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CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Regular Meeting -- March 27, 2001

Verbatim Transcript of Docket Item No.

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16. Consideration of Proposed Scope of Work for the Planned Study of Possible Locations for a New Visitors Center. (#8 3/17/01; #16 2/28/01)

Pepper: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Okay. We had this up for public hearing a few Saturdays ago. We took significant comments from the public. Ms. Eberwein also offered some changes that I believe have been incorporated in as well as some of the other discussion points during the, the discussion at the, by the Council at the, at the end. Mrs. Pepper and then Ms. Eberwein.

Pepper: Mr. Mayor, I was really pleased to see that this docket item was considerably improved that, from the last one. That a number of the concerns that the neighbors had had were addressed, and I felt that there was a major effort to be as objective as possible as this process proceeds. So I am very pleased about that. I do have some questions and then a little tweaking if I could. There are a few changes I would like to make at this stage if I could. Let me begin by saying that I think that Ramsay functions pretty well but better as a satellite facility probably than as our main facility. I was really very pleased when ACVA offices moved out of the Ramsay House because it was just so crowded there that you really cannot work in that kind of environment. It has been overcrowded for at least 15 years so I was glad to see them to 421 King Street. One of the questions, and I, and I have several comments and questions, but one of the questions I do have is it wasn't clear to me in this docket if the plan was, one of the things that the consultant would raise would be the possibility of the office being with the Center or still, or separated from the Center, would it still be at 421? Or, that just wasn't brought up. So, if somebody's keeping a list that's one of the questions I'd like to have answered. The other thing was that I agree with David. I think the Lyceum is just be best of all possible sites because of its beauty and because right there you're adding a site worth visiting and it did solve some of the parking problems and some of the handicapped access problems. It doesn't do much for addressing tour buses but I hope that that'll be at least one of the sites that gets considered even though it's probably a stretch because it's already something else at this point. Anyway, I wanted to mention that in this present document when they talk

about the cost of all of this on page 2 there is a paragraph where it says that this money will come from capital improvement programs. I felt that it was more clearly stated in our last docket item on page 4. You don't all have to turn to this but I wish that the City Manager would take note that the docket item for docket item #8 for March 17 of this year where they discuss the fiscal impact, they made it very clear that, that this would come from the, the City's capital improvement program but from the ACVA's already-allocated amount for this, so I just felt that that needed to be clarified because it's not going to be new money that we take from the general fund but it, it's already there and whatever this does cost and we sure hope it'll be a lot cheaper than what was guesstimated here, and I realize you don't know how much it's going to cost until your RFP goes out, but anyway, I want that to be understood that that's where the money comes from. Okay. Then I, I want to just mention that one of the things that I wish had been here but I will certainly see to it whoever the consultant is I will certainly put my two-cents-worth in. I think that it really needs to be made clear. You know when we started this whole process in January of 1999, we began focusing on one particular site, namely the Union Station site, and it's been quite awhile later that PTO was actually approved, or at least we approved to change the Master Plan and it became very clear at that time what a busy area that was going to be and how densely developed it was going to be, and I think that whoever does this study should understand that the focus on this particular Union Station site was made some 14 months before we had this clear picture of how dense it was going to be. Okay. And so we might not have been quite so aggressive if we had a clearer picture. Anyway, here is what I do need though specifically. At the top of page 2, or at the bottom of page 1 and going on to page 2 –

Mayor: Is this on the memorandum or on the RFP?

Pepper: No. This is today's, no this is the memorandum and this is docket item #16, page, the bottom of the page and then to the top of page 2 where it says about who will be on this committee. I like the idea that the City Manager will choose the key civic, business and neighborhood leaders to, that will be interviewing the consultant once he's here, but what I would like is to know if we couldn't have the person who interviews the, getting, the choosing of the consultant, couldn't we have two representatives, say, from the Federation of Civic Associations on this? Because what you have here, who's, the people who are going to be interviewing and working with, continuing to work with during the course of the study are the staff from the City Manager's office, the Budget office, T&ES, Planning, and ACVA. And with the exception of ACVA staff, all of these represent the City Manager's office, and so what I was hoping is that we could go a little broader and incorporate perhaps two or at least one representative from the Federation of Civic Associations. And I choose that organization just because it's a, a broad representation.

- Mayor: The, I don't, I don't know, you know, the legality of it, and I'll leave that to either the City Attorney or, or the City Manager, but, but I think as a matter of policy that is probably not a, a wise suggestion. I mean this is a procurement and, and you know if we start adding citizens onto procurement committees, well, we're, we're establishing a precedent that, that may in fact lead to, you know, citizens who, who would sit on, on other committees that are, that are, are purely there to, to provide a selection process for the procurement of, of public process, or public services. I mean, we're elected to, and in this case we are going through the scope of work, but I think that, that you know if we begin a, a process where, you know, we are going to add citizens to procurement panels, I think that, number one, that is, it's a bad precedent; number two, it potentially slows down the process, and that's, and I, you know, the procurement processes and laws are there for, for a reason, and I'm not, I don't know that that there's, that there's a legal issue here but I do think as a matter of policy it potentially is a bad precedent to, to –
- Pepper: Mr. Mayor.
- Mayor: Excuse me, Ms. Pepper. I do think it's a bad precedent to, to allow citizens to sit on procurement panels, you know, just as a matter of policy.
- Pepper: Well, I wonder, you know we did do this when, I know it's not procurement, but when we were choosing a Planning Director we did put a person, we had quite a few people as a matter of fact –
- Mayor: That was not on the selection panel. Not on the selection panel.
- Pepper: As part of the interviewing the various candidates and I wonder if the City Attorney would comment on the legality of having such a arrangement and also I'd like to know if the City Manager would object to such an arrangement.
- Pessoa: Mr. Mayor, actually the, the procurement is, is done, the contract is signed by the, Jack Pitzer, the procurement officer, and if the Council were of a mind to appoint citizens to the advisory panel it seems to me they could. You're right that it does raise policy implications for other procurement issues, but I don't think there would be a legal impediment to having a citizen on the panel.
- Mayor: Yeah, I, I think that's probably correct, and, and you know, again, you know, are we, are we now going to have citizens on procurement panels when we buy police cruisers? Maybe we do, maybe we don't. I don't know, but, but as a matter of policy I think, I think it potentially is, is not a wise precedent.
- Woodson: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: I don't know. Phil, do you want to comment or respond to Mrs. Pepper?

Sunderland: I thought I'd wait til Ms. Pepper gets through all her questions then come back and do them one by one.

Mayor: Joyce.

Woodson: Yeah, I just wanted to say that perhaps it's not so much needed as a procurement tool but in the continued advice provision because there are two issues. One, to select the consultant and two, to provide advice to the consultant. And –

Pepper: I'd agree to that.

Mayor: Well, then, and I think that, that's a little bit different than what Mrs. Pepper's –

Woodson: I think it's very different. Yes.

Mayor: Yeah. What Mrs. Pepper suggested originally and I would think this is, is much more advisable than, than the procurement process.

Pepper: So.

Woodson: But maybe she would be interested in that approach.

Pepper: Yes. That would be perfectly fine with me so that it would not be selecting or choosing the consultant but to work with the consultant as part of the ongoing study.

Mayor: I know. It's already in there.

Eberwein: It's already in there as C-2.

Woodson: I thought that was part of our original conversation.

Pepper: No, as you read it on page 2, I believe it says, The committee under the direction of the City Manager that would select the consultant –

Woodson: Under D-2, I believe that's covered.

Mayor: Let Mrs. Pepper, let Mrs. Pepper –

Pepper: Advice to the consultant during the course of the study would include staff from the City Manager's office, the office of Management and Budget, Department of

Transportation and Environmental Services, Department of Planning and Zoning, and ACVA. The final consultant report would be presented to the City Council for its consideration and any action. That does not include ongoing work as part of the –

Sunderland: Let's see, let's see if we can make a distinction between three different things because that's how it was, I think, in our minds. One is the selection of the consultant.

Pepper: Right.

Sunderland: The second is the opportunity as the consultant is working and developing ultimate recommendations and making findings to have the opportunity to sit with a broadly representative group of people, and –

Pepper: We understand that you'll appoint those, and that's fine.

Sunderland: And the third is, and, and I think this is the, where, where you're heading, is probably overstating it, but the day-in and day-out interaction with the consultant, and, and you can, there is day-in and day-out kind of contact often times. Now, it'll be hot and cold obviously over the course of the, over the course of the, the work. That's I think the point that you're getting is an ongoing relationship between staff and possibly others together with the consultant. Let me, let me say two things about that and, and kind of the point on selection as well. The selection to me is simply a, a technical review and a technical determination whether the person or the persons trying to get the contract are, are technically qualified and there's a cost implication and a price implication. There's really not a whole lot of policy in that. There's not a whole lot of input in my view from neighbors and so forth. The trouble I have with the advice as things go, go on is that we're really not establishing a task force or a committee that would meet periodically to discuss and have communications with the, with the consultant. If that's something that you want to have happen, you know, we've done it on other occasions, we could, I suppose, do it here. I just don't feel that it's quite, since we're going to have the opportunity for the consultant to meet possibly on more than one occasion with the public or with the representatives to get their input, I would hope that that would provide ample opportunity for people, number one, to give input, two, to have an idea of what's going on with the report, three, to get preliminary thoughts of where the consultant is going and to have some give and take. But the constant over the course of a year or 18 months relationship or frankly the need to, to have constant communication with a technical consultant is something that I would like to stay away from, to be honest with you. I'm more than happy as we've said to have a group, and that group will meet. If we, if you want more on more than one occasion to give input.

Pepper: Is that something in addition to what's been offered here so far?

Sunderland: No. We, we have in D-2 the, the idea that you know we will identify 20, we would identify 20, we will identify 20 people and that that group will have the opportunity to give input and consult with the consultant.

Pepper: Is that on an ongoing basis?

Sunderland: No, that was not –

Pepper: Or is that a one-time thing?

Sunderland: Well, it didn't have to be one. It could be on a couple or a few but not ongoing for 12 to 18 months.

Pepper: Because what that sound like is that they would all be called in, and I don't know if you have individually or group in mind, but they sort of give it their one shot and, and sit down and shut up and walk out, and the consultant gets to ignore or, or take that advice. And what I would like is, is ongoing input, and I think that what you have here, I mean, I don't mean to be unkind but take a look at it. The people that are going to be working with this guy are all your people. I can't imagine them doing anything you wouldn't want.

Sunderland: But, but, Mrs. Pepper, that's, that's, you're, that's a correct characterization, and you know all the, the RFPs for the most part that we do, that's, that's how we do it. I mean the process is we select, we do the analysis, we do the technical work with the consultant, we produce a product, and you and the public then review the product. That's, and you make judgments based on the product. Hopefully it's a good, technically qualified product that gives you the options you need and the analysis that you need, the public reviews it, make decisions.

Pepper: Well, it sounds to me then that what you're offering is simply the input for people to come and say what they want or don't want and leave, and then there is a time, and I'm going to get to some changes I want for the public input in terms of public hearing and public session of the preliminary designs. I'll get to that in a moment. But it sounds to me like that's it.

Speck: Mr. Mayor.

Sunderland: That, that is how it's proposed now. That, that is it. That's correct.

Mayor: But, but what, what isn't described here, and it's up to the consultant to come up with, with the process, but, but what isn't described is, is the method, whether this

is a mass interview, whether this is series of interviews. I mean a consultant is free to, to choose, you know, potentially what is, is best and is going to yield the best information, and I think that, that, you know, we're sort of ignoring potentially the relationship here between the contractor, i.e., consultant, and us, the City. I mean, this is a, this is a contract between the City and a consultant to provide work, and if the consultant potentially, we're the boss, and the scope or work guides that, and if the consultant is, is consistently answering to a number of other bosses, number one, that has an adverse, potentially an adverse affect on, on work schedule. Number two, it also has potentially means that we don't get the kind of product that we're asking for in the scope of work. The scope of work guides what we want the, the consultant to do. And I think we've made a number of, of substantive and positive changes in the, the revision that we have before us.

Pepper: Well, they were, but do let me say that the method that the consultant will be using will be, be determined at the time of, that he is chosen. He will be presenting his scope of how he wants to do it and what his methodology will be, and we've already said that we don't want to have a citizen up as part of that because it's just not something we ordinarily do when we go out for RFP. So, and you're saying that we don't want them as part of a course of, along the course of the study of all this.

Mayor: No, that's, that's not what I said. What I said was, was that as part of the scope of work we are instructing –

Pepper: He is not us. It is the City Manager and his people.

Mayor: The scope, Mrs. Pepper, we are, we are approving tonight a scope of work. This is –

Pepper: Well, that is true but, but the methodology that we were talking about earlier –

Mayor: Mr. Speck.

Speck: It, it's interesting. We haven't even finished the RFP and, and it sounds like we're already sort of questioning the work the consultant is going to do. I mean, we all understand, and let's just put it right on the table, we all understand there's a subplot here. And the subplot is anxiety about a particular result. Okay. No point in pretending that's not the case, and the, and I understand, Del, that, that you know in terms of some, some of the citizens that are concerned about this whose, whose opinions that you value, that they want to be involved in this, and let's be candid about that too. They would like to be involved so if they see some conclusions come in early they can knock 'em down. That's not a good consultant study. This City is not going to try to keep citizens out of the study

process, but if we are serious about having an in-depth, thorough, objective and inclusive study that touches on all the issues we're talking about, you can't do it by, by sort of micromanaging on a day-by-day basis. Now, ACVA didn't ask for a primary role here but we have directed to ACVA the governance responsibility for administering what has become a pretty big tourism effort. But most of the members of the board of governors have never been involved in a single discussion about a site-specific location. The most involvement they've had, because, you know, it turns over relatively often, is on the problem of not enough space for the administrative offices, and they were involved in the decision to move. But they are the board that we have entrusted with the responsibility of managing tourism and they ought to have a role but no one, they never asked for a primary role. But if we're going to start to do a consultant study on this different than what we've done truly ever before, then we're really, what we're doing is just trying to work a different angle of the same issue. Some people think the thing was wired. Well, it's obviously not. I mean it couldn't be any clearer that there is an effort to have a, a review of all the issues and to do it honestly and thoroughly and professionally. But the other side of it is we want to make sure that the conclusions that it might end up with are not the ones we're worried about. Can't worry about that either. Got to involve the community. How could any consultant come in and do this kind of a study with this kind of an RFP and not actively consult with the community? But if we want to define it so precisely that we, that we're sort of telling them, you know, here's who you talk to and on what day, we've really, why go to the trouble?

Woodson: Mr. Mayor.

Pepper: Mr. Mayor. I'm still continuing here.

Woodson: Okay.

Mayor: Mrs. Pepper.

Pepper: Mr. Mayor, let me just say no one is not being candid here. I think that all the pronouncements that I have made on this issue have been very straight forward. I have no objection to the ACVA's presence on this board. I don't know how we could proceed if they weren't on this board, and it is, this committee, and it is absolutely unthinkable that they wouldn't be. It's essential that they do be. They do an outstanding job. The reason that a neighbor of the Union Station site was not suggested was because this is a City-wide exploration and that is why the Federation member best suited being chosen. So that is where that is coming from. Anyway, that's my last thought on this and I'd like to hear from my colleagues, but before I do let me, can I finish with my last point?

Mayor: Um huh.

Pepper: Which is at the top of page 10, if we may. It's number C. What is, what this is about is, we're talking here about the visitors center and what they are actually to, what the consultant is actually to deliver. And the statement reads: During the course of the study the offerer will present its preliminary research findings to the Board of Governors of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, the City Manager, as well as present those preliminary findings in one City-sponsored public input session. And what I would like to do is to say, would present those preliminary findings at several City-sponsored public input sessions where business and residential community feedback on the preliminary findings will be sought. The offerer would budget for at least three meetings, and so forth. Would there be a problem with that?

Mayor: No. But if, if you're –

Pepper: The idea is that they would be able to perhaps go around the neighborhoods or, or have several meetings.

Mayor: Well but then you're going to have to change, I mean I don't necessarily have a problem with, with what you're suggesting, but you're going to have to change, you know, should budget for three meetings because three meetings are, are listed, three meetings are described in the, in the body of the language that you're now, you suggested several public input meetings, and so that's going to more than three which is going to mean –

Pepper: All right, to budget for –

Woodson: More money.

Mayor: Which is going to mean more money. You know, you already hope that, that they come in for less but at any rate that'll cost more to do that. But, I, you know, again, I think that –

Pepper: Well, let's say for these meetings. How's that?

Mayor: All right. I just think that, that, you know, you just leave it since you're going to have input sessions, if you're going to leave that open-ended the offerer shall budget appropriately for these meetings and not tie –

Pepper: That's good.

Mayor: Them specifically to a, to a set number of meetings and then we'll see how it, how it comes out in the RFP, but that's fine.

Pepper: That covers the waterfront for me.

Mayor: Okay. Ms. Eberwein and then Ms. Woodson.

Eberwein: I also was confused about that section C and –

Mayor: This is on page 10 again?

Eberwein: Yeah, the one that Ms. Pepper just referred to. I, I read the thing a couple of times and I couldn't tell. It sounded, it sounds like you're talking about one session but then you say budget for three and I'm not sure that the problem here isn't that it's just not real clear. It, It's, I thought it was confusing the way it was drafted.

Sunderland: The intent, I think, and Mark can tell me if I, if I'm wrong, is that there would be a ACVA presentation. There would be a staff kind of internal presentation for the City Manager and staff, and there would be a public. So you have three of those. ACVA, internal City, public input session.

Eberwein: That's what that meant.

Sunderland: That was the three. And, and so if you, if you want to change the public input to several, then you, you go three plus.

Eberwein: Well, I guess my only question would be why, why would you have several? Wouldn't it be just under our normal public hearing process and we normally just have one so I'm not sure why – I'm confused.

Pepper: No. Huh uh. I think that they may need to go into the neighborhoods and we don't know yet which neighborhoods we're talking about. It may be that if this were to be located at the Lyceum for example, if that's the one that's chosen, that would please David and me, you see, but we understand that it's not going to get chosen. But anyway, the Lyceum perhaps that –

Mayor: But it might.

Pepper: Would be a good site for that to have a neighborhood meeting there for example. I would like to see more than, than just one that where they actually go out into the neighborhood and make a presentation, and I mean the neighborhood in a very extended sense because it could be the entire City. I would hope the entire City, of course, would be interested in attending ?? and neighborhoods.

Eberwein: As long as we allow the consultant to give us, to, to parse out the cost for the number of meetings so that if we decide that the contract's getting out of hand, that we have a chance to pull back based on, you know, because you could go from meeting to five to, you could keep going.

Mayor: You could go from one meeting to 20 and you can meet with every civic association. And, and these are the, the preliminary findings. And it would be, you know, and again, the final report would come back to us and my guess is that we would, well, that's the point I was just going to make. My guess is that's when we would have a public hearing is on the final report. This is the preliminary. Ms. Eberwein.

Eberwein: Okay. Well, I wanted to compliment the City Manager and his staff for incorporating many of the comments that the Council made, but I had a misunderstanding and maybe the rest of Council doesn't agree me, but I, I'm looking at docket item page 6, typed page 3, and docket item 7, typed page 4, and on, I'm referring to items 5 –

Mayor: You're talking about the scope of work not the docket item, right?

Eberwein: Right. I'm, well, okay. The docket item page 6, number 5, and the docket item 7, number 4. They're related. And in that, in number 5 it says determine the problems or issues relating to the current Ramsay House visitors center where it may fall short of visitor expectations as well as suggestions for improving service. And then on 4, it says, provide the consultant's best professional judgment on the degree a new visitors center in addition to the current Ramsay House location in Old Town. I would like to see the consultant evaluate in light of the potential need for a new visitors center whether we would want to even continue to use Ramsay House at all. And so this sort of assumes, well it does. It assumes that we will continue to use Ramsay House as a visitors center and that was not my assumption. My assumption was that there was the potential for having a completely new visitors center that might be located out of the central system, that we might have a chance to actually restore, one potential could be to restore Ramsay House as a historic site. You could have a small satellite in Old Town, but it wouldn't necessarily have to be Ramsay House. It could even be within City Hall which has handicapped accessible bathrooms and things like that. So I guess my feeling is that I would strongly suggest we not tie the consultant into assuming that Ramsay House will continue as a visitors center and that they be able to look at continuing it or not based on what their suggestion is for an additional visitors center. And I, and I feel that pretty strongly and I don't know if my colleagues share that.

Speck: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Mr. Speck.

Speck: On, on this point I think there has been a recognition for some time that Ramsay House is, is not adequate to, for a lot of things and clearly at some point in the future it could be used for some other purposes in addition, but there's been a pretty strong commitment beginning in the fiscal year '98 budget document when money was first, maybe it was '99, when money was first set aside for some feasibility and analysis, that Ramsay House in some form as a visitor facility would, would be there. And the reason that that's so important is it really is a key issue for all of the Old Town retailers. And we sort of said that --

Mayor: Yeah.

Speck: I think the question is how we use it. I think Claire is right in, in terms of other elements of it but we've had, we've made that commitment.

Mayor: The, I'll tell you, I think Ms. Eberwein brings up a, you know, sort of an interesting point. I mean, number one, in keeping with one of the goals that we've tried to do here, not tying the consultant's hands or determining a particular outcome, she's right on point here, and that's what this does. My particular feeling is if, if that sentiment is there it'll come out in the interviews and the preliminary public, or the community meetings regarding the preliminary work plan. I mean if that sentiment is so strong, and I think, I think, you know, potentially the, the language that is in the parens in addition to the current Ramsay House located in Old Town needs to be deleted. I mean we want to try and, and not limit the scope and I think Ms. Eberwein's right on point.

Pepper: Mr. Mayor, could I just comment on that? That was a point that I was really concerned about too because I wanted to ensure that Ramsay House did continue as a visitors center but more as a one of, of two at least.

Mayor: And I think, I think it's important. I, I agree. You know, but again, I think that's, that's, those are the conclusions that we want the consultant to reach, you know, as part of his or her review and, and study and recommendations. And again the more we confine the more we steer and you know we've tried to be as, as broad-based, city-wide and, and not to determine particular aspects or elements of this. Let the consultant decide that. If that sentiment is as strong as we might think it would be, Mrs. Pepper and Mr. Speck, then that should come out in the interviews and in the review of the, of the preliminary document.

Speck: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Um huh.

- Speck: It, it would be difficult for me to argue against Claire's point in that I've so strongly argued for the need to keep this open, but what enters into this is, and I really don't disagree with the premise that says take a full look at this, but we have in so many instances where the opportunity has come up, affirmed our desire to continue to have a Ramsay House presence that I think that we run into a problem so I wonder if we could, if we, if we could structure some language that says we want the consultant to certainly look at this broadly. There may very well be some other conclusions. It has always been the Council's intent to retain a Ramsay House presence but we would like to have a consultant look at this with fresh eyes and make additional comments or suggestions. But, I mean, it's in writing. It's in the budget. It's in memos. It's in so many different places that we've said this, that any consideration of a new visitors center would still continue to retain a Ramsay House presence of some sort. I think we would really run into a kind of breach of faith with, with particularly the retailers.
- Mayor: Well, but again, you know, we're not making a decision in this document. We're asking somebody to review particular elements of tourism and, as it relates to a visitors center.
- Speck: I agree.
- Mayor: And, you know, I mean, if, I think if, if we're going to assuage people because of their concern about the Ramsay House, you don't do it in, in the scope of work. You do it in the result of the scope of work and in the ultimate actions of the Council. I know –
- Eberwein: Mr. Mayor.
- Mayor: Ms. Eberwein.
- Eberwein: I want to thank you very much for supporting me on that. I'd, I'd like to point out to Mr. Speck very respectfully that while the former Councils may have made that decision, I certainly have not made that decision. I'm looking at this study to look at everything freshly and I could very easily be persuaded one way or the other, but I certainly haven't made the decision as a member of this Council that Ramsay House needs to continue as a visitors center.
- Mayor: Do you have other, any other points you want to make on this?
- Eberwein: No.
- Mayor: Joyce.

Woodson: Thank you. I would never have placed a bet that we'd be talking about this for another hour after –

Mayor: Well, it ain't going to be for another hour.

Woodson: After our public hearing where we discussed it so. I, I just have two comments although I do agree and I think it would very simply changed on Ms. Eberwein's comments which I think make sense in light of what we are trying to achieve here to simply say, you know, if Ramsay House is continued in use, and whatever language would address that, and that doesn't discount that it might be continued. I happen to wish that it would be continued, but it doesn't say that it must be. So perhaps we can just add some little simple language that allows the consultant to appreciate that it doesn't have to continue or that it could.

Speck: I'm confident we could come up with some language.

Woodson: You think. I think we can. I did want to make a comment that you know during this whole discussion I, I just don't want to cast aspersions on staff. I think the real issue wasn't that the staff was all Phil Sunderland's people. They're all our people. They may work under Phil. Phil works under us. They are all our people. I don't think that was the real issue. I think it, it maybe got a little out of hand here, but perhaps the real issue is that the ACVA, as much as I respect them, are not much more than a, a separate entity in themselves because they are a separate charter. We do support them in many ways, but they are a separate charter. So I guess the same argument could be made that they ought not be a part of a procurement process either. So, I think part of the issue, and I have heard as many other of my colleagues have heard, from citizens that there is some fear, but you know I'm sure that the fear is directed at the City Manager so much as that this fear is directed at what ACVA might want. So, in, in all, movement towards fairness and disclosure I suspect that that's part of the issue. And I had something else here. Oh, also, on the question of the item C on page 10 of our package which has to do with these three meetings or five or ten or however many we're going to have, it seems to me that the meetings could be and should be and are public anyway, are they not? So, perhaps the only difference is that citizens would not be making comments during the first two or three, if we have three, or during the three of six if we have six. But that they would have opportunities. But I'm not real certain that we would be taking them to neighborhoods because decisions hadn't been made at that point where the center might be located so how are you going to go to a neighborhood? Wouldn't that be something that a public hearing would do once this report has been submitted?

Speck: Sure.

- Woodson: So I think we're a little ahead of ourselves here in our anxiousness.
- Mayor: No, I, I and I don't disagree. I think what Mrs. Pepper was asking for was, was potentially not necessarily out in neighborhoods but, but more than just one public input session.
- Woodson: And I hear that and I, I completely hear that and I'm –
- Pepper: That's what I'm saying.
- Woodson: Real clear that we could have as much as our money can buy.
- Mayor: Right. Okay. We need a motion on the floor.
- Eberwein: I move – shall I go ahead?
- Mayor: Sure.
- Eberwein: I move approval of the RFP as presented by the City Manager with the changes to clarify the language in Roman numeral II-C with regards to the number of meetings and asking the consultant to give us a range of prices for the cost of additional meetings, and with the language in B, let's see, Roman numeral 1-B-5 and C-4 be adjusted so that it is not predetermined that Ramsay would continue and that the consultant be given the freedom to relook at the entire scope of visitor center facilities within the City, and we'll add what the Mayor said.
- Mayor: Let me, well, let me ask just sort of a clarifying question on the motion. My suggestion would be that we delete the, the reference to Ramsay House in section C, item 4. I do think that it is probably important to retain however the item in section B number 5 because that's to determine the problems. I mean, I think what we're trying to do is, is define where you are now. And so defining the problems associated with the current Ramsay House center I think, I think it is important.
- Eberwein: Okay.
- Mayor: It's, it's the element regarding, or the presumption in the new visitors center that Ramsay House would, would also be, would be operational, is, is I think the, the area where you need to delete that.
- Eberwein: Okay. Let's delete. I agree with that. Let's delete the reference to Ramsay House in number 4 and then keep number 5. I think you'd need to add some language at

the end as well as suggestions from improving service should it be recommended that Ramsay House continue as a visitor –

Sunderland: Mr. Mayor. Can I suggest this? I, let me get the concept across and let's see if we understand the concept because I think there may be multiple places in here that we need do some tweaked, language tweaking which we will take care of. We started off with the idea, and Mark, tell me if this is wrong. I think the language certainly suggests it as Claire is saying, that we're going to assume that Ramsay stays. We might make it better and then tell us the economic impact, benefit or not benefit of a visitors center somewhere else, give us the locations, and we'd make our analysis as to another visitors center kind of on the assumption that Ramsay will stay. Now you're saying, and I don't disagree, take away the assumption that Ramsay will stay and we're really asking the consultant to come back and tell us in a sense now: Ramsay and only Ramsay; Ramsay plus another location; or no Ramsay and another location. So we're taking that assumption away, and I think that to get that concept across we might need to do a number of changes in the, in the document.

Mayor: That's clearly I think the direction.

Sunderland: That's, that's, so I would say let's live with that concept and let us do the language changes. Okay?

Speck: Mr. Mayor, I, I –

Mayor: All right. We have a motion by Ms. Eberwein. Do we have a second? Seconded by Mr. Speck. Mr. Speck.

Speck: Let me just say I, I think that what we're talking about probably makes sense. I, I just really want to stress this is a very big deal for the retailers in Old Town and even though this is a current Council, that in every single instance that the opportunity has come up there has been some affirmation of, of a commitment to continue to keep a Ramsay House presence, and the retailers aren't going to care that it's a new Council. They're going to care that, that they've got budget memos, and documents, and e-mail letters that say, yep, in anything that's talked about about a visitors center, we'll still preserve some presence of Ramsay House. And, and I just, I think that we have to be careful that we don't commit inadvertently a real breach of faith with, with an important community. But we can still develop language that says, you know, that we want this to be looked at as a part of a study and it would be and it would be appropriate for someone to look at that and offer recommendations for us. I just think we need to be a little bit careful about appearing to pull back on something we've promised.

Eberwein: I'd just like to say that I, I would like the language as suggested by Mr. Sunderland and I would only point out, Mr. Speck, that the same concerns that you're expressing from the business community are the concerns that are being expressed in some of the neighborhoods, and I think we've set this process up to be as impartial as we can –

Speck: I agree.

Eberwein: Ask the consultants to look at all the possibilities and at some point they will come back and we will have the input from the neighborhoods affected, we will have the impact from the business community, and I think this process is to be fair all the way down the line, and I think this does it, and we'll just see if the motion fails to pass.

Speck: I don't disagree. I think it's just a matter of how we express it.

Mayor: Joyce.

Woodson: Yeah. Just one suggestion for item B-5 and that would be at page 6 that would be adding as it reads as well as suggestions for improving or discontinuing service, and that's for the Ramsay House. I absolutely do not want to see service discontinued at the Ramsay House. I agree with Mr. Speck. I appreciate the need that sort of settles everything, but the fact is what the consultant says is not gospel. It still comes back to us. It still goes to the citizens. We will make the ultimate decision so inasmuch as they may have the right to discontinue the use in their report, we don't have to follow anything that they say or we can follow everything that they say or some parts of it.

Mayor: That's the beauty of hiring a consultant. You can always either fire them or not do what they tell you to do.

Woodson: Well, you know, that's how consultants, that's how they live.

Mayor: That's right.

Pepper: Do I understand that (was that it?)

Woodson: I'm sorry?

Pepper: Was that it for you?

Woodson: Well, for right now. You know, I might get a stroke of –

Mayor: Let's hope not.

Pepper: Okay. I just wanted to be sure that in that motion there will be, do we understand several City-sponsored public input session.

Mayor: That's, Ms. Eberwein included that in her motion. We've got a motion and a second. Is there any further discussion? And we have some clarifying language from, from Mr. Sunderland, I think, gives you the conceptual framework that is included in the motion. So any, any modifications to the language in the scope of work can be changed accordingly.

Cleveland: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Mr. Cleveland:

Cleveland: I will not be voting for this motion not for all of the good things that are in it, but I think it's like I said before and I think it was said tonight, we're making a decision that is light years, to me, light years ahead of anything that you would want to do with a consultant center or for, for a visitors center, and to do it now or to make that decision now which would probably be light years ahead it's too far, it is to me too far ahead making the decision now, too far ahead of in light of what's going to done because I know where it's going to come up. So, I'm not voting for this motion.

Mayor: Okay. Very good. Is there any further discussion? All those in favor of the motion say aye; all those opposed, no. It passes 6-to-1.

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