



MEETING DOCUMENTATION

Planning • Architecture • Engineering • Interiors • Facility Management

PROJECT: Dixon County LEC – Citizens Committee Meeting #8

LOCATION OF MEETING: County Courthouse Annex – 59140 Highway 12, Ponca, NE

PROJECT NO.: 222701 **DATE:** March 16th, 2023 **TIME:** 6:00 PM

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT:</u>	<u>COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION:</u>	<u>EMAIL ADDRESS:</u>
Mathew Michl	Martinsburg	matt67_michl@yahoo.com
Jeanne Blatchford	Maskell	billblatch2002@yahoo.com
Dave Armstrong	Rural North	armfarm@nntc.net
Cindy Purucker	County Clerk	clerk@dixoncountyne.gov
Ron Mahler	Ponca	debron@gpcom.net
Verlin Hanson	Concord	hansonfarms@nntc.net
DJ Smith	Mayor of Ponca	djsmithband.usa@gmail.com
Lisa Lunz	County Supervisor	supervisoridist5@dixoncountyne.gov
Tom Decker	County Sheriff	tdecker@dixoncountysheiff.org
Larry Boswell	Allen	boswell@nntc.net
Kari Lowe	Ponca	kloweplowe7@gmail.com
Jack Moore	Newcastle	gmadiane4@yahoo.com

<u>MEMBERS ABSENT:</u>		
Blake Eisenmann	Rural South	blake_eisenmann@hotmail.com
Julie Hartung	Dixon	juliehartung@nntc.net
Chuck Chinn	Emerson	chiefchinn@abbnebraska.com
Ken Pavlushik	Township	kenp151@icloud.com

<u>PROCHASKA & ASSOCIATES:</u>		
Steve Johnson	Prochaska & Associates (P&A)	sjohnson@prochaska.us
Curt Field	Prochaska & Associates (P&A)	cfield@prochaska.us

<u>GUESTS PRESENT:</u>		
Don Andersen	County Board of Supervisors	idander@gmail.com
Cindy Geis	County Citizen	cindygeis44@gmail.com
Ron Geis	County Citizen	
Sarah Kumm	County Staff	

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the meeting was to consider options for a new Jail, or new Courthouse/County Offices/Jail, in light of previous information gathered by the Committee. The following points were recorded:

1. There were no corrections or comments regarding the Minutes from the February Meeting.
2. Curt reiterated significant points made during the February Public Meeting, including those made by County and Jail Staff, a recount of the recent Jail Standards report, recent Fire Marshal comments, County Board members, and the DA Davidson presentation.
3. Steve distributed the results of the recent email polling of the Citizen’s Committee regarding their top three selections of future Jail sites. The simple tally was made available by way of a table created by Steve, and it was suggested that the relative preferences of committee members be assigned point values, to create

a ranking system. The final results were:

- Option 1, the County Annex-adjacent land on Hwy #12 (Ponca), received 33 points
 - Option 6b, the open land east of Cooks Gas Station (Ponca), received 13 points
 - Option 4, the Allen property, received 6 points
 - Option 7, the open land east of Hwy #12, south of Ponca, received 5 points
 - Option 3, the Martinsburg property, received 5 points
 - Option 2, the land adjacent to Friendship Memorial Park (Ponca), received 3 points
 - Option 5, the open land north of Ponca on Hwy 26E, received 2 points
 - Option 8, the abandoned Newcastle School site, received 0 points
4. The Committee was shown a general overview of the Newcastle School Building property, and sought to do due-diligence analysis, but concluded that:
 - Too far north in the County, creating much longer drives
 - Older Building would require significant remodeling. Committee preferred not to build or try to utilize a three-story structure
 - Newcastle community still lacked degree of amenities and services needed
 - Would require a vote to change the County Seat
 - Much of structure is pre-engineered construction type—possible rejection by Jail Standards
 5. One Committee member expressed concern that the Option 1 property would potentially be built in a flood-potential area. Curt noted that this property is NOT in the actual “Flood Zone”, but *would* require additional fill dirt to raise it above the “100-year flood” elevation, or BFE, which the Committee had previously considered as part of the required cost. Another Member suggested consideration of lifting the main floor elevation at the Option 1 property more than the required one foot, such as another 6 inch.
 6. Committee Chair Michl commented that the smaller community Options of Martinsburg and Allen should regrettably not be seriously considered for Courthouse/Jail relocation, because they lack utilities, services and amenities, and because the Bond vote to move the County Seat would ultimately prove too divisive.
 7. The Citizen’s Committee voted by voice to unanimously select Option #1.
 8. One Member suggested the entry point to the Option 1 property might be better if separated from the County Annex drive. Curt responded that the State DOR may have opinions on creation of a second “curb cut”.
 9. A member mentioned that there was a possible developer proposing that the larger farmed property considered for Option #1 might be purchased for an additional Industrial project, with the resulting mutual benefit to both that developer and the City of Ponca.
 10. DJ Smith, Mayor of Ponca, suggested that the City of Ponca would likely annex both the County Annex property as well as the Option 1 property, as a precedent to extending utilities. One member suggested extension of utilities would mean running them over or under Hwy 12. The City has previously offered to provide some measure of assistance to a potential Courthouse relocation.
 11. Lisa and Cindy suggested that the County would make inquiries with the Option 1 property owner about possible purchase price. The Committee voted to consider the second and third-place options (#6b and


#7) as fallback options if the property owner proves uncooperative.

12. The Committee also voted unanimously to remove Blake Eisenmann from the Committee due to lack of attendance.
13. It was noted that the City of Ponca and Dixon County Boards would need to take up the Citizen's Committee recommendations before the Committee could progress further with Courthouse relocation planning. It was recorded that the Ponca City Council meeting is scheduled for March 27th, and the next County Board meeting is scheduled for April 11th. It is hoped that there will be reporting of any actions taken by these bodies at the next Citizen's Committee meeting on April 21st.
14. Curt commented on future tasks available to the Committee:
 - All investigations conducted thus far into possible property development costs should be revisited and updated if necessary. A possible future construction Bid Date should be predicted, and assumptions for inflation calculated. Any additional hard and soft costs might be brainstormed by the Committee for inclusion into a possible Bond Referendum cost.
 - i. Among the above, a possible property survey might be procured, allowing much more precise information about the amount of fill required, or total project area required, as all design work undertaken thus far have utilized County GIS-provided information, a relatively unreliable source.
 - ii. Among the above, a preliminary Geotechnical Investigation might be undertaken to determine the suitability of the soils for building construction.
 - iii. A Civil Engineer might be consulted for preliminary information regarding any missing cost-generated project scope items.
 - iv. The Committee should revisit the suitability of the 14-bed Law Enforcement Center template, as well as the logic of using the existing Courthouse/County Offices building area, or if additional area for such items as storage, or future expansion, should be considered. A very preliminary Pre-Schematic Floor Plan might be better developed.
 - DA Davidson should be re-contacted for tax impact for specific project cost when this figure is better known.
 - The County should determine what possible date(s) it would prefer for a future Bond Referendum, and what type of referendum it would like to utilize: Special Election (available dates), mail-in election, or general election dates. Adequate time (a minimum of five months) should be considered for a proper Campaign, and *when* this period should begin, as information collection ahead of this might take a little time.
 - The Committee should plan for separate presentations during an upcoming Campaign phase in each of the Communities of the County. The Committee membership itself should make these presentations, but Prochaska & Associates is willing to help, with technical questions, or to provide Display Board graphics. Suitable timeframes for achieving the maximum accessibility to the presentations should be considered.
 - The Committee should consider which type of campaign it would prefer to run, a "Please Vote" approach, or a "Vote Yes" approach. The latter requires the Committee to function as a non-profit, and formation of a 501 (c)3 corporation, for purposes of fundraising and use of paid or elected staff. The State of Nebraska publishes information for formation of this type of non-profit, and makes the process fairly simple.
 - A "Please Vote" type of Committee, where the County remains involved, might simply ensure that the necessary Voter information is properly reported, or that incorrect information collected from uninformed Voters is politely rebutted.

- Steve had brought examples of brochures which Prochaska & Associates had previously created for use by other County clients in their campaigns.

15. Agenda for the April Committee meeting will depend upon direction provided by the Ponca City Council and County Board.

16. The meeting was concluded at approximately 9:00pm. The next Citizen's Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 20th, at the County Annex building, at 6:00pm.

BY: 
Curtis Field, AIA
Architect - Principal

March 22nd, 2023
Date

If any of the parties present take exception to these meeting notes, please notify Prochaska & Associates within five (5) days of issuance for correction or they shall be presumed to stand as written.

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