

**STAFF REPORT****City Council**

Meeting Date: 7/28/2020
Staff Report Number: 20-164-CC

Informational Item: Update on the Belle Haven community center and library project

Recommendation

The purpose of this informational item is to provide the City Council and members of the public a brief update on the Belle Haven community center and library project.

Policy Issues

As an informational item, there are no policy issues. Staff will identify any applicable policy issues for the City Council consideration as part of any action items related to the project.

Background

In October 2019, Facebook announced its intent to collaborate with the community and the City to build a new multigenerational community center and library on the site of the current Onetta Harris Community Center (OHCC), Menlo Park Senior Center and Belle Haven Youth Center located at 100-110 Terminal Avenue. On December 10, 2019, staff provided an informational item staff report to provide an update to City Council while awaiting a written offer. In addition, the City Council appointed City Councilmembers Carlton and Taylor to an ad hoc subcommittee on this project. On December 16, 2019, Facebook submitted its offer for the City Council's consideration.

On January 28, the City Council approved a resolution of intent to collaborate with Facebook and accept the offer. On February 11, City Council conducted a study session to discuss current service levels and directed staff regarding changes to the preliminary recommendations. On February 25, City Council approved the interim service levels, appropriated \$1 million for interim services, waived purchasing requirements and expressed a willingness to convene special City Council meetings with 24-hour noticing related to any potential contracts in excess of the city manager's spending authority (currently \$78,000.)

On March 10, the City Council initiated the process to abandon public utilities easements and a portion of Terminal Avenue currently occupied by Kelly Park, the Menlo Park Senior Center and the Belle Haven pool. The City Council completed the abandonment process June 23.

On April 7, the City Council voted unanimously to reaffirm the project as a top priority in light of the impacts COVID-19 pandemic. On April 14, the City Council received an Informational Item on the project. On April 21, the City Council took two actions: confirming the next steps and timeline for the project review and expressing support for the draft plan for interim services subject to continued due diligence and final subsequent City Council approval.

Information related to the project is available on the City-maintained webpage (Attachment A).

Analysis

This staff report serves as an update on the project since the April 21 City Council meeting.

As part of the June 9 City Council staff report on the operating budget, staff provided an update that the overall project schedule for the project was delayed. Facebook needed additional time to ensure that the proposed design for the new facility was consistent with the project budget. At that point in time, the estimated timeline for City Council approval of the project was September 2020, resulting in the need to decommission facilities in late March/early April 2021 with demolition occurring approximately one or two months thereafter.

Additional time has been needed to work through the design issues. As such, it appears that the project will not be ready for City Council approval until late 2020 at the earliest. With this delay, there would be a corresponding delay in the decommissioning and demolition process until summer 2021 at the earliest. Staff has shared this revised timeline with the City Council Subcommittee. While awaiting the updated submittal from Facebook, the City Council subcommittee has recommended holding a telephone town hall meeting to provide an update to the community and field questions about the project. The target date of the telephone town hall is Thursday, August 13 in the early evening. The typical cost of a telephone town hall meeting is \$5,000 and would be charged against the City's budget for this project.

Upon receiving an updated submittal from Facebook, staff will develop a timeline corresponding with the meeting schedule outlined in the April 21 staff report as follows:

- Planning Commission study session
- City Council review of a term sheet to summarize the content of the more detailed agreement
- City Council approval of the final interim services plan (see summary below)
- Planning Commission public hearing to make a recommendation on the project
- City Council public hearing on agreement, project and CEQA determination

Interim services plan

As considered at the April 21 City Council meeting, the draft interim services during construction of the new facility includes the following assuming compliance with any applicable health orders at the time:

Senior services

- Locate the program in existing rooms in the Arrillaga Family Recreation Center, which would result in reduced access to certain rooms for the other programs/uses from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays.
- Consider potential minor modifications to kitchen if needed for county health department compliance.
- Increase transportation offering to the Civic Center Campus (Burgess Park) for Menlo Park seniors.
- Explore installation of portables or some other improvement on Burgess Campus for summer camps in 2021 and 2022.

Recreation classes

- Accommodate demand through existing or expanded offerings at the various facilities on Civic Center (Burgess Park) campus.
- Modify the program free structure on a pilot basis to encourage participation of Menlo Park residents interested in classes regardless of ability to pay.
- Increase transportation options between the Belle Haven neighborhood and the Civic Center (Burgess Park) campus through an activity shuttle.
- Explore possible enhancement to existing spaces in the main library or Arrillaga Family Gymnastics

Center for community meeting rooms or other programming.

After school child care

- Explore partnership with Beechwood School to install temporary portables on its campus to house the program

Staff believes that this plan could be achieved within the target service levels and budget for interim services established by the City Council February 25. Upon completion of discussions with Beechwood School and outreach to existing user groups, staff will return to the City Council with more detailed information for final approval.

Capital improvement plan budget

As a separate agenda item on the July 28, the City Council will be considering the capital improvement plan (CIP) budget for fiscal year 2020-21. As part of this review, staff is proposing a funding plan for the City's base-level funding commitments for the project. Additional funding for the replacement of the pool or other enhancements would be considered later after receiving the updated design proposal from Facebook.

Public Notice

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. In addition, the City sent electronic notices via Nextdoor, Facebook and directly to project email and text update subscribers from the project page (Attachment A.)

Attachments

- A. Hyperlink – project page: menlopark.org/bellehaven

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