



FIRE RESCUE DEPARTMENT



Date: January 17, 2013
 To: Members of the City Commission
 Via: Russ Blackburn, City Manager *PF/for AB*
 Via: Paul Folkers, Assistant City Manager *PF*
 From: Gene Prince, Fire Chief *DP/H EP*
 RE: Future Site for Station 1

The Alachua County Fire and EMS Services Master Plan completed in 2004 addressed both current and future fire and EMS station locations throughout the City Of Gainesville and the rest of Alachua County. In the study there are a number of recommendations to relocate existing fire stations; Station 1 is not recommended for relocation. This identifies the area that Station One is located in as the best place from which to provide emergency services both now and into the future. This is more evident with the proposed development of Innovation Square and the Power District.

The current Gainesville Fire Rescue Station 1 has been located on South Main Street and has been a part of the neighborhood for over fifty years. After fifty years of service the repairs and renovations have taken their toll on the building and it is in need of replacement. The planning for a new Station 1 began several years ago by making funding requests as part of the City's Capital Improvement Plan. Funding for building a new Station 1 was approved by the City Commission for October of 2014. Funding for the purchase of property for the station was approved for October of 2013.

I began evaluating relocation sites for Station 1 in fall of 2011, which included the current location of the station. As part of this process, I started working with the City's Land Rights Coordinator, Sam Bridges, to identify potential sites central to the Station 1 service area. The number of sites that would work for a new fire station, both in size and road access, are limited in the Station 1 service area.

I am aware that there have been some inquiries to the City Manager's Office and City Commission concerning the site we are currently considering.

Among others, Mr. Bridges identified two lots immediately south of the current location of Station One between 5th and 6th Ave. and Main Street and 1st Street. These two lots are zoned the same as the current Station 1, we have willing sellers and the proposed pricing falls within the means of our budget. The two properties also meet our need of a larger building site as we plan for future development and a station that will last another fifty years. We are currently working toward the purchase of the two lots with the owners. We are aware that the owner of the lot that borders Main Street has two leased buildings and there are parking concerns with area businesses. We are working with the owner to meet his willingness to sell and assist him in meeting the concerns of his lease holders. We do not have either of the two lots under contract at this time, but expect that to happen soon. When that occurs, the proposed purchases will be brought to the City Commission for approval and citizen comment before the contracts could be finalized per city policy.