to access elevators, which depending if there are walkers or wheel chairs would hold 3-5 people. She stated that she was concerned that there was no lobby in the building with space for the Seniors to sit down as they waited for the elevator. She stated the Seniors who the County transports are the frailest of the Seniors.

Legislator Wright questioned prior to that evaluation was there an issue in October with the buses not being able to make the turn radius. He stated that is the information that was provided to the Legislature.

OSR Director Sheehy stated that she had heard some general discussion that the buses would not be able to turned around to get back out to Route 9D.

Legislator Wright stated then the issue had nothing to do with the Seniors getting out on the wrong side of the bus and having to walk around the bus, as the Legislature was told.

OSR Director Sheehy stated she was not privy to that conversation.

Chair Albano stated that he recalls Director Sheehy stating to him that she had concern that the Seniors would be dropped off at one end of the building and they would have to walk to the mid-point of the building.

OSR Director Sheehy stated that was correct.

Legislator Wright questioned when Director Sheehy first looked at Building #1 where did she think the Seniors would enter.

OSR Director Sheehy stated when she first looked at it, in its conceptual phase, she stated that she thought that they would be able to enter on the ground level.

Legislator Wright questioned what Director Sheehy's understanding is that is preventing that from being the case.

OSR Director Sheehy stated that she believes it had to do with a concern on behalf of the Department of Transportation (DOT). However, she does not have the details regarding that information since it is not her purview of responsibility.

Legislator Wright stated he understands that. He stated that is why he thought an engineer from the County's Planning Department would be present to speak to that matter. He questioned if Director Sheehy has been informed as to why the ground level entry, which she thought was going to be the access can no longer be reconfigured to be usable in Building #1.

OSR Director Sheehy stated that she was informed that there was a concern on the part of the DOT. She stated generally once the DOT states that they will not allow something to be done, that is the end of it.

Legislator Wright questioned if Director Sheehy is in agreement that the Lahey Pavilion is the better overall location versus Building #1 for the Senior Center.

OSR Director Sheehy stated yes, she believe the Lahey Pavilion offers a ton of possibility.

Legislator Wright questioned if it is correct to say that Director Sheehy does not envision much would need to be done to the existing picture as you walk in and see the new proposed space, the Lahey Pavilion.

OSR Director Sheehy stated she does not want to be trapped into a commitment in terms of that. She stated that there are some things that will need to be done. She stated the ceiling seems a little low, there needs to be a kitchen built into the space, so there will need to be plumbing put in and that can result in other work needing to be done. She stated again she is not the qualified person to ask those questions to. She stated in general she believes the reception area and the offices to the left will satisfied the needs. She stated that she does believe the space is a very good opportunity for the Senior Center. She stated in the Building #1 location they would have been on the 2nd floor. She stated that the activities that take place at the Senior Center can at times be loud, with music playing for the exercise classes, dancing and moving tables; that may have proposed some issues. She stated in the new site, the Lahey Pavilion, there is no issue with that. She stated also in terms of access for ambulance services it is better at the Lahey Pavilion also, which is an important fact.

Legislator Wright questioned if Director Sheehy has any concern with the following proposed change: Building #1 there was an offer of 25 year occupancy; in the Lahey Pavilion that has been reduced to 15.

OSR Director Sheehy stated she does not have a concern. She stated currently the County is in the height of providing services for the "Baby Boomers". She stated years from now, the County may see a decline in the numbers of Seniors.

Legislator Gross stated that he believes that the Lahey Pavilion is the better proposal. He stated the infrastructure is there and there is a new oil burner. He stated that he is aware of the concerns with Tax issues. He stated he agrees that the entrance and exit area for a Senior Center is a critical consideration. He stated that he is concerned with the lease, the devil is in the details. He stated the Legislature just received a letter, this afternoon, from County Executive Odell stating per Elizabeth Ailes, if the donation of money from the Ailes Family is not disbursed by November 30, 2015 the Ailes will be forced to forfeit the funds. He stated that he would like to suggest putting the money in an escrow account, which would solve the deadline issue. He stated that he believes the Legislature is on board to have a Senior Center in the Western side of the County. Legislator Scuccimarra has done a wonderful job promoting and supporting the project.

Legislator Nacerino stated that she agrees with Legislator Gross. She stated she and Legislator Castellano went to the Lahey Pavilion and were both very impressed with the facility. She stated it is the most conducive, logical and rational proposal. She stated she believes the change to 15 years is perfect. She stated that will allow the County to re-assess the need for a Senior Center.

Legislator Addonizio stated that she also toured the Lahey Pavilion and was impressed with the condition of the building. She stated that her hope is that the County would have a savings in the build out costs in comparison to the original proposed location in Building #1.

Legislator LoBue stated that she along with Legislator Albano toured the Lahey Pavilion. She stated that she was happy to have the opportunity to see it. She stated one (1) of the aspects of the location is that it is filled with light. She stated she believes that is very important for a Senior Center and any office. She stated however she has questions about the costs. She stated that she would like in writing an answer to the question regarding placing the donation from the Ailes in an escrow account and also in writing a cost benefit analysis. She stated she is not happy with the fact that this was brought forward now, in the middle of the Budget process, she stated that she would like it to be tabled to next month. She stated that notification on the deadline for the disbursement of the funds would have been useful to have much sooner, because now there is a sense of pushing to get it done. She stated that she does want to see a cost benefit analysis between Building #1 and the Lahey Pavilion. She stated the Legislature needs to do their due diligence in terms of the money. She stated she was pleasantly surprised with the condition of the Lahey Pavilion. She stated she is in favor of purchasing the building. She stated that she has concerns with that, but it is included in the Lease which at this time is Confidential, therefore preventing her from speaking to it in an open forum. She stated that she does believe the Lahey Pavilion is the better choice versus the brand new building. She stated for the records she believes the timing is terrible. She stated this is the first time she has seen an issue of this magnitude squeezed into the Budget Process; she has concern with that. She stated that she wants the Legislature to be aware of all of the costs involved.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated that she began working on this project three (3) years ago. She said the Ailes Family graciously stepped forward to offer a donation of \$500,000 due to their respect and passion for the Seniors. She stated that the County has labored over this for months. She stated that it is a good project, we have seen the numbers, we have seen the space, she supports approving the lease. She stated after that, then the County can get the costs. She stated that she is sure the costs are going to be tremendously lower than what the costs would have been at the “vanilla box” that the County had originally been looking at in Building #1. She stated that she hopes this gets moved to the November Full Legislature meeting for final approval.

Chair Albano stated originally the Legislature was in agreement and looking to spend possibly \$700,000 to \$1 million dollars on the Building #1 site. He stated looking at the Lahey Pavilion there is no question that the County will spend a lot less money. He stated once a lease is in place then time can be spent looking for grants and other funding sources that may be available.

OSR Director Sheehy stated in reference to the money donation from the Ailes, she does recall that they made it clear that they had a certain time frame under which they needed to match their Grant.

Legislator Wright questioned when was the first time Director Sheehy recalls hearing that; was it at the beginning of the discussions.

OSR Director Sheehy stated she believes it was. She stated that Mr. Ailes received a \$250,000 award and the Ailes stated that they would match that amount, but there was a timeframe stated that the award money needed to be spent by.

Legislator Wright stated that was never shared with the Legislature. He stated tonight via a memo from the County Executive is the first time he ever heard that concept. He stated that the Legislature had made a decision, but now are being asked to make another decision. He stated he would like something in writing from the Engineering Department that supports

Legislator Albano’s assessment that the County will incur less Build Out costs. He stated that he would like to receive documentation from Commissioner Pena on the Build Out costs. As well as receive documentation from the County’s Law Department pertaining to an Escrow Account.

Legislator Castellano stated that he was very impressed with how nice the Lahey Pavilion was. He stated that he believes it is the better option of the two (2) buildings. He stated with this new location and the gift from the Ailes Foundation he believes the County needs to move forward. He stated he believes it is a great opportunity for the Seniors on the Western side of the County.

Legislator Nacerino stated that the Ailes funding is a gift. She stated the County would be using non-taxpayer dollars to benefit the Seniors with this project.

Legislator Gouldman stated that he believes the Lahey Pavilion is a much better opportunity than Building #1 and he will be supporting this.

Chair Albano made a motion to approve and move the Revised Butterfield Lease Agreement to the November Full Meeting; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. Legislator Wright abstained pending receipt of the Planning Department's Build Out Letter and the Law Department's Letter regarding the Escrow of the \$500,000. Motion Carries.

Item #5) Adjournment

There being no further business, at 7:25P.M., Chair Albano made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Trabulsy, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature.