MEETING MINUTES

HARLEY CLARKE VISIONING COMMITTEE
Wednesday, November 16, 2016
7:00pm
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Ave, Room G300

Members Present: E. DeStefano, E. Revelle, D. Campbell, J. Bryan, P. Elesh, D. Terras

Staff Present: E. Storlie, L. Hemingway


DISCUSSION OF HARLEY CLARKE

The committee reviewed Alderman Wilson’s proposal for Harley Clarke which was approved by the City Council with two amendments. The final part of that proposal included the following language:

The Parks and Recreation Board and Lighthouse Landing Complex Committee, working with the City Manager and appropriate staff, are directed to develop a plan for the future operation of the property beginning in 2018. This plan will include identifying community groups and non-profit organizations that may wish to use the property. The City will also identify additional program uses and associated costs for the property. The plan shall also review and include recommendations to ensure better access to the property through transit/bikes/shuttles, etc. The Parks and Recreation Board and Lighthouse Landing Committee will return to the City Council with recommendations no later than July 1, 2017.

In September 2016, City Council allocated $250,000 in the FY2016-2017 budget for Harley Clarke improvements. City staff prepared an analysis to determine minimum work needed to utilize Harley Clarke for existing programs previously held in the fog houses; and to determine what would be required to bring it up to code, since there will be a change of use of the building. The estimated cost for that work was $660,000. Concerns were raised about the lack of sufficient funding to bring the building up to code. In addition, the most cost-effective renovation to the building may not be optimal for other uses of the building in the long term.
City staff also completed a detailed inspection of the fog houses and determined that the fog houses have deteriorated to the point that they are no longer safe to use for recreational programming unless some restoration work is completed. The estimated cost to complete the fog house roof and masonry repairs is $400,000. There is no alternate location for the programming at the fog houses and the programs may need to be cancelled for 2017 if a solution is not found to complete needed repairs.

Due to the lack of funding to address code compliance requirements at Harley Clarke, staff’s efforts are being redirected to making the building secure and ensuring that the fog houses can continue to be used for recreation purposes while the Harley Clarke Visioning Committee develops a long term operation plan.

Therefore Ald. Revelle and Ald. Wilson are planning to recommend to City Council that:

1. We keep the $250,000 earmarked for Harley Clarke and that the life and safety building improvements needed to bring the Harley Clarke Mansion up to code be deferred until the Harley Clarke Visioning Committee determines a plan for future operation of Harley Clarke that meets with Council approval;

2. A portion of FY2017 CIP funds earmarked for security improvements to the Civic Center be redirected to roof and masonry repairs at the fog houses so that summer children’s programs can continue in 2017.

The committee briefly discussed possible future uses of Harley Clarke and it was agreed that at the next meeting, the committee will hear a presentation from the Evanston Lakehouse & Gardens on what their ideas are.