

12.1. Approval of Process for Berkeley City Council's Request for Use of BUSD Board Room

Rationale:

BERKELEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Donald Evans, Ed.D., Superintendent
FROM: Timothy E. White, Executive Director
DATE: August 26, 2015
SUBJECT: Approval of Process for Berkeley City Council's Request for Use of BUSD Board Room

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 6/23/15 The City Council of Berkeley passed a resolution expressing interest in using the District's Board Room for its meetings on a pilot basis from 09/15/2015 to 11/17/2015. As part of the City Council's request, a proposed license agreement between the District and the City was provided detailing the term and scope of the contract.

The Berkeley City Council and Berkeley Unified School District have a history of sharing facilities used for public meetings. Prior to the construction of 2020 Bonar, where our board room is located, the district held its board meetings at the Old City Hall. This also served as the City Council's Chambers.

In 2007 the District began exploring renovations of West Campus which was vacant at the time. The immediate plan was "to house our administrative personnel from the Central office (2134 ML King and 1835 Allston) and personnel from the 1720 Oregon Street" in safe facilities. This plan was shelved when the estimated cost of the facility was \$20,000,000 and the available budget was \$10,000,000.

Working closely with the neighbors, then Superintendent Bill Huyett, moved forward with a new scaled down plan that was mutually agreeable. In the summer of 2010 during the planning process the City of Berkeley approached the District in a 2 by 2 meeting to explore the possibility of sharing the Board Room space, and in that case also share in the costs. Additional improvements, restroom and conference space, and technology were added to the project. The final construction cost was projected roughly between \$575,000 and \$1,150,000. Although there was never a formal agreement, the understanding was that the cost of the project would be shared. A June 23, 2010 Board

memo states, “The Superintendent and the City Manager will discuss the proposed scope of work and the responsibility of payment and or/ reimbursement.”

The City Council use of the Board Room was outlined in an early community engagement process for the West Campus project, and residents expressed a desire for the city council to explore alternative locations for their council meetings, as documented in the October 18, 2011, West Campus Projects community meeting minutes. The community was most concerned about the volume of traffic and city politics converging into a single family residential neighborhood. No opposition was expressed about the use of West Campus as Board chambers for BUSD Board of Education meetings.

At the January 2012 Berkeley City Council Meeting, 2020 Bonar was no longer considered as a location for the Council chambers. The Council instructed staff to “Review the summary of alternate locations for City Council meetings and directed staff to report back by May 1, 2012 on the cost, schedule, and viability of the following three options: Berkeley Community College Auditorium, Longfellow Middle School Auditorium and the North Berkeley Senior Center Multi-Purpose Room.

It appears that while the City of Berkeley was unsuccessful in locating another suitable location, they declined to partner with the District shortly after these engagements, opting to remain in the Old City Hall until they could find a suitable space. No funding was received from the City of Berkeley for this project.

POLICY/CODE

Board Policy 1330

FISCAL IMPACT

None

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the prior community sentiment associated with housing city council meeting at 2020 Bonar, staff is recommending that the Board agendaize a public meeting or ‘hearing’ to inform the community of the request and allow for the residents and community to give feedback.

Community comments and concerns can be expressed publicly and weighed by the Board in informing decision making on this issue.