

**City Manager's Report**  
**May 28, 2019 City Council Meeting**  
**Prepared By: Cleve Morris**



**Item#: 12.1**

**Subject:** Recommendation by the Historic City Hall Reuse Committee for reuse of Historic City Hall.

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**Purpose:** To provide a recommendation to the City Council regarding proposals for the reuse of Historic City Hall and get direction from Council on how to proceed.

**Background:** Historic City Hall consists of two 2-story buildings one known as Confidence Hall and the second known as Emigrant Jane. Confidence Engine Company Hall was built in 1860 (487 Main St, on the west side) and Emigrant Jane Building was built in 1861 (489 Main St, on the east side). Confidence Engine Company Hall (the Confidence building) has walls constructed of unreinforced masonry, mortared stone, and plaster. The Emigrant Jane building shares a common mortared stone wall with the Confidence building, with the other walls being a combination of mortared stone, brick, and plaster. A reinforced concrete and timber addition was constructed on the North side of the Emigrant Jane building in the early 1900s. The floor and roof framing of the entire structure are timber. The Confidence building is listed in the National Record of Historic Places.

Confidence Hall was the historic Placerville Fire Station prior to being City Hall. It includes approximately 1122 Square Feet on each floor for a total of 2244 Square Feet of total space. Emigrant Jane is approximately 2124 square feet on each floor for a total of 4248 square feet.

The two buildings include approximately 16 parking spaces with some being tandem spaces adjacent to and behind the buildings.

Historic City Hall, 487 and 489 Main Street, was used for many years as City hall buildings, dating back to the early 1900's. In 2005 the City needed more space and purchased the current City Hall building located at 3101 Center Street. The Historic City Hall Buildings sat vacant from 2005 until April of 2013 when the Emigrant Jane Building, 489 Main Str., was leased to a Real Estate company. The Real Estate Company remained in the building until early 2016 when they terminated the lease. The building was subsequently leased to a title company until November of 2018.

In the summer of 2018 the City began negotiations with the El Dorado Arts Council to occupy the first floor of 489 Main Street for offices and to use the first floor of 487 Main Street as an Art Gallery. Originally a long term lease was considered, including provisions to restore the integrity of the both buildings. After some negotiations, it was determined by staff and Council that a Request for Proposals for reuse of the buildings should be issued to consider what would best benefit the downtown. The Council did however, agree to enter into a short term lease with the El Dorado Arts Council for the first floor of Emigrant Jane for offices and for limited use of 487 Main Street for a gallery.

## 12.1

In November of 2018 the Council approved the release of an RFP to consider reuse of the buildings. The closing date was set for February 19, 2019. As of that date two proposals were received, one from the El Dorado Arts Council, and one from the Wopumnes Nisenan-Mewuk Nation of Shingle Springs.

**Discussion:** On May 6, 2019 presentations were made by each group to a City Council appointed committee. The committee consisted of Councilmembers Borelli and Taylor; Placerville Economic Advisory Committee Members Adam Anderson (Also a Courthouse Blue Ribbon Committee Member) and Debra Miller; and Courthouse Blue Ribbon Committee Member Connie Zalinsky. The committee was asked to rank the proposals on 5 categories, based on the proposals and the presentation. The 5 categories and their weighted score are as follows:

1. The financial ability of the Proposer to Restore and Implement the Reuse of the building = 20 Points
2. The proposed use of the building = 40 Points
3. The long term viability of the proposed reuse = 20 Points
4. Positive affect on Historic Downtown Economy = 10 Points
5. Interview/Presentation = 10 Points

The numerical scores of the committee are attached to this report. The overall average of the two proposals are as follows:

El Dorado Arts Council: 86.2

Wopumnes Nisenan-Mewuk Nation of Shingle Springs 61.8

Besides the numerical scores, following are some of the comments by the Committee.

### **Arts Council Proposal:**

#### **Category 1: Financial ability of the Proposer to Restore and Implement the Reuse of the Building. Score – 17/20**

- Appreciated long term financial record and clear financial plan.
- I feel like they have an established group with financial backing
- Some experience in fund raising, thought out plan
- A lot is riding on the apartment rental concept. I really hope this will be vetted properly.
- Long standing organization with track record of fundraising. Concerned about gradually declining assets as shown on tax returns.

#### **Category 2: The proposed use of the Buildings. Score – 31.6/40**

- Great ideas. Benefits residents, visitors and existing downtown businesses. Broad & inclusive celebration of the regions past & future.
- The proposed uses are well thought out. However the space is quite limited. I think it's a beginning to, hopefully, expanding to other buildings in the future.
- Use of all the space. Add variety of experiences.
- I like the artist apartment with rent going to the City – much needed housing. I like the cultural center vibe.
- Would like to see fire house/historical aspect of building have more emphasis.

#### **Category 3: The long term viability of the proposed use. Score – 18.2/20**

- It seems to be the best proposed use of the space
- Assuming space rentals stable, income stable and variety of flexibility of space seems sustainable.
- The proposed uses are well thought out. However the space is quite limited. I think it's a beginning to, hopefully, expanding to other buildings in the future.
- Maintenance fund derived from apartment rentals! This is a well thought out element.
- Feel apartments make good anchor of revenue to supplement other revenue potential

**Category 4: Positive affect on Historic Downtown Economy. Score – 9.6/10**

- This concept would complement the existing business climate well.
- A good way to bring locals back to downtown and stimulate evening business.
- Their goal is to provide space for performing and visual arts, a cultural community center that would serve community residents, an arts flex space, etc. I agree that Placerville has a need for this.
- Assume people would make an occasion – go to dinner, shop, stroll Main Street.
- It will draw people downtown for many different reasons.

**Category 5: Interview Presentation. Score – 9.8/10**

- They did everything we required.
- Succinct – well organized
- Clear, on topic, addressed specific concerns.
- Proposal followed City's guidelines exactly. Presentation was clear, concise & well thought out.

**General Comments:**

- I agree with the committee comments that it would be great to see more celebration of the history of old Fire Station as part of the remodel.
- I can see how it could work.
- The effort put into the bound presentation was great, as well as the interview was well presented. They have a management system in place to manage both the funds and the proposed usage - 35 years as an entity. I love the apartment idea.
- I gave a lower score on #2, Proposed Use, this is because I don't think enough has gone into planning for retaining the historical "story" of the buildings. It was abundantly clear the public wants to see more of this.

**Wopumnes Nisenan-Mewuk Nation of Shingle Springs**

**Category 1: Financial ability of the Proposer to Restore and Implement the Reuse of the Building. Score – 7.6/20**

- It seems most of their financing is based on wishful thinking. There was nothing concrete presented other than possible grants.
- Concern about grants for funding. So many different organizations but no proof of funds.

- In doubt.
- Concerned about no financial history and specifics for future funding.
- Organization too new to assess. Appears to be completely dependent on grant revenues.

**Category 2: The proposed use of the Buildings. Score – 30/40**

- Great ideas, great collaboration with community partners. Think it will make Placerville a great place to visit but not sure if it will make it a better place to live.
- Appreciated creative ideas and historical uses.
- Space on first floor may be well suited. Historical connection a good use on Main St.
- Like the fire dept. aspect, but not sure if it's the best use, like the cultural aspect.
- It seemed like it was all “museum” – type presentation. There is a museum across the street and Gold Bug Park is located just blocks away.

**Category 3: The long term viability of the proposed use. Score – 10.4/20**

- Dependent on grant revenues. Success might be limited by parking constraints and traffic conditions.
- There was nothing about changing the display. One time display does not encourage repeat visits.
- Concerned about longevity of organization and revenue potential to sustain use.
- Not sure schools will choose because other bigger field trip areas, Coloma, Gold Bug. Do schools have field trips enough to meet their needs?
- Not sure all of the groups could work together, concern about cohesiveness of the groups.

**Category 4: Positive affect on Historic Downtown Economy. Score – 9.6/10**

- Much was said about bringing children to Main St. I don't know how many businesses would be the recipients of their business.
- Pros: More people downtown. Cons: Visitors may not benefit existing businesses and may actually harm business climate.
- Not sure kids will bring revenue but liked the potential for downtown awareness.
- Could be another fun historic theme draw for tourists

**Category 5: Interview Presentation. Score – 9.8/10**

- Did a great presentation, did not answer questions when asked how the partnerships would be defined.
- Gave us more of a sense of the appeal of proposal with fire pump, artifacts exhibits, etc. Did not give more details about grants than written proposal.
- Poised. Wasn't clear on specifics.
- It was very enthusiastic but choppy.
- A bit confusing. New partners brought in, partners from original proposal not mentioned (State Parks). Questions remain about which group will be financially responsible for project.

**General Comments:**

- I agree with the committee comments that it would be great to see more celebration of the history of old Fire Station as part of the remodel.
- I really liked their idea of restoring the buildings to mimic their original purposes. However the uses they proposed are not going to support them economically. It was not clear who would be responsible for the buildings, where their funds would come from etc.
- I do not have faith that the group is big enough or organized enough to make it work, though I do like the idea of using the building that way.
- I liked some of the creative ideas for the space, Hook and Ladder, the collaborative effort – but unsure of how the partnership and funding would work. (What if one partner pulled out)

**Committee Recommendation:** Award the proposal to the El Dorado Arts Council. However, require the Arts Council to show how they will bring some of the historic character into the buildings, specifically features and history of the Confidence Fire Station.

**Discussion:** Staff has researched questions that have come up during the process that may help inform the Council in making their decision.

1. Would creating residential apartments on the second floor disqualify the buildings for the National Historical Registry?

Answer: Staff has determined that this would not disqualify the buildings for recognition on the National Historical Registry. Currently only the Confidence Building is listed on that registry. The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation state:

*"1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose **or be placed in a new use** that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment. (bold added for emphasis)*

*2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided."*

In staff's review, it was determined that the historic features of the buildings are primarily those on the exterior. These include the fire hose wagon doors, the balcony on Emigrant Jane, and potentially the Cupola. In addition, where they exist, doors, stairways, windows etc. should be retained and preserved.

2. The Arts Council lost their funding from the County this year.

Answer: The Arts Council funding is not included in the preliminary budget that is currently proposed. This is consistent with past years, and it is anticipated that the funding will be included in the final budget that will be adopted in September. In April the County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution designating "Arts and Culture El Dorado (Formerly Arts Council) as the County of El Dorado's Local Partner with the California Arts Council.

### Options:

1. Award the Proposal to the El Dorado Arts Council
2. Award the Proposal to the Wopumnes Nisenan-Mewuk Nation of Shingle Springs

3. Award the Proposal to El Dorado Arts Council with conditions and recommendations.
4. Award the Proposal to the Wopumnes Nisenan-Mewuk Nation of Shingle Springs with conditions and recommendations.
5. Do not award the proposal and provide staff with direction on how to proceed.

**Cost:** None at this time.

**Budget Impact:** None at this time. If awarded, staff will work with the awarded organization to negotiate a contract for consideration. This will be brought back for Council consideration.

**Recommendation:** Recommendation by the Historic City Hall Reuse Committee for reuse of Historic City Hall.



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M. Cleve Morris, City Manager

*Attachments:*

1. *Proposals*
2. *May 6, 2019 Presentations*
3. *Committee Score Sheet*
4. *Pioneer Mutual Ltr*
5. *J Marquez Ltr*
6. *J Chapman Ltr*
7. *Hangtown Marshalls Ltr*