



## **STAFF REPORT**

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### **Special Report on the New Council Chamber**

Honorable Mayor and Council Members

#### **Summary**

A Council Chamber is being built as part of the new Police Department/City Hall project. As this is a very public part of the project, staff is providing a special report on the details of this room. No Council action is necessary unless changes are desired.

#### **Background and Discussion**

The Belmont City Council met in a dedicated Chamber in the old City Hall on Fifth Avenue. When City Hall moved to 1070 Sixth Avenue, no Chamber was available and the Council has met in the Senior and Community Center. That room has to be set up and torn down for each meeting. An earlier concept for the City Hall remodel contemplated a Council Chamber, but technical difficulties prevented it from being fully designed. The plans developed by EKONA did not have a Council Chamber, but envisioned a two-story lobby and the Permit Center on the third floor of the addition. When KMD was brought on board and the project was being re-scoped, staff and Council indicated a preference to have the Permit Center on the first floor of the addition. At the same time, Council was clear that the basic design and shape of the EKONA plans were to be maintained. This created two stories of "void" in the new part of the building. Thus was generated the idea to put a Council Chamber in the second and third floors of the addition. From early on, therefore, the KMD plans have included this concept.

A rendering of the proposed Council Chamber was shared with the City Council in March 2003 during the design phase and specific direction was provided on issues such as the shape of the dais and whether the seating should be fixed or not. Attachment A is that rendering. Since that time, considerably more detail has been developed and some changes have been implemented. This report provides an update on the details of the Council Chamber.

### Dais

When the dais was discussed in March, it was stated that the main portion of it would be raised about six inches (one step) and the staff seats would be at ground level. The City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk would have “permanent” seats and the staff member presenting an item would sit at the seat facing the Council. The only changes to the dais since that time are that the depth of the work surface has been decreased by 3 inches to provide more room between the mayor’s seat and the back wall. Also, the rendering does not show a “lip” of about 4 inches around the front of the dais so that binders/papers etc. are not as visible from the audience. Attachment B is a detail of the casework for the dais.

### Seating

In March 2003, Council provided direction to install “ganged” (connected) but not permanent seating in the Chamber. The audience seating will be in three sections and will contain approximately 90 chairs. At the meeting on August 10, staff will have samples of potential chairs for the Council, staff and audience.

### Audio-Visual

Due to cost constraints, the audio-visual components installed as part of the project will be fairly basic (good quality, but not “bells and whistles”). The wiring infrastructure, however, is being installed to allow for future additions, such as built-in cameras and a control room or an electronic voting system. The plan for now is for the City to continue to contract with MCMC for taping and broadcasting the meetings. They would have three cameras, as they do now, including one in the corner of the raised dais area to film people at the podium and staff table. The wiring for their needs will be built into the room. The set-up also allows MCMC to pick up the presentations directly, vs. filming the screen, thus enhancing the quality for the home viewer.

The components of the AV system at this point include two projectors mounted (on a simple platform at 10 feet) on the columns at the back of the room and projecting directly onto the angled walls to the side of the dais (see Attachment C). As a result of projecting directly on the wall (vs. a centered, retractable screen), slight design changes were made. Specifically, where the reveals on the wall are located, and the height of the padded lower portion of the wall have been modified as noted on Attachment D. Also, the paint in the Chamber has been changed to a white matte from a light tan that was originally planned.

The raised dais will be outfitted with seven 18-inch gooseneck microphones and the staff positions will have the same. Each position will also have a “cable cubby” to hold the wiring and allow for additional connections (for laptops/dumb terminals, voting equipment, etc.) in the future. The Clerk’s position will have a panel to control the projection and recording equipment. Space is available for an equipment rack next to the Clerk’s seat for future uses such as VCR, DVD, etc. The Clerk will have a new digital recorder for taking minutes. A laptop will be set at the staff position for presentations. A podium will be set in the front of the audience with built-

in wiring. The Mayor will have the ability to cut off the speaker. A wireless microphone is also being purchased.

The AV consultant has modified the lighting and speaker system to maximize effectiveness in the room. Specifically, lighting has been created to minimize shadows on the speakers and the front lights have been changed so that they can be pointed and dimmed to different levels. This will ensure that presentations and TV filming are not compromised.

The total cost of this “bare bones” AV system is estimated at \$70,000 and has been built into the project budget. As the project gets closer to completion, staff anticipates coming back to the Council with a financial update and asking for direction for the use of unspent contingency funds (should they exist).

#### Misc. Issues

As can be seen on Attachment D, interior windows have been added since the original rendering was shown. The reason for this is to bring natural light into the leasable space on the third floor with the hopes this would make it more attractive to the Chamber of Commerce or another tenant. The window is at 6.6 feet in the room, so people could not easily “peer” into the Council Chamber, but it allows light into the room.

One of the main design features of the building is the two story structural glass for the Council Chamber. While this was portrayed in both the exterior and interior renderings, they do not do justice to the sophistication or size of the system. Attachment E is a sketch of the system as seen from the interior. A mock-up of a portion of the window will be on display at the meeting on August 10. At the base of the glass wall system is essentially a bench.

Because of the bright afternoon sun that will shine through the two-story window, drapes are included in the contract. A sample of the material should be available for viewing at the August 10 meeting.

The rendering of the Council Chamber shows the slatted wood on a portion of the ceiling. Because of the curved nature of the room, this will be splayed (closer together at the front, further apart at the back of the room). A sample of the wood ceiling material will be at the August 10 meeting.

Carpet for the Council Chamber was shown to the Council with the materials board in March 2003. A sample of the main carpet and the accent trim will be available for viewing at the August 10 meeting.

Finally, the design of the Chamber includes a City logo, approximately 3-4 feet in diameter, behind the dais. There will be one light focused on it. A separate item on the Council agenda (“Number 9” by Council Member Warden) might lead to direction that would alter the design

behind the dais.

**Fiscal Impact**

There is no direct fiscal impact to this report. Items discussed are either part of the contract or accounted for as part of the contingency budget. Should Council provide direction to add or change items, there might be financial implications.

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends Council accept this report.

**Alternatives**

1. Provide alternative direction to staff.

**Attachments**

- A. Chamber rendering
- B. Dais casework detail
- C. Projector design
- D. Side wall elevation
- E. Structural Glass Wall drawing

Respectfully submitted,

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