



Sanibel Fire & Rescue District

Special Meeting Minutes – Station 172 Rebuild

DATE: May 25, 2023

ATTENDEES: Jerry Muench (Chairman)
Bruce Cochrane (Vice Chairman)
Richard McCurry (Secretary Treasurer)

Kevin Barbot (Fire Chief)
Larry Williams (Fire Marshal)
John DiMaria (Captain)

Chris Jackson (Captain)
Brian Howell (Lieutenant)
Michael Martin (Lieutenant)
Allen Schelm (Firefighter)

Nathalie White (Schenkel & Schultz)
Gary Krueger (Schenkel & Schultz)
Jennifer Hunt (Schenkel & Schultz)

Ramon Acevedo (GMA Architects & Planners)
Zachary Smith (GMA Architects & Planners)
John Wojdak (DeLisi/Fitzgerald)

Commissioner Muench opened the meeting at 9:00 AM. Commissioner Muench led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Randomized Selection

D) Presenter A

Nathalie White of Schenkel & Schultz introduced the company, their design team and previous experience and awareness of the area. Gary Krueger gave a more detailed explanation of the area-specific risks and conditions that had been taken into account.

Nathalie White summarized some of the constraints, requirements and opportunities specific to the Sanibel Fire Station 172 site, including keeping the communications tower in its current location, reusing the detached garage for storage, and working with existing infrastructure. The staff Pinterest board was also highlighted as a source of inspiration for the design.

The apron and access to San-Cap Road were noted to be key layout factors, however an additional 5 feet of space was proposed between the building and the existing communication tower, allowing the existing garage to be kept for secure parking, along with a new apron, retaining the 5% maximum slope. It was noted that the apron would be short, making achieving the higher elevation from the road a challenge, and resulting in the apparatus bay being lower than the base flood elevation. It was explained that, as a result, there would be a catwalk from the bay to its functional rooms, decontamination, turnout gear, workshop, and equipment storage. To meet functional requirements the elevator and stairs had been placed next to the apparatus bay and public lobby, with the decontamination room also having access to the stairs. It was noted that the stairs had been wrapped around the elevator to reduce the footprint, with this also providing a potential training component. The public lobby was confirmed to include a secured treatment room and a bathroom, and accessibility was proposed via a ramp to the reception area, with the potential to change this to use the elevator, but the rest of the space was noted to not be accessible in the same sense. Parking was suggested to generally remain the same overall, with a decrease in public parking area to accommodate an increase in staff parking area. Landscaping was proposed for the corner to reduce the visibility of utility buildings from outside the plot, including a Hurricane Ian memorial with a native-planted bioswale around the edges. On the second floor, the watch room administrative area was highlighted for its view of the apparatus apron and the corner road, compensating for lack of view of the actual bay. Secondary stairs were identified to provide two exits, along with bunks, an officer room, laundry, fitness, kitchen, day room, restrooms, and other elements as identified by the program provided, including door security. A pole was proposed from the second floor into the gear room.

A specific review of the flood elevations and the requirements of the zone was given regarding the areas below and above the base flood elevation, along with the planned measures to be put in place, and the decision to locate the generator at a higher elevation. Flood elevation restrictions were noted to be a key factor in achieving planning approval. The ground level was noted to be a work area with some public, with living quarters over the bay. It was also noted that the design was currently at height restriction, but a variance could be applied for, and a proposal was given for a hatch and observation tower over the stair tower, to form a landmark from the road.

Nathalie White noted that the program on the ground level was a lot smaller than that on the second floor, leading to potential wasted space on the first floor, which had been mitigated by using the area over the bay, itself made possible by the height difference. It was explained that views had been taken into consideration in the layout of the second floor, with communal areas closer to the sunset and southern exposure in an open concept, and specifically requested features noted. Bunks were highlighted as being located near to stairs, with red lines indicating paths to stairs or the gear room pole, and core rooms were identified as restrooms, mop sink, IT, med storage, and a laundry room. The flat roof on the ground floor was identified as a possible location for training anchor points, accessed through the fitness room.

Nathalie White further explained how the Sanibel lighthouse had been incorporated into the design, and the rationale for material and decoration suggestions, showing renderings of the overall design and elements shown in earlier floor plans and elevations, and Jennifer Hunt talked through the proposed interior design and materials.

Nathalie White acknowledged the time and operating constraints the District are operating under, explaining that a notice to proceed would be in June, giving two-to-three months of design development for construction drawings, two months for permits, with demo potentially taking place in November. It was noted that variances would add time, but that there might also be possibilities to reduce time such as early demo. It was also confirmed that the modeling program used permitted creation of drawings, and that floor plans and elevations would be provided, but that the design documentation needed to be created. An idea of costs from similar recent projects was given, although it was acknowledged that the project would fall under FEMA.

It was wondered whether the stairwells were enclosed or open. Nathalie White confirmed that the one at the front was enclosed even on the upper elevation, with the one at the back on the exterior and open. The propane tank was also mentioned, and Nathalie White noted that it needed to be replaced, so a proposal had been made to place it underground by the apparatus bay on the back.

It was asked whether the elevator was required, due to the maintenance expense. Nathalie White explained that the scope required an alternative to stairs to avoid discrimination, agreeing that a lift had been considered, but noting that taking it to the AHJ would be the only other option.

The total score of the structure was requested. Nathalie White noted that it had been sent, but confirmed total apparatus was 3,920, total AC was 6,597, and non-air-conditioned covered areas was 1,011 square feet.

Nathalie White confirmed that the Sanibel restrictions on how much of a lot can be paved or not had not been checked but noted that the only proposed paving was for the aprons and the sidewalk to the ramp, with secured parking being gravel, and permeable pavers.

Clarification was requested about the height of the apparatus bay and whether floor drains could be added, which was agreed to be possible, and it was confirmed that the generator would be at 11 feet, although a preference for even higher was expressed. The three pantries were also confirmed to each include a fridge.

The roof height was questioned, and Nathalie White clarified that due to the way roof height is measured on a hip, puts it right at 45 feet. It was further asked whether the District and Variance should already have spoken with the City due to being able to bypass certain restrictions on non-critical infrastructure buildings. Nathalie

White explained that the towers could go a bit higher, but in general, they had tried to match the island's guidelines.

Concern was expressed for lighting from the tower having an impact on the nearby reserve, and it was confirmed that there were means of reducing or changing the light color.

It was wondered whether the bay could be filled to raise it versus the flood elevation, but this was confirmed to not be possible due to the constraints on the slope, and it was noted that apparatus would be removed at times of flood risk. Support was expressed for floor drains and a higher positioning of the generator.

It was wondered whether the pole could go to the bay floor rather than the gear room and was confirmed that the location could be moved to outside of the gear room but explained that it would create some dead space in the floor plan.

The patio dimensions were confirmed to be on the drawing and estimated at about 8 feet.

II) Presenter B

Ramon Acevedo of GMA Architects & Planners gave an overview of their presentation, then introduced the company, their staff and partners, highlighting the local availability of everyone involved, and mentioning similar work in other areas. Zachary Smith gave an overview of the inspirations, challenges and constraints associated with the site, including its unique shape, the radio tower, water retention, and lead times involved in materials. Ramon Acevedo noted that options were included in the plans due to the lead times they are currently aware of and acknowledged some of the issues impacting the elevation of the slab. A flood map was shown, and Ramon Acevedo explained that habitable space had to be at 11 unless it was acceptable to put dry flood proofing in place, but that avoiding it was preferable.

John Wojdak of DeLisi/Fitzgerald introduced himself and briefly presented a view and plan of the previous station building, following up with the proposed concept plan. The building was noted to be slightly larger, expanding east for some additional room to slope up within the 5% requirement, and maintaining the drive-through apparatus bay. It was noted that this would reduce the parking to single loaded with twelve spaces. A concept landscape plan was shown to demonstrate the number of code-required trees, which would be concentrated to the east for buffering purposes and include storm-water management. Ramon Acevedo noted that the layout shown had been chosen to keep the R2 residential portion of the building towards the neighbors, but that it could be flipped within the site confines, and that with another 20 feet of depth, the apparatus bays could potentially be double loaded depending on the folding doors.

Ramon Acevedo gave a quick overview of the program provided in regard to functionality on the different floors, and it was noted that the second floor was very heavy loaded. It was reiterated that many details were open to discussion, such as security and tracking within the station. The possibility for different technological options and systems to be installed throughout the station was mentioned, and other rooms, areas and features were briefly touched on for each floor. It was highlighted that calling control dispatch had been unclear in the provided program and noted that the existing storage would be replaced by a new area. A mezzanine was suggested as an option to take advantage of room height.

Ramon Acevedo showed a second concept with all support areas elevated, using an interconnected corridor for access and leaving only storage below the flood level, and noted that there was plenty of space in the site to adjust storage as needed. A restroom was shown to be within the public area, with stairs out of the living quarters to the access corridor and bay, and Ramon Acevedo highlighted areas that would need to be rated and set up for fire separation. The electrical treatment room was also noted to still be at ground level, and regarding positioning, it was suggested to move the gym to the ground floor. Two stairs were included from the second floor, although Ramon Acevedo noted that other similar facilities only had one. The footage was confirmed to be around 9,300 square feet, with some room for adjustment, comprising 2,000 plus of bay, over 1,000 of support area, around 2,800 including the administration area and living quarters two-stories high. It was confirmed that option two did not have a pole.

Ramon Acevedo also showed a third option with different bunk options, and stair placement providing direct access to the bay.

John Wojdak explained some of the thoughts and inspirations behind the vertical architecture, with materials chosen to reflect the functionality of building areas. Ramon Acevedo noted that an emphasis had been placed on the station being a second home for crews. Unfortunately, it was not possible to run a fly-through of the proposed model due to technical issues. Ramon Acevedo concluded with other key features that had been requested in other projects, such as adjustable lighting, and the floor was opened for questions.

Clarification of the rationale for having the second floor as a side structure rather than over the bays was requested. It was explained that it could be done but that clearance was tight without increasing the height of the floor above, which would then run into issues with overall height limits. It was confirmed that the height of the current design was around 37 or 38 feet.

The lack of an elevator was questioned with note that it was not a desired feature. Ramon Acevedo explained that it was very hard, and would need to be argued with the State. It was further wondered where an elevator would be included in the floor plan options show. Ramon Acevedo identified several areas where it could be located, noting that regulations allowed for a small 2,500 lbs. elevator. Options for using a chairlift instead of an elevator were discussed.

The location and heights of the generator were questioned. Ramon Acevedo confirmed that it would be above the flood level, with location to be discussed depending on the use of the generator. It was explained that the generator would need to run the entire structure. John Wojdak added that once the building was set, the generator location would then be determined in order to avoid the bunk areas, with fuel also becoming a factor in terms of storage tank. It was confirmed that the generator had not run out of gas during Hurricane Ian, with barges able to make deliveries.

It was confirmed that one of the two sets of stairs would go outside and the other to the bay.

The apparatus bay floor height in option one and two in relation to the living quarters was questioned and confirmed to be three feet, with the treatment room at ground level. John Wojdak noted that the treatment room could also be located off the lobby.

2. Commissioner Input

This agenda item was discussed during the presentation Q&As.

3. Public Input

A reminder was given of the tendering process which started with twelve firms and was narrowed down to two candidates, leading to the concept presentations, and the floor was opened to ask pertinent questions and give opinions.

It was noted that both concepts had hit salient points, with Lieutenant Martin feeling that the first presentation had been slightly stronger. It was confirmed that costs could not be discussed. Captain Jackson noted that the first presentation had shown a more visually appealing style with the other being more functional, and that there might be a significant cost difference depending on the decision to build over the bays or not, adding that the first presentation had provided a solution around the functionality requested where the second had left decisions a lot more open. Lieutenant Howell agreed that the first presentation seemed to have a well-thought-out floor plan, an impressive aesthetic with local touches, and the lighthouse feature. Additional support for the finalized nature of the first presentation was given, including the utilization of the space over the bay. Chief Barbot explained his functional view of the station, agreeing that the first presentation had come very close to meeting all the functional requirements of the brief. Additional support for the first presentation's flow and placements was expressed, with the ability to make adjustments reiterated.


It was wondered if all requirements had been covered, and agreed 90% to 95% had, but that there would be further review periods to ensure everything was in place.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cochrane to approve the conceptual design from Schenkel & Schultz as the design that best meets the functional requirements of the Sanibel Fire & Rescue District operations and is most compatible with the neighborhood. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Muench. The motion was approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Muench to give Chief Barbot the authority to enter a work order with Schenkel & Schultz. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cochrane. The motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Commissioner Jerry Muench



Commissioner Bruce Cochrane



Commissioner Richard McCurry