

Gary W. Moody
299 ½ W Madison St
Franklin IN 46131

June 21, 2010

TO:
Franklin City Council
Mayor Fred Paris

RE: **Petition for Retention and Re-Purposing of City Property at 55 W. Madison Street** (as presented 6/7/10)

At your last meeting you were presented with a petition regarding our historic WPA-era post office building, a.k.a. former city hall, and the imminent need for space for city court. That petition was signed by 123 residents of Franklin. Some parties chose to ignore that statement by their constituents, despite the fact that our nation and state were established by and for "we, the people", and despite the fact that the Indiana constitution explicitly states "that all power is inherent in the people; and that all **free** governments are, and of right ought to be, founded on their authority." It is regrettable every time that local officials display such disdain for the public which they are supposed to serve.

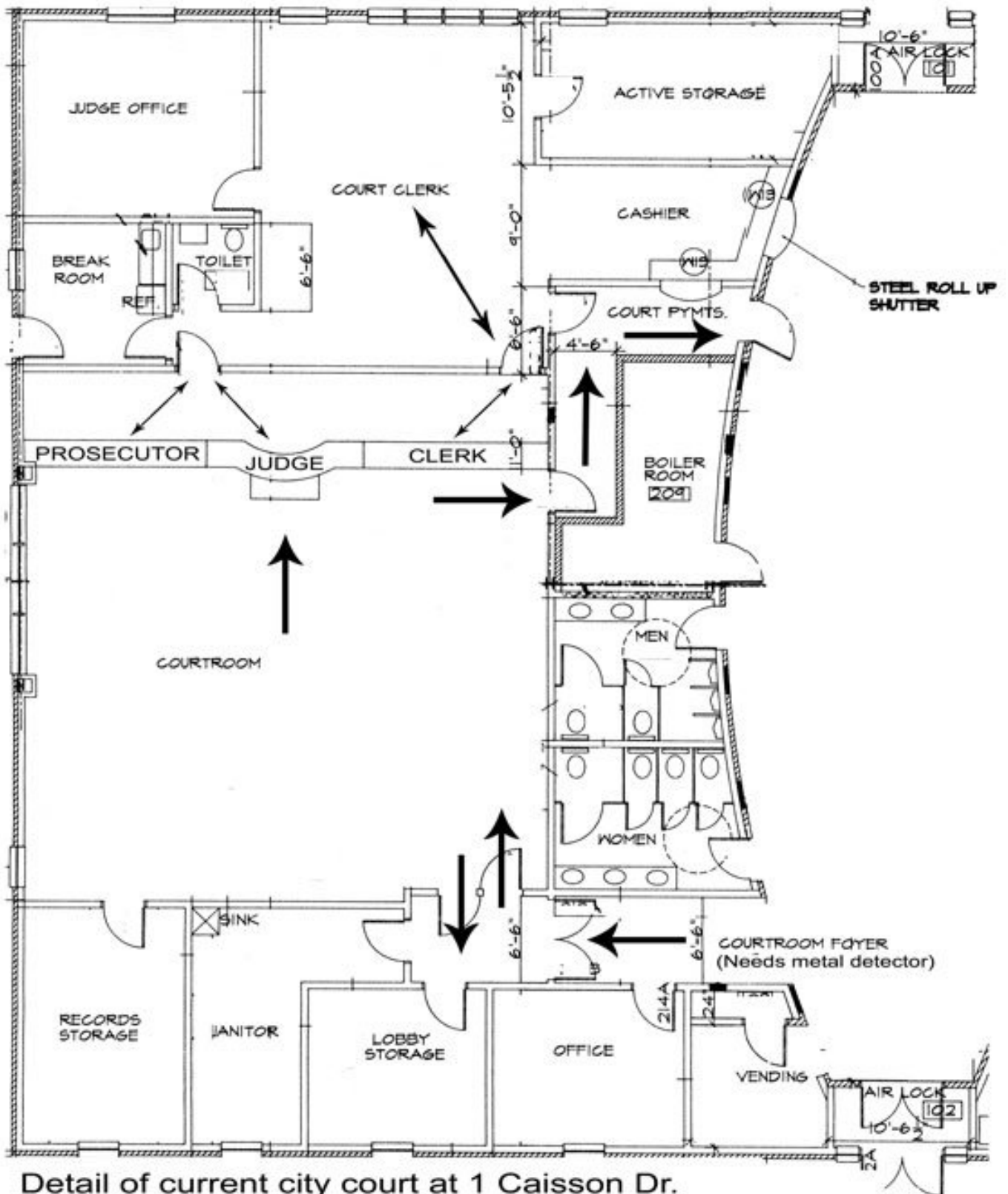
Nevertheless, the facts of the matter that confront you are these:

1. The value of, and opportunities presented by, 55 W. Madison, are vastly beyond what has been acknowledged by those anxious to discard that property;
2. The current city court facility at 1 Caisson Drive was carefully and thoughtfully designed and built, at great cost, to function specifically as the city court;
3. While the first floor of 70 E. Monroe has very roughly a similar amount of floor space as the current city court, the areas which were reconstructed for use as city hall - the hearing room and lobby - were designed specifically for that: *City Hall*. These spaces, and the entire first floor, are not, other than gross square footage, similar in any way to the court facility at 1 Caisson Drive. Merely taking the trouble to visit the latter will show you that. Further discussion and observation of court business will confirm to you, as it has for me, that it is physically impossible to plop down Franklin City Court in the existing spaces at city hall. Such a move will only be possible if city officials go to the great expense of completely gutting and re-designing the city hall hearing room and lobby, at least. Even with that, it may be necessary to build a structure in the parking lot. Or buy the building next door.
4. As I reported to you on August 3, 2009, moving city court to old city hall would net the court a gain of about 80% more space for current or future needs. The original blueprints of the structure, which I have since made available for your review at the Johnson County Museum, show that the original open design of the first floor would be conceivably adaptable to include a city court hearing room, cashier's office, and other facilities that both the public and court staff need during hearings, along with appropriate considerations of security.

To summarize: Rather than "staying the course" of the "flip this building" fever that seems to permeate the current city administration, it is indisputable that our city will best be served in the long run by taking an intellectually and fiscally **CONSERVATIVE** approach to this matter. First of all, as we all learned in school, one must do one's homework. I've done most of that **for** you, as it seems that no amount of increased compensation can buy enough time for some officials to gather even the most basic facts about our city and how it functions. The facts having been handed to you, I trust that you will realize that retaining the 2nd-most historic and valuable public building in the city, next to the county courthouse - well, the museum is up there too - to use for its best remaining purpose, a soon-to-be-needed court facility, while saving the remaining space in city hall for future needs, is exactly the kind of prudent course of action that the voters had in mind when they supported you to begin with.

Diagrams are attached for your convenience.



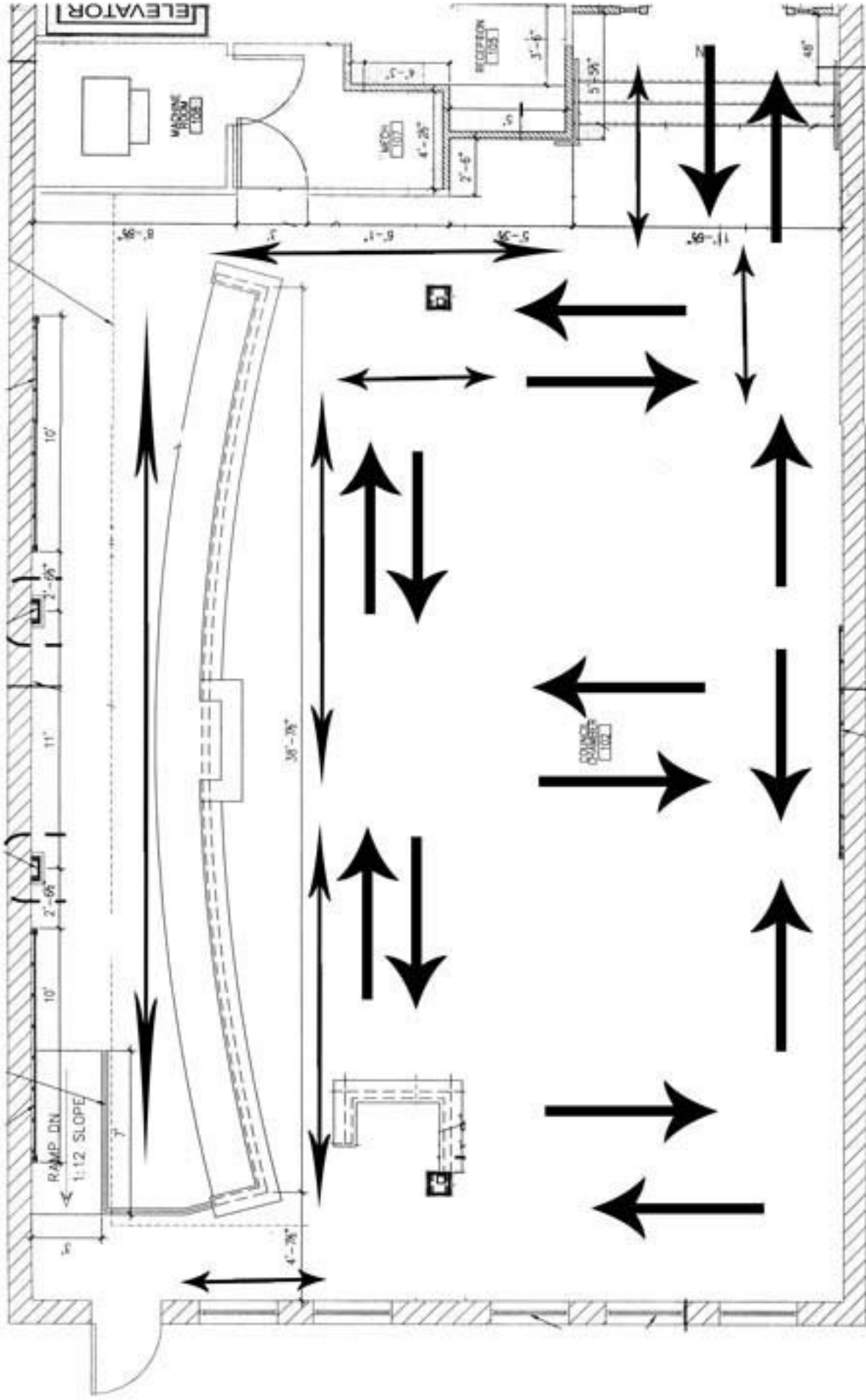


Detail of current city court at 1 Caisson Dr.

Key:

➔ Flow of court clients.

↔ Flow of court staff.



Detail of 70 E Monroe hearing room. Key: Flow of public Flow of officials

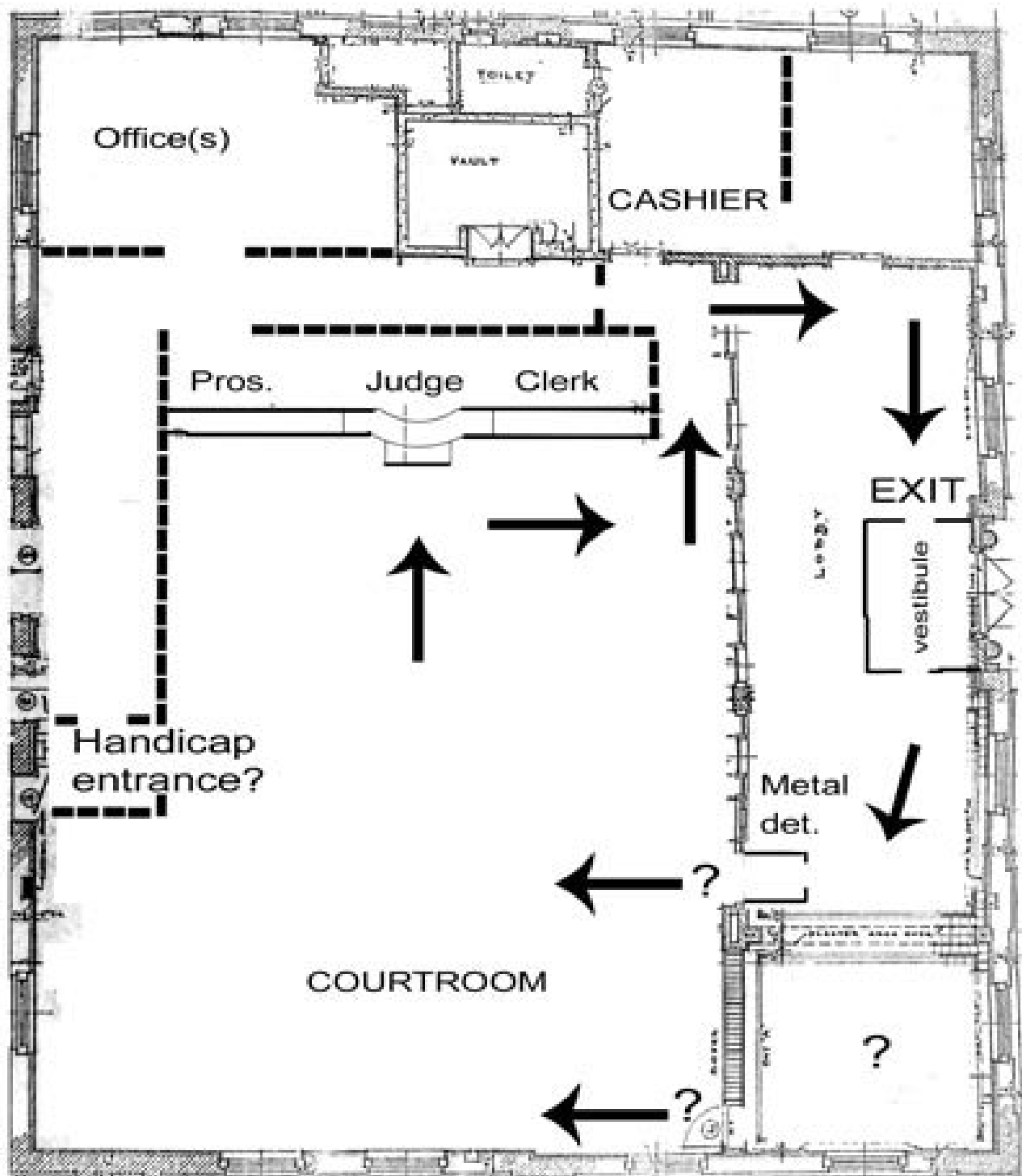


Diagram of possible city court layout @ 55 W. Madison (1st floor) (not to scale) Key:

- current or future walls.
- flow of court clients.
- ? possible locations of flow route.