

Board Responds to Candidate's Criticism

Written by Letter to Editor

Wednesday, 25 October 2000 18:00

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In the October 4 issue of the River Cities' Reader (#291), you printed a letter from Karl J. Rhomberg, a Democratic Party candidate for the Scott County Board of Supervisors, that was critical of a decision we made concerning the lease of office space for Juvenile Court Services. Following is our response.

The background: In order to start the remodeling of the Bi-Centennial Building, a space had to be vacated to start the work. The 10-year remodeling plan is required to move all non-court-related functions from the Courthouse to the Bi-Centennial Building in compliance with a study that was completed in 1987.

The requirement: locate approximately 6,000 square feet of space, for a period of seven to 10 years, for Juvenile Court Services close to the Courthouse and Juvenile Detention Center, where frequent day-to-day interaction takes place. We did not want to purchase more real estate, so a lease was desired.

The method: advertise for office-space proposals with all major real-estate firms, downtown-property owners, Davenport One, and other known land/building owners and developers.

The results: six proposals received and reviewed. Three rejected due to their distance from the Courthouse. Another was rejected because of excessive remodeling costs.

Final selection: An architect was hired to prepare detailed specifications so final firm bids could be received and have comparable quality standards. Mr. McChurch's bid met the requirements. The other bidder chose not to bid. We conducted a survey of other similar space downtown and met with Mr. McChurch to clarify his proposal and request further concessions, which were made. The final proposal was well within the range of other space of similar quality and size. Parking stalls are optional.

Public hearing: A duly advertised public hearing was held. All information regarding the lease

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terms, conditions, and form of lease were provided to all parties. All questions regarding the lease and lease form were answered. Two parties came to publicly support the project as an outstanding example of public/private cooperation to improve an existing downtown property.

End result: a solution to a problem that also provides a win-win result. The county receives fair value for its lease needs and a property is enhanced for increased tax value. The county does not have to forever own and maintain another property. We can sublet the space if the Bi-Centennial project is completed ahead of schedule. We call this good fiduciary responsibility of the taxpayers' money!

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