MINUTES
KEIZER CITY COUNCIL/KEIZER URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY JOINT WORK SESSION
Monday, November 9, 2009
Keizer City Hall, Council Chambers
Keizer, Oregon

CALL TO ORDER

Council President/Agent Jim Taylor called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m. The following were present:

Councilors/Agents:
Lore Christopher (6:10)
Jim Taylor
Cathy Clark
David McKane
Mark Caillier
Brandon Smith
Richard Walsh

Staff
Chris Eppley, City Manager
Shannon Johnson, City Attorney
Susan Gahlsdorf, Finance Director
Kevin Watson, Assistant to the City Manager
Tracy Davis, City Recorder

Keizer Civic Center – Catering Center

Bill Quinn, Keizer, reported that he had spoken to four caterers who had informed him that the $300,000 catering center was not needed and one who said it was; He added that the caterers he spoke to had complained that they had to pay a fee to get on the preferred caterer list and that the list was now closed; some caterers were not invited to submit a proposal; and several caterers were not happy with the way the City is conducting this business. Mr. Quinn questioned if the architect who designed the building had informed the city that the warming kitchen would be inadequate for the civic center and, if not, why would they be hired again to do the redesign?

Councilor/Agent McKane responded that the full kitchen was in the original plan for the building but was taken out purposefully. City Manager Chris Eppley confirmed this and added that initially the City had not anticipated hosting many large events. He also explained that the caterer's list is primarily to guide customer service; but the list has changed into a set of criteria and anyone can submit and be on the list after the City checks references and verifies that they meet the criteria. Kevin Watson added that an ad for caterers was put in the Statesman Journal and that the fee was for the ongoing cost of usage of the facility and having the caterer name in the marketing materials. Liz Hall from Class Act provided additional details. Discussion then took place regarding the difference between being a community center or a convention center.

Jerry Crane, Keizer, representing Spice Island Catering Center, voiced support for the proposed catering kitchen. He explained that he had lost business in the previous year because he does not have mobile kitchen like larger caterers but he could bring the business to Keizer if there was a kitchen at the community center. Discussion then took place regarding avoiding competition with the Renaissance Inn and supporting local businesses, the logistics of catering, enhancing economic development and disposable vs. washable dishes.

A. J. Nash, Keizer, chair of Economic Development and Government Affairs (EDGA) at the Keizer Chamber of Commerce, reported that the group had approved the idea of having a catering facility and encouraged inclusion of a dishwashing unit. He also reviewed marketing schemes being considered and concluded that bringing more people into the city will benefit local businesses. Additional discussion took place regarding the room rates for the Community Center, marketing plans and ideas, and public art.

Christine Dieker, Keizer, Executive Director of the Keizer Chamber, read the formal recommendation of EDGA to move forward with the proposed catering center and to move forward in marketing and sales.

Sherrie Gottfried, Keizer, Renaissance Inn, noted that as long as the City is a competitor with the mission of bringing visitors into the city who would spend the night, then the competition would be complementary. Noting that the Renaissance Inn is a hotel first and a catering company second, Ms. Gottfried reiterated the need for a strong marketing plan, explained that Renaissance meeting rooms can only hold 350-550 and noted that if the City focused on attracting large out-of-town groups, then both the City and the hotel would benefit.

Following lengthy discussion regarding bookings, marketing, a business plan, and partnering with the hotel, Mayor/Agent Christopher explained that the discussion and testimony was important so that Council could make a decision on the proposal. Mr. Eppley then fielded questions regarding various figures on the blueprints, the need for a marketing plan prior to construction of the facility and the timing and costs for one.

Mayor/Agent Christopher summarized the three decision points:

(1) What are we going to do? Are we going to aggressively market outside the city for larger events and what will be the balance?

(2) If that is the case, are we going to build the amenity to support that; and

(3) Are we going to authorize the City Manager to go out with an RFP for a marketing plan?

ADJOURN Meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

APPROVED:

AGENT/MAYOR:

Lore Christopher

Debbie Lockhart, Deputy City Recorder

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Agent/Councilor #1 – David McKane

Agent/Councilor #2 – Brandon Smith

Agent/Councilor #3 – Mark Caillier

Agent/Councilor #4 – Cathy Clark

Agent/Councilor #5 – Richard Walsh

Agent/Councilor #6 – James Taylor

Minutes approved:

December 7, 2009