



Office of the City Manager

ACTION CALENDAR
June 26, 2012

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From:  Christine Daniel, City Manager
Submitted by: Mark Numainville, Acting City Clerk
Subject: New Location for City Council Meetings – Analysis of Alternatives

RECOMMENDATION

Reconsider the viable locations for City Council meetings based on new information and cost estimates and direct staff to complete necessary design and construction documents for a preferred meeting location.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Depending on the location chosen for Council meetings, the estimated cost for the required upgrades is \$280,000 - \$350,000. Funds for design costs are available in the FY 2012 budget and funds for construction will be recommended as part of the FY 2013 Capital Budget.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) is relocating its district offices from the Maudelle Shirek Building to the renovated West Campus facility. The district is also renovating a space at West Campus to serve as the new meeting location for the School Board. That meeting space may be ready for use in the spring of 2013.

At the meeting of November 8, 2011, the City Council directed staff to report back on alternate meeting locations for the Council. At the meeting of January 17, 2012, the Council directed staff to conduct further analysis on the cost, schedule, and viability of three preferred alternatives: Berkeley Community College Auditorium (BCC), Florence Schwimley Little Theater (BHS) and North Berkeley Senior Center Multi-Purpose Room (NBSC). Staff has toured each location with the facilities management staff from the governing jurisdiction and prepared the analysis in Attachment 1.

In the interim, a new analysis of the viability of the Maudelle Shirek Building provides additional options for the location of Council meetings. An analysis of the facilities at Live Oak Park is also included below.

BACKGROUND

For the three facilities that staff was directed to study, Berkeley Community College Auditorium (BCC), Florence Schwimley Little Theater (BHS) and North Berkeley Senior Center Multi-Purpose Room (NBSC), there were five primary criteria in determining feasibility: Scheduling, Logistics and Storage, Dais and Staff Seating Configuration, Conference Room, and Upgrades Needed.

Of these three facilities, staff found that NBSC was the most viable location for City Council meetings. The facility is City-owned which would ensure that City legislative bodies have scheduling priority for meetings. It could have new fixed infrastructure and equipment which would reduce set up/takedown time and prolong the life span of the equipment. The NBSC is the only facility that has dedicated, secure storage for City meeting supplies and equipment. It has adequate space for the Council and staff and a flexible floor plan to accommodate persons with disabilities. The estimated cost for the required upgrades at NBSC is \$350,000.

Both the BCC Auditorium and the Little Theater lack secure dedicated storage, have scheduling difficulties, and require additional set up/takedown time and complexity. Further, BCC lacks sufficient room on the dais for the Council and staff to conduct the meeting. The Little Theater lacks a conference room and has difficult access to restrooms.

Maudelle Shirek Building (Old City Hall)

Recent analysis has resulted in a favorable outlook on the ongoing feasibility of Old City Hall for meetings of City legislative bodies. Due to the age and condition of this facility, there is a need for several facility upgrades, which will be described below. With some moderate investment, Old City Hall can remain in service as a viable meeting location.

By way of comparison, a brief analysis of Old City Hall with the criteria applied to the three alternate locations is provided here.

Scheduling

This facility is the current location for meetings of the City Council, Rent Board, Planning Commission, and ZAB. As a dedicated meeting location that would be exclusively used by City entities, there are no concerns with scheduling and availability for meetings.

Logistics and Storage

The facility currently has all meeting infrastructure built in and there is adequate storage for all staff needs.

Dais and Staff Seating Configuration

The current fixed dais furniture functions adequately and provides good sight lines for the Council, staff, and the audience.

Conference Room

There is an existing conference room. New furniture for the staff area may need to be purchased. The staff area could also be expanded if needed in the future.

Upgrades Needed

To ensure access under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the elevator will require approximately \$100,000 in upgrades and repair. The one-time construction costs for needed repairs to the building are estimated to be \$144,000. In addition, once the school district vacates the facility, the City will assume all ongoing costs estimated at \$36,000 annually.

The list of upgrades includes a new boiler, security improvements, sewer lateral testing, hazardous material testing and abatement, and a new elevator control unit. The cost includes permits, project management, and contingency. The total cost for the first year is estimated at \$280,000.

Additional audio visual and facility upgrades may be considered if the budget for essential improvements allows for an expanded scope of work.

In addition to the cost savings, staying at Old City Hall will eliminate the logistical challenges of moving to a new facility, the disruption to activities at the Senior Center, the potential confusion by members of the community, and possible impact on residents near the Senior Center. Old City Hall also provides an easier path of travel from the downtown transit hub.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Two locations at Live Oak Park were evaluated for viability – the theater and the auditorium. The theater is not viable due to its small stage, limited capacity (no increase over current), ADA concerns, and a lack of a nearby conference/staff room. The auditorium is a better option at this location. This location is not well served by public transportation.

Live Oak Park Auditorium (Shattuck and Berryman)

This location is currently rented by community groups for various types of events. The auditorium has a large open floor plan (no stage) with a high ceiling.

Scheduling

As a City-owned facility, priority scheduling for legislative bodies would be available. This may reduce revenue slightly as some paying renters are displaced. Currently, the auditorium is booked Monday – Friday until 10pm for various dance, martial arts, and exercise classes.

Logistics and Storage

The facility has adequate storage for staff needs. The logistics at this facility in terms of set up, take down, installed equipment, and layout would be similar to NBSC. The site also features kitchen facilities.

Dais and Staff Seating Configuration

A temporary stage would need to be set up for meetings. There is adequate room with the open floor plan for staff and the public. The Council would be on the temporary stage at tables and chairs set up for each meeting. Set up and take down would be slightly longer than NBSC due to the temporary stage.

Conference Room

There are multiple options for conference rooms that are close the meeting room.

Upgrades Needed

The upgrades for this location would be similar to NBSC with regards to AV equipment, electrical, and broadcast.

CONTACT PERSON

Mark Numainville, Acting City Clerk, 981-6900

Attachments:

1: Analysis of Alternatives from January 17, 2012

Complete Analysis of Berkeley Community College Auditorium (BCC), Florence Schwimley Little Theater (BHS) and North Berkeley Senior Center Multi-Purpose Room (NBSC).

1. Scheduling

Currently, four legislative bodies hold meetings in Old City Hall: City Council, Rent Board, Zoning Adjustments Board, and Planning Commission. All of those bodies, except the Planning Commission, currently web stream and broadcast their meetings. To ensure ease of community access to these meetings it is important to maintain a consistent time and location schedule. In a typical month, these bodies hold seven regular meetings in the evenings. A sample monthly schedule is provided in Attachment 2.

Berkeley Community College Auditorium (BCC): This location lacks sufficient assurances that the meeting location will be able to accommodate the full schedule of regular meetings. In addition, BCC closes at 10:30 p.m. and additional security and janitorial staff would be required to cover the time needed past 10:30 p.m. resulting in additional cost to the City.

For BCC the cost is \$50 per hour for security. Other costs include custodial services to clean up event areas and restrooms. The City would also be required to use an in-house BCC A/V technician at a cost of \$50 per hour for the full meeting duration (approximately 6-7 hours).

Berkeley Community College facilities staff has noted that it will be difficult to schedule A/V support availability, as they currently have only one staff in the A/V Department, for such a long term commitment. They have indicated that it would be difficult solely for City Council meetings, and likely not possible to meet the needs of the other legislative bodies.

Florence Schwimley Little Theater (BHS): Due to other regular Berkeley High School uses of this theater, this facility lacks sufficient assurances that the location will be able to accommodate the full schedule of regular meetings.

As is the case with BCC, the Little Theater closes at 10:30 p.m. and additional security and janitorial staff would be required to cover the time needed past 10:30 p.m. resulting in additional cost to the City.

North Berkeley Senior Center (NBSC): This is a City-owned and operated facility. As such, it is more likely that the City's legislative bodies would have priority in terms of

scheduling. The cost for a staff monitor at the front desk would be approximately \$22 per hour.

2. Logistics and Storage

The ability of the City to store equipment and supplies on-site is important to reduce set up/break down time and to reduce the wear and tear on the electronic equipment. It is estimated that the equipment in a fully portable scenario would have its effective life span reduced in half due to the impacts of installing and removing the equipment for each meeting. This would result in additional costs for equipment replacement.

Berkeley Community College Auditorium (BCC): Facilities staff for BCC has confirmed that there is no possibility for any dedicated and secure storage space for City meeting supplies and equipment at this facility. This would mean that all meeting equipment would need to be portable and require full set up before the meeting as well as full take down and removal to a City facility after each meeting.

It is estimated that 2-4 hours of set up/take down time would be needed for BCC. This facility would need to be ready for student access first thing Wednesday morning, thus City staff would be onsite until 1:00 a.m. - 3:00 a.m. for a meeting that adjourns at 11:00 p.m.

Florence Schwimley Little Theater (BHS): Facilities staff for BHS has confirmed that there is no possibility for any dedicated and secure storage space for City meeting supplies and equipment at this facility. This would mean that all meeting equipment would need to be portable and require full set up before the meeting as well as full take down and removal to a City facility after each meeting.

It is estimated that 2-4 hours of set up/take down time would be needed for BHS. This facility would need to be ready for student access first thing Wednesday morning, thus City staff would be onsite until 1:00 a.m. - 3:00 a.m. for a meeting that adjourns at 11:00 p.m.

North Berkeley Senior Center (NBSC): The NBSC has secure on-site storage available for meeting equipment as well as the ability to have permanent meeting infrastructure installed into the facility. This will reduce staff set up time and increase the lifespan of expensive electronic equipment. Set up of the Multi Purpose Room would take 2 hours or less with the allocation of additional Clerk and Public Works staff (on regular time between 3pm and 5pm). Take down time at NBSC of 2 hours or less is possible with the addition of an extra staff monitor at \$22 hour and assistance from exempt staff at the end of the meeting. For meetings that adjourn late in the evening, Public Works staff could assist with take down on regular time between 6:30am and 8am on Wednesday mornings.

3. Dais and Staff Seating Configuration

Berkeley Community College Auditorium (BCC): The BCC Auditorium lacks sufficient stage and floor area to accommodate the nine members of the Council, the City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk, Deputy City Clerk, and a location from which staff could address the Council. The seats in the auditorium are fixed and there is no flexibility in the layout or arrangement of seating.

Florence Schwimley Little Theater (BHS): The Little Theater has a large stage area that could accommodate the Council and all staff. Access to the stage area is provided by a ramp that is converted as needed, however converting the ramp will involve additional staff set up and take down time.

North Berkeley Senior Center (NBSC): The open floor plan of NBSC Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) allows for maximum flexibility for set up. The accommodations for the Council on the stage are slightly more compact than the current dais. Staff would be located on the floor just off the stage, similar to the current stepped configuration of the dais at Old City Hall. There is ample space in the MPR to accommodate members of the disabled community.

4. Conference Room

Berkeley Community College Auditorium (BCC): At BCC there are two potential options for conference room space. First is a classroom near the auditorium. Second is the student government room across the atrium from the auditorium entrance. In order to use the student government space, the City would need to reach an agreement with the students about how and when the space could be used. There is no kitchen or refrigeration available.

Florence Schwimley Little Theater (BHS): There is no room in the immediate vicinity of the Little Theater that could be used as a conference room. The only space available is the hallway outside the large theater where portable tables and chairs could be arranged. There is no kitchen or refrigeration available.

North Berkeley Senior Center (NBSC): The NBSC has several options for conference room use. The meeting rooms on the first floor could accommodate Council and staff with minimal additional set up. There is a kitchen and refrigeration on-site near the conference room.

5. Upgrades Needed

All three facilities are adequate for ADA access, transit, parking, and seating capacity. None are built for this type of use and all will require upgrades in network access, BCM broadcast infrastructure, off-site captioning, and video presentation.

Preliminary estimates for each facility are below and include AV system, dais furniture, electrical upgrades and AV conduit. They do not include project management, carpentry or broadcast infrastructure costs.

Berkeley Community College Auditorium (BCC): \$75,000

Florence Schwimley Little Theater (BHS): \$120,000

North Berkeley Senior Center (NBSC): \$225,000

The higher cost at NBSC is attributed to the permanent infrastructure that would be installed. However, the permanent nature of the equipment at NBSC will result in a long term savings compared with the high replacement cost and short lifespan of the portable equipment that will be set up and taken down before and after each meeting at the other two facilities. The longer set up and take down times of the portable equipment at BCC and BHS will also result in higher staff costs at overtime rates. The total costs at NBSC also include higher costs for the installation of video screens and an additional projector. However, all the upgrades at NBSC result in an enhanced community facility for City residents compared with the funds expended on a “rented” facility primarily used by another jurisdiction.

For NBSC there may also be ancillary costs associated with the increased use of the building. Paint, carpet, and other regular maintenance may need to occur on a more frequent schedule. In addition, Public Works staff is assessing the path of travel near NBSC to ensure that sidewalks and curb cuts are in good condition and that there is adequate street lighting.