

Memo

To: Village Council
From: Doug Willardson
CC: Village Managers
Date: February 16, 202
Re: CONFIDENTIAL Property Acquisitions

Currently, there are a few inter-related land acquisition/development opportunities for the Council to consider. Staff seeks Council's input on which direction they would like to pursue. These opportunities are the Post Office building, lease/arrangements for construction of a parking deck behind the Holly Inn, and the Moore County water tank property.

POST OFFICE BUILDING

As the Council previously discussed, the owner of the Post Office building has expressed interest in selling the building to the Village. An appraisal of the property came back at \$942,000; the current owners originally floated a \$1.5 million selling price. As a reminder, Council was originally interested in purchasing the building because--

- a. it is a valuable asset downtown,
- b. it could provide swing space for library materials while the library is under renovations,
- c. the library lease required the Village to lease the book shop space for a couple of years and the owners would not let the Village assume the lease (this has since been resolved),
- d. it could possibly house the Tufts archives displays long-term and the Welcome Center—decreasing the space needs for an expanded library and eliminating the Welcome Center lease payments at the Theatre building.

Taking a deeper dive into the possibility of the Tufts Archives, Welcome Center and Roast Office sharing the Post Office Building, we analyzed the potential space needs and financial costs.

Space Needs:

- i. Current Space Usage
 1. Tufts Archives: 2,100 sq ft + 376 sq ft shared (office, restroom, Tin Whistle Room)
 2. Tufts Storage (basement): 2,100 sq ft
 3. Welcome Center: 875 sq ft (500 sq ft is minimum)

4. Roast Office: 509 sq ft
5. TOTAL: 5,960 sq ft
- ii. Current square footage of the Post Office:
 1. First floor: 3,751 sq ft
 2. Second floor: 435 sq ft
 3. Basement: 1,454 sq ft
 4. TOTAL: 5,640 sq ft
- iii. Potential Post Office First Floor Usage
 1. Tufts Archives: 2,100 sq ft
 2. Welcome Center: 500 sq ft
 3. Roast Office: 509 sq ft
 4. Common Space: 500 sq ft
 5. Other/Misc: 142 sq ft
 6. TOTAL: 3,751 sq ft

Preliminary estimates show that the public portion of the Tufts Archives, the Welcome Center, and the Roast Office can all be accommodated on the first floor of the Post Office building.

Financial Analysis:

The owner offered to lease the Post Office building to the Village for an estimated cost of \$85,500 annually. The annual cost to purchase the Post Office building is as follows (assumes 100% financing at 2.1%):

- a. At \$1.0 million purchase price: Initially \$70,000 decreasing to \$51,000 over 20 years (\$57,869 average)
- b. At \$1.25 million purchase price: Initially \$88,000 decreasing to \$63,000 over 20 years (\$72,336 average)
- c. At \$1.5 million purchase price: Initially \$106,000 decreasing to \$76,000 over 20 years (\$86,804 average)

If purchasing the Post Office building, the Village can save money from eliminating the Welcome Center lease and will also receive lease revenue from the Roast Office. The Village currently pays \$20,640 annually for the lease of the Welcome Center at the Theatre Building. The Village would receive \$16,532 annually under the current lease terms for the Roast Office.

The June 2020 library needs assessment recommended a library expansion of 9,645 sq ft for a total of 13,470 sq ft of library space. At \$325 per sq ft, the library expansion would cost approximately \$3.1 million. If the 2,476 sq ft currently used by the Tufts Archives could be used as library space it would save an estimated \$805,000 in construction costs. \$805,000 is equivalent to an average debt service payment of \$38,333 under the same 20 year/2.1% rate assumed earlier.

In total, \$20,640 (Theatre Building lease savings) + \$16,532 (Roast Office lease revenue) + 38,333 (construction cost savings) = \$75,505; approximately the same as the debt service payment for purchasing the building at \$1.25 million.

In addition to this, there will be costs to make the Post Office building move-in ready—assume \$84,000 based on renovation cost of \$20 per sq ft. However, purchasing the building also creates a savings from eliminating the \$55,560 annual post office lease paid by the Library Foundation/Village as required under the Village’s agreement with the Library Foundation for the initial two years. Lastly, if the Village purchased the Post Office, it would not need to rent swing-space for library use during construction. This cost is estimated at \$220,000 for 5,000 sq ft of space at \$22/per sq ft for two years.

Hosting the Archives at a separate location will require a staffing model change. However, there are already plans to hire two additional FTEs when the library is expanded. It is possible that with these additional staff members, the Archives could be appropriately staffed at a separate location especially with support of staff/volunteers from the Welcome Center.

Based on the above assumptions, purchasing the Post Office building has the potential to save money over maintaining the status quo at the Welcome Center and expanding the library and archives fully on the existing site. On top of this, the Village will own an asset that could be sold and the original purchase price recouped (more or less based on market conditions).

In addition to the fiscal benefits, the non-monetary benefits of reducing the physical footprint on the Village Green and the synergy created by combining the Archives museum and Welcome Center should be considered.

HOLLY INN PARKING DECK

Pinehurst Resort is a little hesitant to allow the Village to use the parking area behind the Holly Inn to build a parking deck. They are concerned that there is not full community support for expanding the library and by allowing us to build a parking deck they will be complicit in the expansion and may receive some blowback. They also feel entitled to some compensation for use of the property. They suggested a land swap for a portion of the Moore County water tanks property in exchange for use of the land. Finally, they feel there may not be a need for additional parking particularly after they add 94 spaces at the Carolina Spa. Compounding this, the Resort recently had a conversation with representatives from the State that insinuated the State has some parking plans for the Village.

MOORE COUNTY WATER TANKS

Moore County has expressed interest in meeting with Village staff to discuss disposition of the County water tank property. They indicated that there is interest from the Resort as well. The County suggested a meeting between the Village, the Resort and themselves. As you know, controlling this area would be very beneficial to the implementation of the Village Place small area plan.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Council direct staff to complete the following:

- a. Engage the seller of the Post Office building with an initial offer of the appraised value and with authority to go up to \$1.2 million, with the understanding that final approval is to be made by the Council.

- b. If the acquisition of the post office is likely, move forward with the release of an RFQ for an architectural firm to renovate/expand the library building on site with archives “museum-like” features being displayed at the post office after the swing space need has ceased.
 - iv. Receive public feedback on library expansion plans. Adjust, if needed.
- c. Determine if there are any potential or actionable plans by the State to develop additional parking in Pinehurst.
- d. Meet with the County regarding the water tank property. Include potential purchase price in the five-year SOP.
- e. Reassess need for parking deck. Meet with the Resort and negotiate compensation for use of Holly Inn lot if parking deck is still a priority. Compensation will be minimal as the resort will still have access to the same number of parking spaces (or even more) as they currently do. Compensation may take the form of a limited number of parking spaces being developed in Village Place to support the Manor or Pine Crest Inn.