

May 21, 2012

To: Mayor Mary Rossing and City Council

From: Fire Chief Gerry Franek

Re: Requested letter pertaining to the use of the current Fire Station and the proposed offices and training area in the new Police Department Station located at the Cowles site.

Mayor Rossing and City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this subject, as I have not been involved with the site committees discussions in some time. The following is my professional opinion as Northfield Fire Chief regarding the future needs of the Fire Department as it relates to the use of the current vs. new Police site.

RE: Use of the current site:

I believe our existing building is in an optimal location in the center of our city, with easy access in and out of the station. Traffic at this location is automatically slowed down at this major intersection, which has allowed us to operate safely without stop light controls for years.

With the Police Department vacating our current site we would have an abundance of room for offices, training areas and dorm rooms, with minimal expense to remodel or convert spaces as necessary.

I believe the first and best option would be to explore a 3 to 5 bay addition to the rear of the current structure with doors pointing to the river. With this addition, we would not need to reinforce the existing floor and it would solve our truck space deficiencies for years to come

If the first option is not possible, the 2nd best option would be to develop a plan with the least expense to bring the floor up to the correct load bearing capacity to allow us to bring most of our fire trucks and equipment under one roof. It has been a concern that the apparatus floors ability to hold the weight of all of our trucks is not adequate. This should be studied to find out if indeed the previous studies were correct.

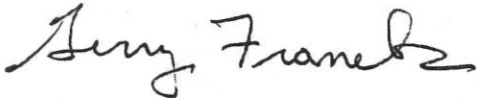
With the first option the existing building will be usable for many years to come and keep the department in the most accessible location for responding to calls. The second option will buy time and keep us as efficient as possible until more apparatus space is developed.

Re: New Police Department at proposed Cowles site:

Although it would be very nice to have new offices and training areas at this site, it doesn't make sense to spend an extra 2 million dollars at this location when no one knows if we will be locating to this site. If our trucks and equipment are at the 5th Street location, our training and offices need to remain there also until a permanent agreed upon facility is chosen. We need to be responsible with the tax payers money.

Thank you again for the opportunity to weigh in on this subject.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Franek", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerry Franek
Northfield Fire Chief

CC: Tim Madigan and Mark Taylor