

COUNTY FACILITIES – Payson Campus Appraisal

We are giving you fair warning – this article is very apt to make your eyes glaze over and could go so far as to put you to sleep – but it is very important information and we hope you will stay with us to the end!

This is a fraction of the kind of information that the Gila County Facilities Planning Citizens Advisory Committee waded through to help give all of us some thoughtful, considered direction (and if you happen to run into them, you really need to thank them. We do!). It is also information, dry as it is, that we all need to have in the back of our mind as we go on into this discussion.

The appraisal for the Payson Campus was prepared by Kurt Peer, Peer Appraisals, Inc. of Tucson, AZ. Again, copies of this and any other information considered by the Committee are available upon request. The date of inspection of the property was March 21, 2007 and is the effective date of the values stated.

The site was split into 3 different appraisal parcels due to the physical layout of the property (east and west side of Colcord Road) and a shared ownership interest in the Chamber of Commerce Building between the County, Town and Chamber. The Chamber building is also the newest and the more upscale of all the buildings.

The “in a nutshell” detail out of a 97 page appraisal summary is thus:

PROPERTY A ... CofC Building – 2-story; 1,908 sq. ft.; parking; .21 acre; \$400,000;

PROPERTY B ... Main Administration Building – 2-story, 11,973 sq. ft.; Health Building – 3,034 sq. ft.; AHCCS/CAP Building – 1,003 sq. ft.; parking; 2.12 acres; \$1,950,000;

PROPERTY C ... Sheriff’s Building/Jail – 7,238 sq ft; Recorder/Assessor Building – 1,880 sq ft; parking; .65 acre; \$825,000.

The grand total for the 2.98 acre site with buildings is \$3,175,000.

For the record, we have had more than 1 realtor and/or developer take a look at the appraisal and the comments have ranged from “very fair” to “somewhat high”. (we welcome any appraiser-realtor-developer who would like to take an in-depth look at the appraisal and give us their “two-cents-worth”.)

Other information that the Committee requested and weighed concerning the Payson location were existing Administration Buildings replacement costs, land costs for alternative sites, existing utility infrastructure, cost of alternative utilities (i.e. sewage treatment plant, water system, fire protection, data transmission lines, etc.) and so on.

The Committee inquired of County management if the 13,881 sq. ft. in the combined Main Administration Building and the CofC Building could accommodate the services provided by the Recorder, Assessor, Engineering, Flood Plain, Waste Water, Community Development, Supervisor, Information Technology (IT), Health, AHCCS/CAP, and Cooperative Extension once the Courts, Judges, Probation and County Attorney were re-located into the new Criminal Justice Facility. The answer was “yes”.

One of the “sound bites” the Committee had been subjected to early in their process was the idea that the existing Main Street location was a “multimillion dollar property that should be sold and the proceeds used to buy cheaper land and build the facilities”.

The Committee quickly learned that here is no “cheap or cheaper” land in Payson or all of northern Gila County (the cheapest available alternative site was \$2.5 million and has no utilities to it. A discussion on alternative sites will be in a future article).

Secondly, they calculated that if the Payson Campus sold for the full appraised value of \$3.175 million, the proceeds would not even cover the cost of replacing the combined square footage of the Main Administration building and the CofC building (13,881 sq ft @ an estimated \$236.91/sq ft = \$3.288 million) – much less cover the cost of build-ready land or put money towards the new Jail and Criminal Justice Center.

Third, they knew there would still be the cost of purchasing other land. Another wrinkle to this was the information that land, if needed, could be added to the existing site at about the same price as relocating onto land away from the site.

Fourth, there would be the additional costs of bring utilities to an off-site (if available), of infrastructure, impact fees, redevelopment costs, etc. (we don’t have a good estimate for this because of all the variables and site-specific needs, but have been told this could up to double the project costs. It was the high cost of constructing and operating a sewer plant, water plant, fiber optics, etc. that made the Committee reject the idea of a Tonto Basin site.).

And, finally, they were under a mandate to look out for the taxpayer and keep the costs down. This all added up to their recommendation of staying on the current location in Payson – with the caveat that whatever was built fit the character of the area, used other stakeholders in the design process, and provided for beautiful and functional public space.