

NO BASIS FOR DECISION

I attended a work session of the Eugene City Council dealing with options for a new or remodeled City Hall. I had a career in construction, and owned and ran a consulting construction cost-estimating business in Eugene from 1980 to 2003.

The work session was about how to proceed with the project: Whether to build new or remodel; and if the decision were to build new, the old City Hall would have to be demolished. I understand that the old City Hall structure is made up of quite a number of structures, each with separate post-tensioning. Demolition of post-tensioned structures can be very complex and expensive.

No current estimate of construction costs was presented. Items known to be missing from estimates — cost escalation, contingency, demolition and other items — were not quantified. There was no design to estimate.

Where the new building would be located is unknown — several sites on the City Hall block (and some elsewhere) were discussed.

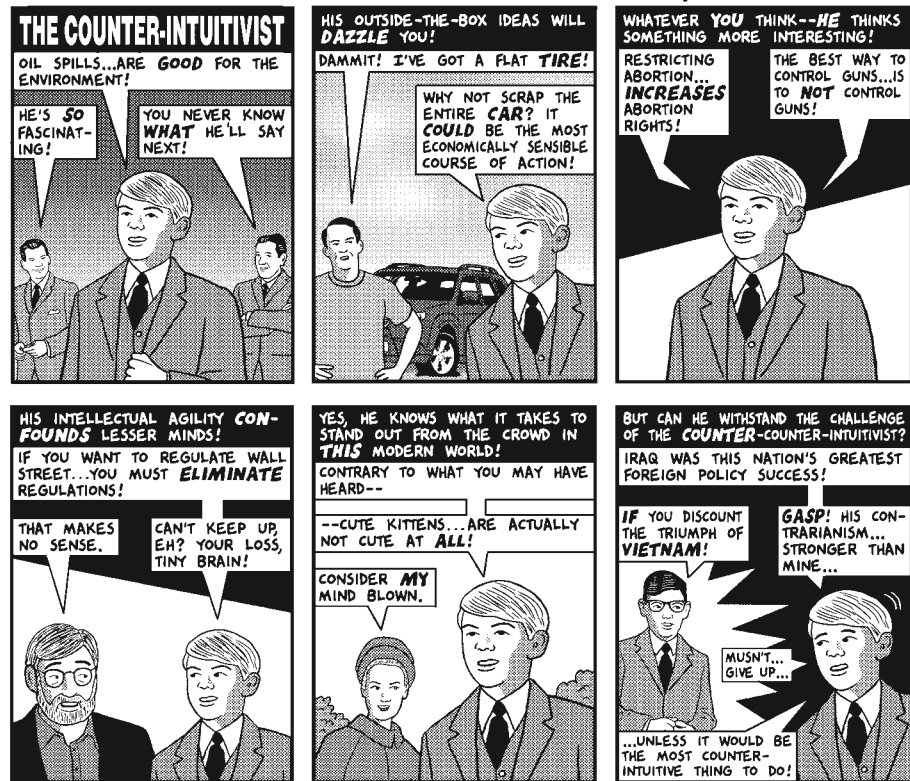
The next day the council approved demolition of City Hall and construction of a part of a new City Hall.

That is decision making in the absence of virtually all the information required for decisions. No budget (that I saw), no site decision, no design, no recent or accurate estimates, no schedule. Everything is missing.

I recommend a halt while all the issues

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



are considered and resolved. The city, by failing to insist on clear resolution of all essential issues, puts the consultants in an impossible position. There appears to be no basis for proceeding.

Tom Giesen
Eugene

A THOUSAND BLASTS

Eugene is a lot noisier than it needs

to be. By law, trains that travel through cities without an established quiet zone must sound their horn four times at every intersection. For Eugene, this can add up to over 1,000 horn blasts per day — blasts which can be plainly heard throughout the entire city, even though they are only relevant to one intersection.

Over 600 cities across the country — including Portland and Salem — have

opted to have a quiet zone — providing for safety without the need for a horn. A quiet zone would increase livability in Eugene by instilling a more peaceful living and working environment, both during the day and at night when most Eugene citizens are trying to sleep.

The Eugene City Council is currently considering creating such a quiet zone. Make your voice heard, and let the City Council know you support the creation of a quiet zone in Eugene by signing the petition at eugenequietzone.com.

Since such a quiet zone is already under consideration, then the support it receives from citizens could be more than enough to tip the scales in favor of a quiet zone!

David A. Caruso
Eugene

LAUGHING AT UO

Regarding shutting down the life drawing class at the UO: Only an academic artist who's worried about losing a cushy job with a highfalutin title would shut down a long-lived and necessary drawing class. All this move did was make the art department a laughing stock in the true art community. So much for diversity and creativity at the UO!

Annie Kayner
Eugene

TROUT VS. AMPHIBIANS

Every spring, ODFW sends hikers and helicopters to our Cascades lakes to plant trout in areas where they are not naturally

VIEWPOINT BY ALAN ZELENKA, EUGENE CITY COUNCILOR

The Best Option

THREE REASONS WHY A NEW CITY HALL MAKES SENSE

I fully support the concept of reduce, recycle and reuse. In fact I remodeled my 1927 house twice, supported a remodeled building for the police station, authored the reusable bag ordinance, and I have been an early supporter of reusing Civic Stadium. But sometimes that is not the best option, nor the option that makes the most sense. After hearing and analyzing the ton of information on this issue, I believe building new City Hall is the right direction for Eugene for three reasons: cost; sustainability and energy; and accessibility, functionality and community.

Cost — It is clear that the latest information about the existing structure of City Hall shows significant deficiencies that will likely add potentially millions of dollars to the three-year-old cost estimate to rebuild City Hall. That cost estimate was done by Turner Construction and was based on a conceptual idea without detailed engineering evaluations. Turner did exactly what it was asked to do — a high level estimate of costs to rebuild. Today Turner says that with the recent more detailed information available about the condition of the existing structure, we should not rely on that cost estimate today.

An updated cost estimate by our hired architect, Rowell Brokaw Architects, shows the net cost of the two options is \$21.4 million to rebuild and \$12.5 million to build new. Rebuild would cost \$8.9 million more than

building new (or about 70 percent more). Even if this estimate was off by a factor of two the difference is still over \$4 million. But I believe Rowell Brokaw did a very thorough and professional job, and it's clear to me that the build-new option has much lower cost and risk. In addition, a new City Hall will be the substantially cheaper option to operate over its life.

Some have argued that when we make this decision we need to take into account Phase 2 of City Hall, and when we do the rebuild option gets the advantage. I am willing to talk about a consolidated City Hall or Phase 2, but I don't think we necessarily need a Phase 2 or that it is a cheaper option. We killed a consolidated City Hall plan back in 2008 because of its high price tag (about \$120 million) and the lack of support to spend that kind of money. We decided to refocus our efforts on a plan that would get us a new City Hall that we could build within our current means (i.e., no borrowing). That is essentially the direction we have been heading for the last several years. So I am not holding my breath for a consolidated City Hall any time in the near future. I look at this decision as a stand-alone new small City Hall project rather than a two-phase project, and from that perspective building new is the less costly strategy.

Sustainability and energy — A new City Hall is clearly the more sustainable option. It will use the land

more intensively and have a substantially lower energy and carbon footprint over its life. An energy performance study showed that the current City Hall has an Energy Use Index (energy used per square foot per year) of about 130. A new City Hall will have an EUI of about 30 (over 4.3 times as energy efficient), and the best a rebuilt building could achieve is about an EUI of 75 (two-and-half times more than a new building). The energy and cost savings of the new building will last the entire 50 plus year life of the building. A new City Hall can also be built "net-zero energy" ready.

Accessibility, functionality and community — In its day our current City Hall was a fine building, but it is not anymore. It is not welcoming, it is inward focused, it's not flexible, it doesn't meet our functional needs and it's not very accessible. The rebuilt building using the same basic structure won't be much better. A new City Hall would be welcoming, with a modern design for functionality, and will be much more accessible. It would be a real asset to our city, help create identity and pride within the city and allow more people to participate in the new meeting rooms. It would allow us to display and celebrate our rich history, and a new public plaza on the southwest corner would engage the citizens of Eugene with City Hall in new ways. I also love the potential of a new courthouse on the eastern portion of the lot, and an expanded Farmer's Market on the butterfly lot.

For these three reasons I am in favor of building a new City Hall.

Alan Zelenka represents Ward 3 on the Eugene City Council. His email address is alan.zelenka@ci.eugene.or.us.