

**Mayor**  
Willard Rodarmel  
**Mayor Pro Tem**  
John Plourde  
**Council Members**  
John Gordon  
John Murray  
William Siegel



**Office of the  
City Manager**

119 Fox Street  
Lemoore ♦ CA 93245  
Phone ♦ (559) 924-6700  
FAX ♦ (559) 924-9003

**To: Lemoore City Council** SS Item # 3  
**From: Jeff Briltz, City Manager**  
**Date: March 10, 2011**  
**Subject: Relocation of Recreation and Planning Offices to CMC**

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**Discussion:**

At the January 18th Council Meeting, Council Member John Gordon requested a study session item to discuss the possible relocation of the Planning Department to the 711 Cinnamon Drive (CMC) and collocate the staff with the existing Public Works and Building Inspection staff.

This concept is certainly not new, and one that your staff has been discussing as an option for many years. In addition, we believe, this concept should be discussed along side the proposed relocation of the Recreation staff, which is a concept that we are a bit further along with in the planning stages.

The expansive space at CMC has presented us with many opportunities. When the City moved into the building in 2003, we combined into one location that were previously spread over four different areas, bringing together Public Works, Parks, and Building Inspections. At the time, the City tried to take advantage of the existing office space that was built for Candlewick Yarns, making as few alterations to the building as possible, while permitting our occupancy.

Over the years, we have made modifications in the way we utilize the space. The most significant change has been the use of the western half of the building. Initially, this 75,000 square foot area was used only for storage; for the City, community groups, and even others who rented out much of the space. Over the past three years or so, however, these uses have changed. Initially we installed two basketball courts and have allowed National Junior Basketball (NJB) to use the courts each Saturday during their season. They are completing their third season using the courts. About two years ago, we began offering a boxing program in CMC, eventually raising enough money to have a ring installed. Last year, the Council approved a 20 year agreement with Kings Community Action Organization (KCAO) to construct and open a food bank in the rear portion of the building. Just last month we opened a dance room for recreation classes and an indoor play structure, both of which were grant-funded. Additionally, we are currently installing a grant-funded rubberized walking track around the perimeter of the interior of the recreation side of the building.

Since the recreation uses have began, we have deliberated on the need to move the Recreation Office staff from their present location at the Civic Auditorium to CMC, for obvious operational reasons. This concept was first discussed formally in 2009. In late 2009 and early 2010, we drafted the modifications needed to permit the move, and developed budget estimates. Interestingly, perhaps one of the largest barriers to the move is the canal that runs along

Cinnamon Drive. While it does not present significant obstacles today, the recreational uses of the building bring much more pedestrian, bicycle, and in general more kids to the facility. Simply stated, there is not a safe way for pedestrians or bicyclists to enter the site. Undergrounding the canal and constructing a sidewalk and pedestrian entry to the facility is estimated to cost between \$400,000 and \$500,000, and in my opinion, is required before we move the Recreation Offices to CMC.

The second significant barrier to moving Recreation Offices to CMC is the lack of parking. Presently, our employees take up all but about 15 parking stalls at the facility. Some of this problem will be alleviated with the undergrounding of the canal, but more parking is needed on site if we are to allow recreation programs that draw more than 25 or so attendees during the work day. Expanding the parking lot will cost at least \$75,000, and perhaps as much as several hundred thousand if we were to add 50-100 stalls in the grass area in front of CMC.

Interestingly, neither of these barriers really impact moving the Planning Office to CMC. There are relatively few Planning customers at any one point in time, so parking is not really an issue, and very few walk or bicycle in, so the canal does not pose a significant hurdle.

There will need to be building modifications made to accommodate either the Planning Office staff and/or the Recreation Office staff at CMC. We have had enough conceptual layouts reviewed internally that I am confident we could remodel the office space to make it all work. An estimate of \$400,000 to \$500,000 will be needed to modify to space, constructing new offices in presently unimproved warehouse space, moving existing public works staff to accommodate the recreation staff nearest the recreation uses, and ultimately improving the customer service area to accommodate serving both building inspection and planning customers at one service counter.

So the focus for the discussion Tuesday afternoon should be the value of relocation. First, the Recreation customers share little with the Planning, Public Works, and Building Inspection customers. Because of this, it is proposed that they would have a separate entry and we would make efforts with the building layout to keep the recreation uses separated. The Parks and Recreation Commission has also studied this issue on several occasions since 2009, and is supportive of the office move to CMC. I am convinced that moving the recreation offices makes sense and has significant operational benefits. Additionally, there is ample available funding in the Community Recreation Impact Fee, General Facilities Impact Fee and certainly in the proceeds from the 2011 RDA Tax Allocation Bond Proceeds. The decision should be based on your confidence that we will continue to operate comprehensive recreation programming in the future. If there is uncertainty of that, due to budget constraints, then perhaps committing the nearly \$1M to accommodate the move would not be wise.

The Planning office move is far less expensive to accommodate. Some modifications to the building are still necessary, but parking and canal work is not needed for the Planning move alone. We do not have a stand alone budget for the office accommodations of only moving the Planning office without additionally relocating Recreation, but it could perhaps be done for approximately \$150,000.

The decision on the Planning office relocation should be based on our ability to assist the Planning, Public Works and Building Inspection customers. Admittedly, most of the Planning Customers later become customers of Building Inspections, and some of Public Works. During

construction, often time there are questions of both Planning and Building Inspections staff on projects from developers and contactors. Clearly, locating these services together would simplify where developers go to get information.

However, it should be noted that while in general we believe collocating Planning, Public Works and Building Inspection provides improved opportunities for service for the reasons states above, I do not believe it will constitute revolutionary improvements. Conflicts naturally exist between the City's aggressive General Plan and the more practically oriented building code, which solely focuses on health and safety. Many policies in the General Plan and anticipated zoning code go well beyond the Statewide building code for reasons beyond health and safety, including aesthetics, community preferences, and sound planning practices, just to name a few. Simply locating the Planning Staff at CMC will not eliminate those conflicts, and I believe those are the conflicts that present the greatest concerns to some of the building community. I simply wanted to caution you that moving the Planning office will not provide changes to policies or policy interpretation.

From an ongoing operational cost perspective, the move from the current locations to the CMC is unlikely to create an ongoing financial savings, assuming the same level of staffing is provided. We will still be conditioning a similar amount of space. There may be an opportunity to share some equipment further, such as copy machines, etc. Moving the Planning staff to this more central location will allow for more flexibility in staffing and coverage, which as you know is a challenge today.

We will have staff from Planning, Building Inspection, Public Works and Parks and Recreation available to participate in Tuesday's discussion on this topic.

Finally, should direction be provided to work towards additional relocation, the Council will need to determine what to do with the existing occupied office space. At the Civic Auditorium, this is not a significant concern. We anticipate many of the same uses, and the current offices could easily be converted to additional storage and meeting rooms. At the Planning Office, more significant items need to be considered, including the current occupancy by the Lemoore Volunteer Fire Department. Options may include other city use, such as Finance/Utility Billing, or even leasing out the space as professional offices.

**Budget Impact:**

None at this time.

**Recommendation:**

None, for discussion only.