

Council: Salem library will not become police station

Michael Rose, Statesman Journal 7:02 a.m. PDT June 24, 2014



(Photo: Thomas Patterson / Statesman Journal file)

Salem City Council, by a unanimous vote, agreed to drop any further consideration of converting the library's building into a police station.

Preliminary discussions about using the library's building for a police station irked some library users. The council's action on Monday may end speculation about the library's future, as the city considers a seismic upgrade of the Vern Miller Civic Center and construction of a new police station.

A staff report presented to the council indicated that the concept of placing a police station in a reconfigured library building "is not likely economically feasible."

The council also passed a motion to create "a blue ribbon task force," with members appointed by the mayor, to advise the city on how to proceed with improvements at Vern Miller Civic Center.

"The need is urgent. We need to keep this moving forward," said Salem Mayor Anna Peterson.

Several Salem area residents who spoke at Monday's council meeting, urged the city to consider alternatives to the civic center site for the new police station. The mayor, however, reiterated that she was committed to building the new police station on the civic center site.

At a council work session in May, the idea of using the library's building for a police station was brought up. Councilors briefly discussed moving the library to a new location at the same May meeting.

In other business, the council approved the city's fiscal 2014-15 budget. The \$520.6 million budget spared most city services from budget cuts, but general fund support for routine street maintenance was eliminated. About 7.1 full time equivalent positions also were trimmed from the budget primarily by leaving open positions vacant. No staff layoffs are expected.

Historic building

Salem City Council voted to review a Salem Historic Landmarks Commission decision to block demolition of Howard Hall. A public hearing will be scheduled on the issue, but a date hasn't been set.

Salem Hospital has proposed razing Howard Hall, which had once served as a dormitory at the Oregon School for the Blind. The hospital has proposed building a playground and therapy garden for children with disabilities on the site at 700 Church Street SE.

On June 12, the Salem Historic Landmarks Commission concluded that the historic value of preserving Howard Hall outweighed the hospital plans for the property. Members of the landmarks commission said the hospital hadn't fully explored alternatives for rehabilitating Howard Hall, which was built in the 1920s.

Read or Share this story: <http://stjr.nl/1miRNmF>

MORE STORIES



Nonprofits seeking a little love at Holding Court

[\(/story/news/2014/06/24/nonprofits-seeking-little-love-holding-court/11337631/\)](/story/news/2014/06/24/nonprofits-seeking-little-love-holding-court/11337631/)

[\(/story/news/2014/06/24/nonprofits-seeking-little-love-holding-court/11337631/\)](/story/news/2014/06/24/nonprofits-seeking-little-love-holding-court/11337631/)

June 24, 2014, 6:30 p.m.



Reunion planned for town that disappeared

[\(/story/news/2014/06/24/reunion-planned-town-disappeared/11337351/\)](/story/news/2014/06/24/reunion-planned-town-disappeared/11337351/)

(/story/news/2014/06/24/reunion-planned-town-disappeared/11337351/)

June 24, 2014, 6:18 p.m.



New clinic for veterans to open Wednesday

[\(/story/news/health/2014/06/24/new-clinic-veterans-](/story/news/health/2014/06/24/new-clinic-veterans-)

[open-wednesday/11334693/\)](open-wednesday/11334693/)

(/story/news/health/2014/06/24/new-clinic-veterans-open-wednesday/11334693/)

June 24, 2014, 5:25 p.m.