

Power plant future use given clear guidance

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The results are in from surveys completed by residents who toured the now-closed CPS Mission Road Power Plant during an open house in March.

Out of the 25 surveys completed, the top choices for the facility were public and mixed use, with 17 in favor of those options, according to information from CPS Energy. The least favorite options were condominiums and offices. Retail landed in the middle.

The 100-year-old Mission Road Power Plant was decommissioned six years ago, and now CPS Energy is deciding what to do with it. CPS Energy employees met from January through March with neighbors and community leaders to discuss a feasibility study for possible future uses, according to CPS Energy.

Scott Smith, director of environmental planning and compliance for CPS Energy, said the utility company wanted to release the results to the neighborhood so people could see that their opinions are being noted.

“We felt it was important, since the community went to great efforts to respond to the inquiry, that we should let them know, ‘Thank you very much; we do plan to use your input and not just put it in a wastebasket,’” Smith said.

Smith said he wasn’t surprised by the results because he had no preconceived notions of what the community wants or expects the sturdy brick structure to become. He said the whole point of the open house was to gauge public opinion.

Martha Henry, a member of the Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association, toured the plant during the open house. She said she is in favor of mixed use, with some sort of living space and a public or private business.

“I just like the idea of people being able to walk around and enjoy the space and the scale (of the building) and enjoy the park,” Henry said. “Who owns it isn’t that important; it’s just that it is accessible to the public.” Henry said the community still is talking about the project. The hope is that CPS Energy will move forward quickly once the feasibility study is complete, she said.

The redevelopment project team will use the input as the foundation of the study, which is expected to be completed before fall, Smith said. CPS Energy held the open house March 10.

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