

## **Justice and Law Enforcement Sub-Committee of the Pima County Bond Advisory Committee**

June 13, 2007

Present: Jim Berry, Gary Campbell, Nicole Fyffe, Greg Gearhart, Hon. Jan Kearney, Doug Kooi, John Neis, Pat Skinner, Dan Sullivan and Katrina Mothes (Note taker)

### Welcome

Mr. Sullivan welcomed the committee and gave approval of the March 21, 2007 Meeting Summary.

### Project Presentation Form

Doug discussed the proposed form currently used by other committees to evaluate projects and asked for comments. Dan Sullivan requested additional time to review the form before the next meeting.

### Presentation of Superior Court Bond Proposals

#### The Honorable Jan Kearney, Presiding Judge

1. Judge Kearney began her discussion explaining how the content of this presentation would vary somewhat from the one given in January as a result of information obtained from meetings with the County Administrator and an increased understanding of currently available resources. The Judge explained that she would continue to bring the long-term issues facing the courts to the attention of the public and the County for as long as necessary to ensure that critically important needs would be addressed and met.
2. The committee was given an overview of Superior Court issues, an explanation of basic needs, and the extreme importance of addressing existing concerns. An overview was given of the history of Superior Court and how the court reflects the diversity of our community, the Court's commitment to justice, and an overview of the Court's our past and the promises ahead in the future.
3. Judge Kearney discussed the significant population growth in Pima County and the impact it has had and will continue to have on the court system. She also discussed other indicators of growth including the following:
  - Case filings have steadily increased since the time the courthouse was completed in 1975.
  - Pro Per litigants have increased to 20,142 per year placing a tremendous demand on the Service Center/Law Library which was established to meet this demand in 2005.
  - Over 33,000 jurors per year report to Superior Court.
  - Recent estimates indicate that 852,788 jurors, litigants, attorneys, employees, and media, will utilize the Superior Court Building this year resulting in conditions where the facility is no longer adequate and creates immense concern for safety and productivity.
4. Despite the myriad problems resulting from overcrowding in the existing Superior Court Building, Judge Kearney stated she would not seek a new building at this time (at a cost estimated to exceed (\$500,000,000), but is instead requesting \$8,000,000 to renovate the 8<sup>th</sup> floor and other areas of the existing Superior Court Building that will allow for better utilization of the existing space. In her discussion of the current building, she provided the following information:
  - Currently there are two Judges that "float" within Superior Court due to insufficient office and courtroom space.
  - By statute, an additional three superior court judges are warranted in Pima County. Unfortunately there is currently no means to accommodate them within the existing building.
  - The renovation of the 8<sup>th</sup> floor is the most critical aspect and will provide an additional six courtrooms with concomitant chambers for the judicial officers and offices for staff. Of note, plans are being made for one of the new courtrooms to be equipped as an "E courtroom" to allow for the use of new technical advances that are expected to allow for numerous benefits in the future.

5. Another priority facing the court involves the significant growth that has occurred in Northwest Tucson over the past 20 years. In order to meet the increased demands in this area, a Northwest Justice Center is proposed. This center will contain adult and juvenile probation facilities as well as courtrooms that will serve to reduce overcrowding in existing facilities while better serving this area.
6. Sheriff's Dept. Presentation for the Drexel Heights 1.8 Million Bond Proposal  
Jim Berry, Lt., Community Services
  - Jim opened with discussion of a proposed Drexel Heights Station. It should be noted that this request was not included in the earlier presentation of Sheriff's Department issues.
  - The building currently serving this area has been in operation since 1963 and is no longer adequate to serve the increased population of this area or handle the significant increase in criminal activity that has occurred since 1996.
  - Currently deputies often need to drive across town to serve this area. There is no easy access and there are many traffic delays.
  - The Sheriff's Dept. is proposing relocating the San Xavier District Office near Manzanita Park. This would cover Districts 3 and 5.
  - The building would be 5,000 square feet with ample parking and access.
  - Benefits would include:
    - a. Office will be in the heart of the District.
    - b. Deputies will be closer to the public they serve.
    - c. Provide for a quicker response time.
    - d. Enhanced law enforcement services.
    - e. Easier access for area residents.
- The next meeting of the Justice and Law Enforcement Subcommittee is tentatively scheduled for August 1, 2007 at 1:00 pm. Additional information and a confirmation of this date will follow soon.
- Meeting adjourned 3:00 p.m.