

RICHLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

SOUTH CAROLINA

DSS FACILITY AD HOC COMMITTEE

April 21, 2015
3:00 PM
Admin Conference Room

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda was sent to radio and TV stations, newspapers, persons requesting notification, and was posted on the bulletin board located in the lobby of the County Administration Building

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Rush called the meeting to order at approximately 3:04 PM.

COUNCIL RETREAT DIRECTIVES FOR DSS FACILITY

A. UNITED WAY AND THEIR INTENT TO USE THE VACANT SPACE IN THE COUNTY'S PUBLIC HEALTH BUILDING

Mr. Madden stated that United Way has indicated to staff they will not be utilizing as much space as previously planned.

Mr. Pearce inquired as to why this item was on the agenda.

Mr. Madden stated the matter was brought up at retreat as possible options for accommodating some of the services of either DSS or CASA.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING OF THE AIR QUALITY OF THE DSS FACILITY

Mr. Hixon stated overall the air quality in the building is very good. There were a couple of typical spores noted. These same spores were present on the outside of the building.

Mr. Hixon stated when an analysis is conducted the outside conditions are reviewed because you will have the same components present inside the building. The goal is reduce the amount of inside contaminants vs. the outside.

A couple of improvements were noted (i.e. overall housekeeping, carbon dioxide levels).

There were 5 areas identified that had elevated levels of carbon dioxide, which have been corrected.

One of the major recommendations of the analysis was to clean the carpets.

Mr. Pearce stated when Council toured the facility there was a problematic wall identified.



Committee Members Present

Torrey Rush, Chair
District Seven

Julie-Ann Dixon
District Nine

Greg Pearce
District Five

Others Present:

Kelvin E. Washington, Sr.
Bill Malinowski
Tony McDonald
John Hixon
Paige Greene
Warren Harley
Chad Fosnight
Brandon Madden
Daniel Driggers
Michelle Onley
Monique McDaniels

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Mr. Hixon stated the wall has been removed and reconstructed the walls with green board contained in a typical bathroom and placed splash guards to prevent water contamination in the future.

Mr. Washington inquired if the plan is to gradually replace the carpet in the facility.

Mr. Hixon stated there has already been two phases of replacement wherein the carpet was replaced with vinyl and tile.

Mr. Washington inquired if the humidity is staying consistent or has it been fluctuating throughout the building.

Mr. Hixon stated the humidity levels came out well. The facilities are routinely kept below 60% humidity.

Mr. Washington inquired as to the age of the building.

Mr. Hixon stated it is believed to have been constructed in 1970 as a department store. It was retrofitted and DSS began occupying the building in 1980.

POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR CURRENT FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS VS. NEW FACILITY

A. COUNTY STAFF ANALYSIS

Mr. Rush stated the issue with constructing a new facility is the way to fund the construction costs.

Mr. Washington inquired if DSS contributed any funding for facilities.

Ms. Matthus, Director of Public Information at DSS, stated her cursory understanding of the statute is that counties are responsible to provide a building for their local DSS facility.

Mr. Washington inquired if there were any instances where either State or Federal funding was received by the counties to provide for facilities.

Mr. Pearce stated there is only \$8.2 Million of non-committed capital money in the budget this year. Of that \$8.2 Million, there are \$39 Million of requests.

Mr. Rush inquired if staff could identify can funding mechanisms available (i.e. Where is it? How does it look? Can we participate in that process, and if so, how do we participate?)

Mr. Pearce inquired if the cost of land purchase was factored into the estimates for construction.

Mr. Hixon stated there is an estimated cost for 10 acres of land included in the estimates.

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Mr. Rush inquired if staff had looked at possible expansion of the present facility.

Mr. Hixon stated expansion has been looked into, but because of the topography of the land expansion is not a viable option.

Mr. Washington stated while staff is researching the different models, if a public-private partnership can be explored.

Mr. Pearce inquired if there was any way to accommodate CASA in the present facility.

Mr. Hixon stated one of the proposals allocates about 2,600 sq. ft. of the existing warehouse that is presently nothing but a shell. The available sq. feet would give CASA about 10 of the 30 visitation rooms that were requested.

Mr. Malinowski suggested the Economic Development Department to locate existing office space to relocate the DSS Offices and CASA.

Mr. Hixon stated there is roughly \$1 Million of capital improvements planned for the existing DSS facility. The improvements include HVAC units, LED lighting, and roofing.

Mr. Rush stated one of the most ideal places to look at retrofitting is "grocery stores" similar to the Decker project.

Mr. Fosnight stated he has been researching available property, but it is a challenge to find property on a bus line and within the 60,000 sq. ft. needed.

Ms. Greene stated the youth center is needed to assist older youth who are exiting foster care to transition them to independent living. These youth are ill prepared for adulthood and lack independent living skills needed. The center would also be utilized as a visitation center for siblings and families, as well as, allow DSS workers to observe children and parents interacting.

NEXT STEPS

A. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

Mr. Rush will coordinate the next meeting with staff.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:48 PM.