

CITY OF DANA POINT
AGENDA REPORT

Reviewed By: DH CM CA

DATE: APRIL 12, 2006

TO: CITY MANAGER/CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS RENOVATION TASK FORCE

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF COUNCIL CHAMBER RENOVATION DESIGN

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council (1) approve the recommended design concept presented by HMC Architects for the renovation of the City Council Chambers, including the creation of a foyer expanding the usable public space at City Plaza and the purchase and installation of associated digital broadcast equipment; (2) authorize staff to publish the appropriate construction documents for the purpose of soliciting bids for the construction associated with the renovation project and the purchase and installation of the associated technology equipment; and (3) authorize the transfer of \$300,000 from the General Fund Undesignated Fund to the Facilities Improvement Fund for use on this project.

ISSUES:

The Council Chambers in its current condition is in dire need of space planning and remodeling for the efficient conduct of public meetings and public participation. A renovation of the Chambers is also needed to improve security and to enhance accessibility and participation for those with disabilities. Current technology for cable television broadcast is obsolete and produces a poor quality live broadcast of public meetings, while increasing failures in the existing audio/visual equipment lead to our questionable ability to continue live broadcasts. These significant issues coupled with a Council desire to generally modernize and renew the look and feel of the chambers has resulted in a significant renovation project.

BACKGROUND:

At its meetings of January 17 and 26, 2005, the City Council provided direction for the creation of a number of Subcommittees and Task Force assignments to assist the Council with policy development. One of the various Task Forces in question is the Council Chamber Renovation Task Force. Mayor Anderson and Councilmember Lacy serve on this Task Force along with several staff members.

Since its creation, the Council Chamber Renovation Task Force has met several times, both at the staff level, and with the active involvement of the entire group. Initial tasks

included the identification of specific concerns that must be addressed as part of the renovation project, and a review of other local council chambers. A "wish list" was developed identifying areas that should be corrected, updated, and/or introduced into the new design of the chambers.

In August of last year, a Request for Qualifications and Related Proposals was published to invite design firms to submit proposals for the council chamber renovation. These submittals were received and an extensive review was conducted throughout October. Additional meetings were conducted to further review and discuss submittals resulting in a short list of firms to be interviewed.

In February, the City Council voted to award the design contract to HMC Architects as the most qualified and comprehensive design team to produce the desired project results.

DISCUSSION:

The HMC Architects design team, in close collaboration with the Council Chamber Renovation Task Force, has developed a comprehensive design for our new chamber. This design incorporates the latest advances in television and internet broadcasting and is both modern and stylish in concept. The design uses complementing natural tones in natural woods, fabrics, and carpets to integrate and enhance the features of our local "small town" community.

The interior design and decorating incorporates some of the best features highlighted in other local council chambers. The task force visited several recently renovated council chambers around the county to discover what worked and what specific features could be applied to our design. Of the facilities visited, the Laguna Hills Council Chamber left the greatest impression on the task force members for its use of natural woods, earth tones, and welcoming appeal. This became the inspiration for use of interior design finishes, colors, and fabrics.

This renovation project encompasses a significant increase to the usable "public space" at City Plaza. The design includes the creation of a vestibule, or foyer, outside of the existing chamber room, by enclosing the hallway. This new space will provide the opportunity to feature a rotating display of local featured art work, display community events, and historic photography. The result of this project design will transform our existing council chamber into a modern multi-purpose functional meeting space with a significant increase in public access space and the ability to broadcast meetings live over television and the internet as well as to digitally record meetings for distribution or archival purposes.

The new technology proposed for this project will result in a state-of-the-art council chamber designed to meet the needs of multi-media presentations and broadcast in several formats. All cameras, recording, presentation, playback, and broadcast equipment is designed for use in the "digital" age. Our broadcast partners at Cox Cable have indicated that they will be utilizing fully digital-only systems within the next five years. This project represents our best opportunity to purchase and install new equipment to meet this coming digital broadcast standard before it is imposed upon us.

Part of the broadcast design specification from the inception of this project has been the ability to “push” our broadcast over multiple format options. This multi-format option includes analog and digital television media, as well as streaming video over the internet, or “web-casting.”

Associated with the technology upgrades with this project, but outside the scope of the council chamber renovation, the City will be taking control of our own Dana Point Community Channel on Cox Cable channel 30. This represents a fantastic opportunity to provide community specific information 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. We will have creative control over the format and content of this television channel providing us the ability to re-broadcast recorded meetings, provide public service announcements, maintain and broadcast a community events calendar, and communicate emergency/disaster related information to the public through a dedicated information “pipeline.” This 24-hour Dana Point Community Channel is a milestone for our community and signifies the Council’s commitment to “transparency in government,” and keeping our residents informed about local activities and ways to get involved. A large percentage of the costs of this project, as identified in the Fiscal Impact section of this report, are associated with the development of this television and web broadcasting ability.

Approval of the recommended action will allow the Council Chamber Renovation Task Force to produce and publish construction documents necessary to permit the project and solicit bids for the construction, and purchase and installation of the technology equipment.

NOTIFICATION/FOLLOW-UP:

None

FISCAL IMPACT:

As the Council will recall, resulting from the negotiations with Cox Communications, the new franchise agreement approved in November 2004, provided the City with a one-time Public, Education and Government Grant in the amount of \$788,700. This grant has been remitted to the City and can be utilized for capital or non-capital purposes at the Council's discretion. The funds are budgeted and intended for the Council Chamber Renovation Project and specifically for the purchase and installation of the equipment necessary to support digital television broadcast and re-broadcast of council and commission meetings.

Anticipated costs for the completion of this project, as specified, are as follows:

Grant	\$789,000	
Design Development / Engineering	\$135,000	(allocated by Council 2/22/06)
Construction Costs	\$400,000	(Estimated)
Meeting Space Multi-Media Technology	\$202,000	(Estimated)
Digital Broadcast Equipment	<u>- \$352,000</u>	(Estimated)
Add'l Funding Needed	< \$300,000 >	

The \$789,000 dedicated for this project is already assigned to the Facilities Improvement Fund. There is currently \$7.3M available in the General Fund Undesignated Fund. Staff is requesting authorization for the transfer of funds from GF Undesignated Fund to the Facilities Improvement Fund for this project. This \$300,000 transfer represents the total financial commitment from the City and is only a small percentage of the total cost of developing a million dollar renovation project for the benefit of the public use.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS:

1. Other alternatives as identified by the City Council.