



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

October 21, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From:  Christine Daniel, City Manager

Submitted by: Mark Numainville, City Clerk

Subject: Request to Berkeley Unified School District to Use Meeting Chambers at 2020 Bonar Street for Emergency Purposes and Analysis of Council Chambers at 1947 Center Street

RECOMMENDATION

1. Authorize the City Manager to send a letter to the Berkeley Unified School District to request the use of the meeting chambers at 2020 Bonar Street for City Council meetings in the event an emergency makes 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way unusable.
2. Cease consideration of the use of 1947 Center Street for a new Council Chambers due to its configuration limitations.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

On May 20, 2014 the Council made a referral to the City Manager to analyze 1947 Center Street as a potential location for a new permanent City Council Chambers.

Staff retained a space planner to assist with the analysis. The analysis found that while there is adequate space for a new Chambers on the first floor of 1947 Center Street, the large supportive columns in the proposed area prevent the space from being used as an open meeting chambers. There is not sufficient space for the dais between the columns and the line of sight for the public and members of the Council is very limited.

At this time, the Maudelle Shirek Building remains the best suited location for regular City Council meetings.

With no immediate replacement identified, and given the age and condition of the Maudelle Shirek Building, having a suitable back up location that is available on short notice is necessary and prudent. The Longfellow School Auditorium remains the Council's back up location for large capacity needs, however the difficulty in scheduling and set up limits its feasibility as an emergency, short-notice back up location. The newly constructed meeting chambers at the BUSD West Campus location at 2020

Bonar Street would be ideal for this purpose. The location is purpose built as a meeting chambers for a legislative body, is set up in a meeting-ready state, and is likely to have fewer conflicts than the Longfellow Auditorium. Staff is requesting that the Council authorize the City Manager to send a letter to BUSD requesting the use of the Bonar Street facility if the Maudelle Shirek Building becomes unusable due to an emergency event, such as an earthquake or fire, or the failure of a major infrastructure system such as lighting, plumbing, heating, or the elevator.

BACKGROUND

Over the past four years, staff has analyzed several sites as possible locations for City Council meetings. Staff has presented reports in the new meeting location on May 20, 2014, January 21, 2014, June 26, 2012, January 17, 2012, and November 8, 2011. The locations under the most recent consideration have included the North Berkeley Senior Center (NBSC), West Berkeley Senior Center (WBSC), Live Oak Park Theater and MPR, Berkeley Community College Auditorium (BCC), and Florence Schwimley Little Theater (BHS). Staff toured each location with the facilities management staff from the governing jurisdiction. Each location has certain strengths and weaknesses and none were judged to be superior to the existing Council Chambers at the Maudelle Shirek Building.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Moving to a new meeting location will likely result in significant energy savings as Old City Hall currently does not feature energy efficient heating and lighting systems.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Consider the viable locations for City Council meetings and direct staff to begin a detailed analysis of the costs and timeline for moving to a new meeting location.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The fiscal impact will depend on the location chosen. Previous estimates are approximately two years old and likely are no longer accurate.

CONTACT PERSON

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