

Community Input Meeting Report

Chattahoochee Hills Community, Library, and City Services Facility Space



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Executive Summary

A Community Input Meeting was held on June 30 in response to a request made by the City that the Chattahoochee Hills Civic Association (ChCivic) and Community Brickworks work together to gather a community-wide consensus on how best to integrate the needs of the Community with the requirements of the City for facility space at City Hall.

Forty-four people attended the meeting held at City Hall, including residents from the Rico, Goodes, Friendship, Serenbe, County Line, and Rivertown Communities. Tom Reed, president of the ChCivic, facilitated the meeting; Judy Henderson, president of Community Brickworks, provided background information on Library and Community Programs conducted in the facility; and members of the ChCivic Board facilitated break-out sessions and assisted with meeting check-in.

In the opening session, Tom Reed addressed the main concerns voiced at a previous meeting hosted by council members Dave Hanson and Faye Godwin:

1. The City needs additional facility space for anticipated increases in staff and services.
2. The Library was asked to vacate its space in order to make room for new staff.
3. The Community has no designated space for meetings and gatherings.

Since that meeting, ChCivic has worked with the City, Community Brickworks, and volunteer architects and engineers to draft a proposed plan that designates space for the Library, Community, and City Services at City Hall.

The meeting split into four breakout sessions to give citizens an opportunity to discuss their concerns, how they currently use City Hall, their thoughts about the proposed plan, and what long term goals might look like for community and municipal space. Their input is compiled on the following pages.

Community-wide consensus was given on the following suggestions listed in order of priority:

1. Dedicate the left side of the building for the Community. Move municipal functions proposed on the left side to the right side of the building and dedicate the right side for Municipal functions.
2. Allow the Community to use the auditorium for functions (shared use with the city).
3. Reclaim all or a portion of the grounds behind the building.
4. Establish a process for open dialogue between the Community and Elected Officials, beyond the two minute public comment sessions at council meetings.
5. Reestablish use of the playground equipment, either behind the building or at Rico Park
6. Long term – Build a municipal center in one of the villages and build a new Community Center.

Breakout Session Report

Facilitators: Group 1 – Laurie Searle, Group 2 – Nancey Green Leigh, Group 3 – Sandra Huffmaster, Group 4 – Adria Whitfield.

Responses are identified below by Group Number. An “X” is indicated in multiple columns when more than one group gave a similar response.

1. What concerns do you have about the use of City Hall for city services and community services?				
Response	GP1	GP2	GP3	GP4
Combined use of the City Hall facility is appropriate, with separate sides for the community and city services.	X	X	X	X
Community is important.	X			
Tangible assets should be preserved like the park.	X			
Make a resolve that community functions are important.	X			
Concerned that we might lose access the auditorium.		X		
Are safety issues in reference to the police real?		X		
Lack of access to open space behind the hall (foyer of building).		X		
City has rendered useless Fulton County’s investment in the park equipment behind the building.		X		
The Finance Office space seems excessive.		X		
What children or citizens might see in potential police works.			X	
Not enough community space.			X	
The suggested space is good for separation of citizens from police				X
That the plan would be implemented, the community would get all set up down the hall and would have to move again later.				X

2. How do you currently use city Hall?				
Response	GP1	GP2	GP3	GP4
Auditorium	X	X	X	X
• Music	X	X	X	X
• Family Reunion	X			
• Dancing	X	X	X	X
• Court	X			X
• City Birthday Bash	X			
• Classes	X		X	X
• Community Meals	X	X		
Meetings	X		X	X
City Clerk Office			X	
Library ¹	X	X	X	X
• Children and self	X		X	X
• Tutoring	X	X	X	X
• Book Club	X	X	X	X
• Computer Use	X		X	X
• Gathering	X			X
• Home school		X	X	
• Arts & Crafts classes	X		X	X
• GED programs	X		X	
• Building resumes	X			
• Community Activities	X	X	X	
• Fax Machine		X		

Note 1: Several of those present said that they did not use the Library or other Community Brickworks programs.

3. Short Term Goals – What is your input to the proposed plan?				
Response	GP1	GP2	GP3	GP4
Impound cars at a 3 rd party location due to safety hazard and environmental concerns.	X	X	X	
Relocate the city maintenance vehicles to behind Fire Dept or to Don Lee's property.	X			
RE-claim a portion of the park behind City Hall.	X			
Not enough Community space.			X	
Dedicate the entire left side of the building to the Community, because the city's needs are not immediate?	X			
What is the need to have the Auditorium walled off?	X			
Move city clerk, manager, and public safety dir to right side of building.	X			
The Community side of the building needs some sort of community-wide oversight/guidance group.	X			X
Outside of building needs landscaping.	X			
Historical Society and Welcome Center in the Community side of the building .	X			
Use doors instead of a wall in the hall to provide access to auditorium when needed.	X		X	
Make the proposed changes; retain use of auditorium for community use when court and council are not in session.		X		
Make the playground equipment usable and/or move it to Rico Park.		X		
No secondary exit from city clerk's office.			X	
Too much room for finance office.			X	
Want doors instead of a wall to separate City and Community Space.			X	
Consolidate mayor and council room with other municipal space and give those rooms to the Community.			X	
Liked that there is the potential expand (outside of the building) on the Community Side.				X
Keep the Library.	X			X

4. Long Term Goals – What is your vision for the Community and Municipal Space?				
Response	GP1	GP2	GP3	GP4
Have the Municipal Center in one of the villages.	X	X	X	
Give existing building back to the community.		X		
Create a <i>Friends of the Library</i> group.	X			
Have after school/summer programs		X		
Create a process for the community to work with the city.	X			
Have input sessions with city council.	X			
Have a separate library building combined with community, cultural and recreation center. In the recreation center we would like a gym, ball field and swimming pool, and have the Center connected to the greenway path system.		X		
Build a boat ramp to the Chattahoochee River at Capps Ferry.		X		
Have a free-standing community center that would have a library, senior center youth center, gym and pool, welcome center, historical center, cultural center with auditorium, meeting rooms and activity rooms.			X	
Recover the space behind the building, specifically the walking trail and track.				X
Improve Rico Park ball field; include a track, playground, picnic area, and restrooms.				X

Other Questions, Concerns, & Input				
Response	GP1	GP2	GP3	GP4
Where will voting take place?		X		
Community input is important.	X			
Tangible assets like the park behind the building should be preserved.			X	
In the year 2007, an average of 1200 people a month came to the facility for activities.			X	
Concerning the Library:				X
1. Has the City committed to paying the utilities for the Library and Community side of the building?				
2. How is the Library funded?				X
3. What is the ratio of children to adults who currently use the library?				X
4. If the community is to support the library, will it have opportunities to give input on its function, space, and use?				X
5. Needs more variety of books				X
6. Needs a way of letting community know of needs. Suggest a list of needs in the Weekly Reader.				X

Concerning the Library: Responses from Judy Henderson

- 1.
2. The Library is funded through donations and small fees from Home Schooling.
3. The ratio of Library usage is 2 adults to 1 child.
4. The Library volunteers are always open to input on its function, space, and usage.
5. The head of Fulton County Library said that our Community Library had an amazing variety of books and that we are better set up then most of his branch libraries.
6. The main need is for volunteer time to keep the library open and staffed.

Community input collected during the opening group session:

- Timeline: When will the city make a decision on the input and recommendations and when they implement the plan? We know that the CH2M Hill transition will be taking place soon, so it would seem that this decision needs to be made quickly.
- How do we address the issue of trust with our elected officials?
- The city initially reported that “safety” was an issue in co-locating the community and police services. Is safety really an issue?
- If the city designates the entire left side of the building to the community, are there any resources available to the community or does it need to come up with all of the funds?
- What is the next step from the city? When will they respond to our input, and will there be opportunity for additional input or negotiations on our requests?

Additional input collected from the Community during the wrap-up of the meeting:

- We would like more opportunities for real and open communications between the community and elected officials
- We would like more chances to know about and participate in review of development
- We appreciate ChCivic’s efforts to produce the Weekly Reader and keep us informed
- We ask that the whole community be informed about the results of this meeting and notified of any additional meetings
- We ask that the next Community Input Meeting scheduled for July 9 be postponed until input is received from the City on this meeting
- We ask that the City Council provide a timeline for their discussion process, and give us a projected date when we may expect a final decision

Next steps (discussed with and articulated based on the general consensus of the group):

- ChCivic will compile the meeting input into a report
- ChCivic will present the report to the city council and mayor and request a timeline as to when they might give their feedback, which recommendations, if any, they will implement, and what the process and schedule is for implementation of whatever final resolution comes out of this process.

Meeting Attendees

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sara Ann Alford 2. Paul Alford 3. Gladys Bridges 4. H. Thomas Blum 5. Kenneth Bryant 6. Carla Carrabino 7. Barbara Chatham 8. Joe Chatham 9. Gene Cotton 10. Marilyn Cotton 11. Earl Clime 12. Margaret Clime 13. Tully Dempsey 14. Geneva Eaton 15. Jerry Eaton 16. Barbara Edge 17. Ruby Foster * 18. Noel Gilliam 19. Nancey Green Leigh * 20. Cindy Hanson 21. Maria Hanson 22. Carole Harper | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Woodie Harper 24. Judy Henderson * 25. Sandra Huffmaster * 26. Kenyon Langley 27. Dave McMurrain 28. Alan Merrill 29. Lynn Merrill 30. Ned Peek 31. Chuck Panzarella 32. Tom Reed * 33. Marianne Reeves 34. Rocky Reeves 35. Jeff Rhyne 36. Laurie Searle * 37. Sam Smith 38. Tamara Toth 39. Terri Yakubesan 40. Molcie Trimble * 41. Bill Wells 42. Adria Whitford * 43. Claire Williams 44. Carter Williamson |
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Meeting Evaluations: 23 received

	Yes	No
1. Did you receive valuable information during this meeting?.....	22	
2. Did the facilitators help guide your discussion?	23	
3. Was your input captured accurately and recorded?	23	
4. Were ideas discussed that you had not previously considered?.....	19	4
5. Do you have any other comments to share?		
a. Move City Hall to larger "finance office" and make south wing all community center.		
b. We need more communication between city government and the citizens of the City. The City Council and City Government has lost the trust of the citizens and this needs to be rebuilt.		
c. The community needs more opportunities to give input in meetings like these with the Council and Mayor.		
d. It seems that a large part of the space (4 rooms) is for meeting rooms/training and that these could be combined. There could be one small room to seat 8-10 people for board meetings and one large room for meetings that only happen once a week/month.		
e. Keep the Library		
f. Very Good Meeting!!!		