



September 8, 2021, statement by Manzanita City Council President Linda Kozlowski in response to a petition earlier submitted by Will Stone.

Introduction

At the September 8, 2021, Manzanita City Council meeting Council President Linda Kozlowski responded to a petition submitted to the city by Will Stone in May. Mr. Stone requested that the petition be added to the regular agenda in July for consideration. The petition, signed by 260 people, including part- and full-time Manzanita residents, requested that the city remodel the old schoolhouse on the city-owned Underhill property instead of following through with its August 2020 Resolution 20-21 to remove the schoolhouse and to construct a new city hall.

Statement text

“The foundation for this “ask” is that some are estimating that the cost savings of renovating the schoolhouse would result in significant savings as compared to new construction.

We have performed our due diligence including preliminary budget development; when we compare apples to apples for new versus renovation, they are actually pretty close. The proposed-savings suggested in the petition did not actually include the tenant improvements needed to complete the building, site work or the soft costs.

We considered all the viable options and while we can debate the details, the point is that it is close enough that new construction is likely the most viable option even from a cost perspective.

When the cost between renovation and new construction is close, it is critical to consider other factors to evaluate the choice. This includes considerations such as

- the building’s life span,
- energy efficiency and technology,
- long term maintenance and operational costs.
- And finally form and function such as optimized site and space plans.

With new construction we can design what we need, in the most efficient and cost-effective way; with a renovation we will spend resources and our time trying to figure out how to fit our needs into a space that was not built for us.

So, to get to the point, we will not conduct a new cost estimate and believe the information we have and the sentiment of the majority of this council are based on good information.

The fundamental issue at hand is that some of us just disagree and want to see the schoolhouse preserved at all costs. And the truth is that if the schoolhouse could have met our needs in a cost and design effective way, we absolutely would have considered it. But it won't, and it can't and no additional studies will prove anything different than what we already know. If anything, it will only add time, and thus more cost to whatever we do. Every day that passes increases the cost of any project, and so its paramount that we move this project forward now.

What we have heard loud and clear is that cost is the key concern for all of us. It is also evident after the testimony we have heard since the bond measure failed that we have more in common than we have differences.

The rhetoric may be that we aren't listening, that we are advancing without your input but that is simply false.

We have heard you.

We started with a much larger, more complex building that was intended to serve as a civic center for our community. We had estimated that we would spend a lot more money to build a larger facility with a 6.5-million-dollar bond measure.

You told us very clearly that isn't what you want. That cost is the number one concern for you, and that a civic center is not what we should focus our resources on.

We heard you. And we have listened.

What we are now aiming for is a much more modest city office building that can serve as the administrative and public safety headquarters for our city.

It is a leaner building program than any of the options contemplated for the bond measure.

There is no predetermined outcome.

There will be opportunities for the public to weigh in on the design and discussions on financing will be held publicly.

We need to work together, to move forward and let the work heal the divisions between us. This may mean that some of us must simply disagree and commit. But we must commit, and we must move forward to construct a building that truly reflects our common values for a cost that makes good sense and for a price tag that we can afford."

Thank you!