

Clovis pays \$2.8 million for land to build civic center project

By Marc Benjamin

Clovis City Council members approved a land deal on the fringe of Old Town Monday night that has been years in the making.

The City Council voted unanimously to buy property for an enlarged library, senior center and transit system hub.

The city will buy the 5.7 acres, north and east of Clovis Avenue and Third Street, for \$2.85 million. In addition, the city will shell out \$450,000 for relocation costs and preliminary engineering and design for the site. The land is owned by Kevin and Denise Tweed and is the old site of Clovis Lumber Co. Escrow is expected to close next month.

The city has been negotiating with the Tweeds for several years to acquire the land, which is on the northern edge of Old Town Clovis.

The city will pay for the property with proceeds from land sales, redevelopment funds, an existing library fee on new development and grant funding.

The land purchase will set other transactions in motion, too. The city wants to sell its existing 11,000-square-foot senior center to help pay for the new one and acquire the existing 8,600-square-foot library building from the county for additional city offices adjacent to City Hall.

The city also is seeking financial help from the Fresno County Public Library through the Measure B tax to help build the new library. The proposed 30,000-square-foot library could cost \$10 million or more to build. Both the city and county intend to seek donors to assist in construction.

Mark Keppler, chairman of the Clovis Community Foundation, said he expects his organization will play a role.

“We will be as helpful as possible in the fundraising efforts to make this a reality,” he told the council.

John Wright, vice chairman for Clovis Community Foundation and the city’s former planning and development director, also looked forward to getting the project moving.

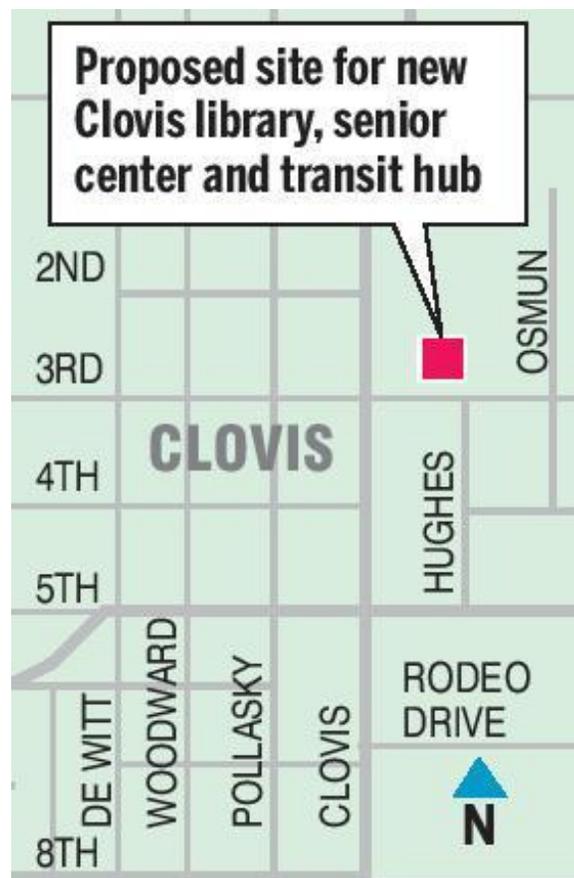
“This is a singular opportunity for the community to step up again and do something dramatic and beneficial for the long-term growth of the community,” he said.

The Clovis library had 1.1 million visitors from 2012-2014, city officials say.

Fresno County Librarian Laurel Pryziasny said the project will need to get approval of Fresno County supervisors, but she does not anticipate any difficulty.

“We’re really excited and we appreciate the fact that we are at this stage,” she said.

Grant money for transit programs has been set aside by the city for the new transit hub, which must be built by 2017



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under the grant rules.

In other action, the City Council also approved bids for improvements for Centennial Plaza on the old Department of Motor Vehicles property on Pollasky Avenue near Fifth Street. Improvements include demolition, grading, paving, concrete work, landscaping and infrastructure. The low bid was \$1.8 million from Yarbs Grading and Paving.

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