



CITY COUNCIL and ECTOR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
JOINT MINUTES
CITY OF ODESSA, TEXAS

APRIL 10, 2018

On April 10, 2018, a joint meeting/workshop of the Odessa City Council and Ector County Commissioners was held at 1:31 p.m., at Ector County Administration Annex, County Commissioners Courtroom, Suite 120, 1010 E. 8th St., Odessa, Texas.

City Council present: Mayor David R. Turner; Council members: Malcolm Hamilton, District One; Dewey Bryant, District Two; Barbara Graff, District Three; and Filiberto Gonzales, District Five.

Council member absent: Michael Gardner, District Three.

Ector County Commissioners present: Ron Eckert, County Judge; Ector County Commissioners: Eddy Shelton, Greg Simmons, Dale Childers, and Armando Rodriguez

Others present: Michael Marrero, Interim City Manager; Norma Aguilar-Grimaldo, City Secretary; Gary Landers, Interim City Attorney; other members of City staff; and members of the news media.

Judge Eckert called the Ector County Commissioners to order.

County Commissioner Simmons gave the invocation. Council member Bryant led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and Texas flags.

Judge Eckert read the agenda item.

A quorum being present, Mayor Turner called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. and the following proceedings were held:

Consider the possibilities of cooperative efforts for a possible new joint or shared use Ector County Courthouse and City of Odessa Municipal Building and any related requirements. Judge Eckert reported that the Courthouse had challenges with working conditions and provided examples. He stated that it was the responsibility to the US and Texas Constitution that mandates to try cases that was safe to the public. There were severe issues and tremendous daily challenges. It was an obligation to provide citizens a safe courthouse. A cooperative relationship with the City would allow for a new courthouse, provide safe working conditions and compliance with the Constitution.

Council member Gonzales arrived at 1:40 p.m.

Mayor Turner asked for details on the courthouse. Cruz Castillo, JSA Architect, reported on a preliminary study from 2012. The total square footage was 180,000 with a cost between \$95 million to \$110 million. Depending on the building type, it may reduce the cost. The parking of 500 to 600 spaces was included in the cost. It included room for growth which had an increase in square footage with four floors. Another study was commissioned in 2013 by the Commissioners Court. Judge Eckert stated to collaborate with the City, it would shift costs to the City with the parking and land acquisitions, demolition and remediation

costs. With the City picking up the costs, it would reduce the cost of the courthouse construction. Commissioner Shelton stated that the idea came from the Downtown renovation. He met with the former City Manager for the location of the courthouse which would be on the land of the current Odessa American building. The City purchased the Odessa American building after the bond election failed. He reviewed the map of the area which would tie into the City's development. Council member Hamilton asked if the courthouse could be built upward. Mayor Turner stated that it was difficult to project the growth of our community. Council member Hamilton stated to develop for the future and build for long-term. Commissioner Shelton stated that the Commissioners discussed different scenarios. Commissioner Childers reported that the study had four stories and a build-up. The County would not have the maintenance cost to maintain a large building. Council member Graff stated that the building did not have to build all the floors, but built as needed. Council member Hamilton suggested a fee based parking. Council member Bryant stated that the City has aging building and overcrowded in the buildings. He stated that a new courthouse was needed but the alternatives needed to be researched. It is a problem for the people in Odessa and a plan needed to be developed. Commissioner Rodriguez stated a courthouse was needed.

Judge Eckert stated that there were concerning factors in waiting to build the courthouse. Factors included inflation, climate and the legislative climate, which he elaborated. There was a history of bonds failing in Ector County. Council member Graff stated that the courthouse has problems and a new courthouse was needed. She stated that the Odessa American was bought to trade with the County. She recommended that the Commission issue certificates of obligation. Judge Eckert explained the certificates of obligation. He stated that the courthouse was at an emergency stage. Council member Graff stated that the facts about the courthouse were needed to inform the citizens. Council member Gonzales had concerns but was optimistic in moving forward. The City has growth issues and current commitments. He suggested timelines be set and outline the requests.

Commissioner Simmons reviewed the map with the proposed bond that failed. He provided new options. The County could sell the courthouse to the City and all would benefit of revitalizing Downtown. With the City's assistance, the courthouse would be more affordable. Judge Eckert proposed a scenario for parking and trading land. Council member Hamilton suggested asking the oil and gas companies for assistance. Mayor Turner appreciated the courthouse maintenance workers. He had concerns and asked for costs on demolition and acquisitions. Commissioner Shelton recommended a committee to evaluate, research, gather information, and explore the options for the future needs. Council member Bryant agreed. Council member Graff stated that there were no plans. The City has needs and issues. Linda Haney, County Clerk, stated that the legal provision on the deed must be reviewed. The deed has certain restrictions for public use.

Elaine Gollaher, citizen, had concerns for the all people. She stated that the courthouse was for all the people. There were people who couldn't afford their property taxes. Her concerns included the homeless, need for more shelters and the people.

Council member Bryant reiterated that the best way to collect information was through a committee. We were faced with a dilemma. He stated time was an essence.

Consider scheduling an additional joint meeting of the Odessa City Council and the Ector County Commissioners Court for follow-up discussion on the possibilities of a joint Ector County Courthouse and City of Odessa Municipal Building. The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, April 17 at 1:30 p.m.

Teresa Waters congratulated the officials for meeting. She supported the courthouse but asked to consider the geography and high rises. She stated to keep the best interest of the citizens.

Judge Eckert explained his thoughts on the Constitution. He stated that people are innocent until proven guilty. The Constitution was a fabric of the United States. The courthouse was a home for justice.

There was no other business, the meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Norma Aguilar-Grimaldo, TRMC, CMC
City Secretary

David R. Turner
Mayor