

Agenda Report

DATE: APRIL 26, 1999

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CYNTHIA J. KURTZ, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR DECLARATION OF CERTAIN CITY-OWNED REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 541 SOUTH OAK KNOLL AVENUE AS SURPLUS PROPERTY AND APPROVAL OF SALE THEREOF

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution:

- A. Finding and determining that certain City-owned land at 541 South Oak Knoll Avenue (subject property) falls under Class 12 of Categorically Exempt Projects and is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Recorder;
- B. Declaring that the subject property is not needed for the purpose for which it was acquired or for any other public purpose and is, therefore, surplus real property; and
- C. Directing the subject property be sold through a public noticed competitive bid process, pursuant to Section 4.02 of the Pasadena Municipal Code.

BACKGROUND:

The subject property (the Property), having a site address of 541 South Oak Knoll Avenue (see Attachment A) and identified as Los Angeles County Assessor Parcel Number 5734-020-902 (portion), has been unoccupied since it was damaged during the Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1989.

Currently part of a larger (28,350 square foot) City ownership also improved with a Water and Power Department substation, the Property to be sold consists of a rectangular-shaped mid-block parcel containing a total gross land area of 11,100 square feet. The site is level, about three feet above sidewalk grade. All public utilities are connected. Vehicular access is provided by two concrete driveways on Oak Knoll Avenue.

The Property is known as the historically significant former Engine Company No. 34 complex. It consists of a two-story, brick Mediterranean Revival style building containing 3,928± square feet. The fire station was built in 1917 and is virtually intact inside and out. A three-story, wood frame and stucco hose drying tower is considered to be the structure's most distinctive feature. The construction contractor, Leonard Bukowski, and the architect, Joseph J. Blick, were well-known, respected Pasadena residents.

According to a structural engineering study performed by Grossman & Speer Associates, Inc. in September, 1997, seismic retrofit and structural repair work is necessary to render the building suitable for occupancy. The costs for further testing, design and structural retrofit is estimated to be in the \$175,000 to \$200,000 range. In addition to the seismic retrofitting, plumbing, electrical, HVAC and other upgrades will more than likely be desirable for contemporary occupancy.

As part of the sale, the City will retain a 15 foot wide ingress and egress and utility easement running east-west, 21 feet south of the north property line. This easement will provide vehicular and utility access for the substation adjoining to the rear. For additional ingress and egress to the Property, a 15 foot wide easement will be conveyed over the east 100 feet of the remaining City ownership.

Several groups and individuals have expressed interest in the Property. A list of interested parties has been maintained for notification of the pending auction.

On March 24, 1999, staff presented this matter to the Planning Commission to comply with P.M.C. Section 2.105.110 B, 4 (a). The Planning Commission was asked to consider and make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the declaration of this Property as surplus and approving its sale. The Planning Commission voted unanimously in favor of staff's recommendation.

During its March 24th meeting, the Planning Commission recommended that the Property be sold subject to a title condition providing that the historically significant structural improvements cannot be removed. However, the Property was declared a Cultural Heritage Landmark by resolution adopted by the City on November 13, 1990 and recorded by the Los Angeles County recorder on June 6, 1991. Accordingly, another deed restriction accompanying the sale of the property is unnecessary because existing protections at the local level and under state law accomplish virtually the same result.

This former fire station is one of several historic buildings located within the City eligible for conversion to business and professional office use upon the attainment of a conditional use permit. However, it is the intent of staff that the subject structure be preserved, especially the exterior appearance. As a designated landmark, any exterior alteration requires design review.

Staff believes that the best course of action is for the Property to be declared surplus and sold in its "as is" condition on an open competitive bid basis. Processing of this sale should be administered by staff, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 4.02 of the Code relating to the sale of surplus property.

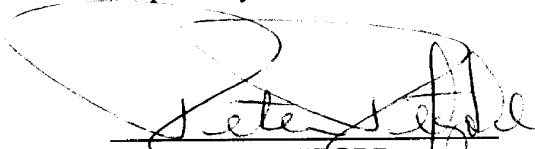
FISCAL IMPACT:

Anticipated proceeds from the auction, based on the Property's appraised Fair Market Value, are estimated to be in the \$300,000 range. Actual moneys realized will be deposited into the Charter Capital Fund Account.

Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

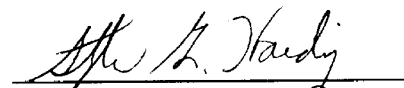
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