



CITY OF GAINESVILLE

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs

Memo

To: Cynthia W. Curry, Interim City Manager
Via: Tony R. Jones, Acting Chief Operating Officer
From: Roxy N. Gonzalez, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Director
Date: February 8, 2022
Re: Thelma A. Boltin Center Wild Spaces & Public Places Renovations Project Delay and Recommendation

This memorandum is offered as an update on the Thelma A. Boltin Center Wild Spaces & Public Places (WSPP) Renovation project. The memo will 1) explain project delays, 2) offer an overview of structural concerns identified, and 3) provide a recommendation for a path forward.

The Thelma A. Boltin Center is a historic building and an active city recreation center. The building was last renovated in 1999 and was identified as a WSPP project. On August 22, 2019, the General Policy Committee approved a comprehensive renovation to bring the facility to current standards and to maximize its public utility. Staff was directed to negotiate design and engineering services for the development of construction documents. A Request for Qualifications solicitation was posted on January 13, 2020 and the City Commission authorized WSPP to negotiate a contract with Wannemacher Jensen Architects, Inc. (WJA) on May 21, 2020. A contract with WJA was executed on November 24, 2020 for these design services.

In December 2020 city staff identified what appeared to be the structural failure of the roof in the Thelma A. Boltin Center auditorium. The City's Facilities Department immediately hired a company to provide engineering consultation and temporarily shored the building. City Facilities then solicited a bid for a structural engineering firm to perform a comprehensive assessment of the structural deficiencies.

The City received a report from Sputo and Lammert, LLC in November 2021 and has held a series of meetings to discuss the findings. In summary, the structural engineer found that the structural damage in the auditorium is significant and warrants both complete demolition and replacement of the auditorium wing, *or* demolition of the entire facility. The latter may be the most cost effective path to pursue.

Staff is mindful of the historical significance of this structure to our community and has taken this into consideration. That said, because of the construction standards and

methods utilized when built and the failures attributed to those construction methods, we recommend a complete demolition of the Thelma A. Boltin Center and construction of a replacement facility. With your approval, staff will begin working closely with the City's Historic Preservation Officer, the Historic Preservation Board and the City Communications Team to chart a path forward.

Copy: Phil Mann, Special Advisor to the City Manager
Betsy Waite, Wild Spaces & Public Places Director
David Risor, Assistant Facilities Manager