

# CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

## Re-use of Doble Reserve Center

February 5, 2007 – 6:30 p.m.

Council Chambers

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City Council Present: Mayor Marchand, Councilors Grasso, Dwyer (7:05 p.m.), Reynolds, Whitehouse, and Smith

City Council Absent: Assistant Mayor Ferrini, Councilors Pantelakos and Hynes

Officials Present: John P. Bohenko, City Manager; Cindy Hayden, Deputy City Manager, David Moore, Community Development Project Manager; David Holden, Planning Director; Steve Parkinson, Public Works Director; Bill Irving, Police Captain; Robert Sullivan, City Attorney; and Kelli L. Barnaby, City Clerk

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### **I. Call to Order**

At 6:35 p.m., Mayor Marchand called the work session to order and advised the City Council and members of the public that this meeting is to provide an update regarding the Re-use of the Doble Reserve Center which is early in the process.

### **II. Introduction**

City Manager Bohenko advised the City Council that we will be discussing the Re-use of the Doble Reserve Center and that Deputy City Manager Hayden and Community Development Project Manager Moore will walk the City Council through the process and how it will play out over the next few months. He informed the City Council that a date for the public hearing regarding the Re-use of the Doble Reserve Center will be established at the February 12, 2007 City Council meeting. City Manager Bohenko further informed the City Council that the property would not become available until 2012.

### **III. Presentation**

Deputy City Manager Hayden reported that the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) is the City Council for the development of a re-use plan, including conducting a public outreach process to obtain input as to the future use of the property. She informed the City Council that the City must prepare a redevelopment plan by June 20, 2007, and hold a public hearing on the plan prior to that date. She spoke to the requirements under BRAC law, which a key issue requires outreach to homeless service providers and other agencies to see if they have a use for the property. Deputy City Manager Hayden advised the City Council that it does not mean that the final re-use plan has to include a homeless component. She said the plan must balance in an appropriate manner a portion or all of the needs of the community for economic redevelopment and other development with the needs of the homeless in the community. She advised the City Council that HUD would approve the re-use plan.

Community Development Project Manager Moore provided an overview of the property. He reported that the main building was used for primarily office and meeting space for the stationed unit. No military training has taken place on the property; maintenance of vehicles associated with the maintenance building is routine and small in scope, according to the Environmental Officer. Mr. Moore spoke to the zoning of the area which is General Residence A (3 sides) and General Business. The Reserve Center was built in 1958 with the main building being constructed on a concrete slab. There is an outbuilding, also built on a slab, with a two bay maintenance garage with heat. Both parcels sit on a 3.39 acre site.

Deputy City Manager Hayden reviewed the six re-use options as follows:

**Option 1: Cross Roads House (Homeless Service Provider)**

Cross Roads House proposes to relocate its emergency and transitional shelter from 600 Lafayette Road to the Doble Army Reserve Center at 125 Cottage Street.

**Option 2: The Coming Home Collaborative (Homeless Service Provider)**

This proposal was submitted by a partnership, which includes The Housing Partnership, Cross Roads House, United Way of the Greater Seacoast, and the Portsmouth YMCA. The proposal is for 25 housing units to be constructed with six units being set aside as transitional housing for families moving out of Cross Roads House. As part of the proposal, The Housing Partnership would construct the project and provide long-term management; United Way would provide advocacy and financial support during the implementation stages; the YMCA would establish a day care at the site; and Cross Roads House would identify appropriate families and provide case support for the transitional program.

**Option 3: Piscataqua Chapter No. 4 of the New Hampshire Disabled American Veterans (Letter of Interest)**

The Piscataqua Chapter No. 4 of the New Hampshire Disabled American Veterans, submitted a letter of interest in January 2007. In this letter, the organization stated its interest in relocating its facility from Newington to Portsmouth and using the property for its offices and a place to hold events for Seacoast veterans.

**Option 4: Municipal Reuse (Police Department)**

All City Department heads were consulted about their interest in the Doble Property for municipal operations. The Police Department has expressed interest in the property as a potential site for the relocation of its facility.

Captain Irving advised the City Council that the Police Department is experiencing issues with its current building. He said that they request to keep this as an open option available for the future.

### **Option 5: Administrative Space for Non-Profit Organizations**

The City has leased office space in the Seybolt building to non-profit agencies for many years. The Doble property provides an opportunity to relocate these agencies and allow the City to reuse the space at the Seybolt building for alternative uses.

### **Option 6: Housing Reuse**

The development of public or private housing may also be appropriate for the Doble site. An analysis by the Planning Department indicates that a total of 4 lots with four-unit town home units could be constructed on the site if it is redeveloped and the existing structures removed.

## **IV. Discussion and Questions**

Councilor Grasso asked if the existing buildings at the site would remain or be removed. City Manager Bohenko advised Councilor Grasso that remains wide open at this time.

Public Works Director Parkinson reported that the buildings in there current use are in good condition. He said five years from now we are not sure how the buildings will be structurally.

Councilor Grasso said it is important to remember that the area is general residence and it is a neighborhood. She said what ever goes into the location must be compatible to the area.

Councilor Whitehouse asked if the state has first refusal on the property. Deputy City Manager Hayden advised Councilor Whitehouse that the state has not expressed any interest in the property.

Councilor Smith spoke to re-use plan and asked how tied we are to the plan once it has been submitted to HUD. Community Development Project Manager Moore advised Councilor Smith that we have been told if a plan needs changes it would need to go through the process again and follow the original standards. Councilor Smith asked if we could submit more than one plan. Mr. Moore said that the Army states that they must transfer the property by 2011 and there are no options for a re-use or additional plan.

Deputy City Manager Hayden spoke to the Residential Density Incentive – Planned Unit Development Ordinance, and advised that up to 30 units of housing could be developed on the site if the site were rezoned from Municipal to General Residence A; consistent with adjacent General Residence A zoning.

City Manager Bohenko said that there is one other option which has not been discussed, that option, is that the City could say that we have no use for the property. He said that we could also open the process to the private sector as well. Deputy City Manager Hayden said the option of saying the City has no use for the property should have been listed.

Councilor Reynolds said a potential use of the property would be for a recreational facility and a site for an ice rink. City Manager Bohenko said that we are not lacking in recreational buildings in the City but we are lacking in ball fields.

Mayor Marchand said it is important that residents in the area come forward to express their opinions at the public hearing on this matter.

Councilor Grasso asked if we could look at combining more than one option. City Manager Bohenko said we could and it would all be in the plan.

Mayor Marchand said he has heard the issue of an ice rink raised. City Manager Bohenko said from an operational standpoint, it has its challenges, and it would be difficult to break even financially with that type of facility. Councilor Reynolds said he is aware of the challenges with an ice rink, but it is an amenity that we lack, and we have a high school ice hockey team that must travel to Exeter at significant cost to the City.

**V. Establishment of Public Hearing Date on Re-Use of Doble Reserve Center (to be ratified at the February 12th City Council meeting)**

Councilor Dwyer asked if the public hearing would be on a single plan or multiple plans. City Manager said that it would encompass the plans as presented this evening.

City Manager Bohenko advised the City Council that the date of the public hearing would be set at the February 12<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. He said it is recommended to conduct the public hearing at the April 4<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.

At 7:15 p.m., Mayor Marchand closed this portion of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kelli L. Barnaby, CMC  
City Clerk

# CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

## Board and Commission Appointment Process Blue Ribbon Committee

February 5, 2007 – 7:30 p.m.

Council Chambers

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City Council Present: Mayor Marchand, Councilors Grasso, Dwyer (7:05 p.m.), Reynolds, Whitehouse, and Smith

City Council Absent: Assistant Mayor Ferrini, Councilors Pantelakos and Hynes

Officials Present: John P. Bohenko, City Manager; Robert Sullivan, City Attorney; and Kelli L. Barnaby, City Clerk

Committee Members Present: Eric Spear and Richard Katz

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### **I. Call to Order**

At 7:30 p.m., Mayor Marchand called the work session to order and advised the City Council that the Blue Ribbon Committee was put in place last year to review the process of Board and Commission appointments.

### **II. Presentation Regarding Term Limits**

Eric Spear, Chair of the Committee, said a number of issues have been dealt with and we are here this evening to discuss term limits for Boards and Commissions. He spoke to the initial charge which was to *Create a balance of encouraging “fresh blood” and healthy turnover into city’s boards and commissions while retaining interested, engaged, and responsible long-term members.* He advised the City Council that a great deal of time was spent on this matter and the Committee felt it would be beneficial for the City Council to receive additional information listing all the members of the board and the years they served when making appointments. He said some individuals have retained on boards longer than what is healthy for the city. He discussed the limits as recommended by the Committee for the various boards and commission and said that there would not be a term limit for alternates. He outlined the details of the recommendation as follows:

- There are no limits for alternates
- The term limit clock begins with a person’s first appointment as a regular member
- They are welcome to serve the city on other boards
- They are welcome to apply to their board after sitting out for a term

Mr. Spear said the following are the boards and limits as recommended:

|   |         |          |
|---|---------|----------|
| Building Code Board of Appeals          | 3 Terms | 15 Years |
| Cable Commission                        | 4 Terms | 11 Years |
| Conservation Commission                 | 5 Terms | 15 Years |
| Economic Development Comm.              | 3 Terms | 12 Years |
| Historic District Commission            | 5 Terms | 15 Years |
| Planning Board                          | 5 Terms | 15 Years |
| Portsmouth Housing Authority            | 3 Terms | 15 Years |
| Portsmouth Housing Endowment Fund Board | 5 Terms | 15 Years |
| Recreation Board                        | 3 Terms | 9 Years  |
| Taxi Commission                         | 5 Terms | 10 Years |
| Traffic & Safety Committee              | 5 Terms | 10Years  |
| Trustees of Trust Funds                 | 5 Terms | 15 Years |
| Zoning Board of Adjustment              | 4 Terms | 20 Years |

Mr. Spear said that the city would need to take time to determine if term limits could be created.

### III. Discussion and Questions

Councilor Dwyer asked why there are different lengths for terms for boards and commissions. City Attorney Sullivan said that some boards and commissions are not regulated by state law. He said that there is some flexibility for the city to exercise some level of authority. He said that there is no clear way as to why different lengths for terms were created. Councilor Dwyer said that she would strongly advocate and feels that these limits are too conservative.

Councilor Grasso said that the Library Board of Trustees is not listed and should be added. City Clerk Barnaby informed Councilor Grasso that the ordinance which created the Library Board of Trustees has a term limit that each member cannot serve more than two consecutive terms. Councilor Grasso said that there should be something that states whether the alternates would be considered for regular member positions. City Attorney Sullivan said that the City Council is required to consider Zoning Board of Adjustment members that are alternates for regular member positions. He said that the name should be brought forward by the Mayor for discussion.

Councilor Raynolds thanked Mr. Spear for his and the Committee's work on this matter. He spoke in favor of the City Council receiving the additional data outlined by Mr. Spear relative to members of the boards and the years they have served.

Councilor Whitehouse said he appreciates the work conducted by Mr. Spear and the Committee. He said experience on boards and commissions is important but it is unfortunate that some long serving members may look at serving as an ownership rather than service provided. He spoke in favor of the creation of an ordinance to address term limits.

Councilor Dwyer spoke to the importance of experience and that the alternate positions allow for training and orientation of a member for the particular board or commission they serve. She said we want citizen participation, and suggested it is difficult to get turn over when there is no frank discussion on how the person is contributing to the board and/or commission they serve. She suggested treating these as personnel appointments and hear honest feed back on how the person participated and contributed to the board and/or commission.

Mayor Marchand explained the process he follows when someone applies for a board and/or commission. He advised the City Council if there is no vacancy for the board and/or commission the person has applied for he writes back a letter asking if they would be interested in serving on another board and/or commission. He said it is important that we involve people in the community.

Councilor Smith spoke to his service on the Planning Board for 14 years. He advised the City Council that he has given a great deal of thought to term limits and has never been a fan. He suggested the creation of a two or three member committee to help with the appointment process. Councilor Smith also suggested that the City Council receive the attendance records on a quarterly basis for the boards and commission. He said that a person should not be appointed to a board or commission unless they have been a resident of the city for at least two years. Councilor Smith also recommended that the City Council review the list of boards and commissions to see if it is necessary to have all of these and if some may be combined.

Councilor Dwyer said that she agrees with Councilor Smith on the number of boards and commission and the need for the City Council to review them.

City Manager Bohenko said that an index of the boards and commissions would be sent out by City Clerk Barnaby for the City Council to review and make recommendations and comments. He also suggested that when a Blue Ribbon Committee is created that a date be set as to when the committee would cease to exist.

Discussion followed on how a chair is selected to various boards and commissions. It was determined that different processes are followed for the different boards and commissions. Councilor Dwyer said that there should be uniformity for the selection of a chair and suggested the creation of rules for the appointment of a chair.

Councilor Whitehouse suggested that the Legal Department review the term limits as suggested by Mr. Spear and the Committee.

Councilor Dwyer said some of the term limits suggested by the Committee are too long and we need to make room for the new generation.

Councilor Raynolds said he agrees with Councilor Dwyer that some of the terms suggested should be decreased.

Councilor Smith spoke to the institutional knowledge that is so important and needed for the land use boards.

Richard Katz advised the City Council that the recommendations were a consensus of the Committee and they are conservative.

Councilor Dwyer said institutional memory is important and there are ways to bring that back. She said that the Council may want to consider creating senior positions to come in and share experiences and knowledge on specific matters boards and commissions may be dealing with.

Mayor Marchand said the suggestion of the Committee is that the City Council vote to empower the City Legal Department to research the boards and commissions they outlined in their report to find out the necessary steps to implement the term limits.

Richard Katz provided the City Council with a proposed amendment to the application for the boards and commissions. The suggestion would be to add the three following questions to the application:

1. Portsmouth's historic architectural heritage is the prime factor contributing to the city's growth and should take precedence in determining the direction of that growth.
2. Portsmouth's historic architecture is only one of many factors contributing to the city's growth and should not be paramount consideration in determining the direction of that growth.
3. Please state your opinion of these statements and how it would affect your performance in the position you are applying for.

The City Council requested that the City Clerk remove the question on the application which asks how long a person plans to live in the City of Portsmouth.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

At 8:40 p.m., Mayor Marchand closed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kelli L. Barnaby, CMC  
City Clerk