

**Evanston City Council  
Closed Session Minutes  
Aldermanic Library  
Monday, November 13, 2006**

PRESENT: Aldermen Jean-Baptiste, Wynne, Bernstein, Holmes, Moran,  
Tisdahl, Rainey, Hansen and Wollin

STAFF: Julia Carroll, Herb Hill and Rolanda Russell

PRESIDING: Mayor Lorraine H. Morton

START: 10:46 p.m.

**Minutes**

Mayor Morton asked for any corrections to the closed session minutes of October 23, 2006. Minutes were accepted as presented.

**Real Estate – Appraisal, Parcel 7**

City Manager Julia Carroll reported receiving (letter) a second appraisal on Parcel 7 (owned by NU) for \$4 million. Another appraisal about a year ago was at \$4.9 million. The only thing outstanding is information on NU's charter. First Assistant Corporation Counsel Herb Hill had sent that to outside counsel and it was not back yet; hoped to have it at the next meeting. A study shows there are 162 parking spaces on Parcel 7.

**Real Estate – Appraisal, Hot Dog Island**

Ms. Carroll reported that Alderman Moran had asked for an appraisal of this land which came in at \$350,000 (letter). Alderman Moran noted that evening they approved funds for planning studies for Central Street. The Central, Crawford and Gross Point Road area has had a jumble of built environments. Currently there is a hot dog stand at this north entry way to Evanston. He sees positive changes in uses happening there with other developments - a new environment -- and the way to cap it off would be to put Hot Dog Island somewhere else that is more appropriate. His idea is the City would own the property and put a garden and or public art on the site. He noted in Wilmette where Lake/Wilmette Avenues intersect there is a nice sculpture. He did not think \$350,000 was an overwhelming amount of money. There is interest in the community to raise funds if there is a willingness by Council to acquire the property. He did not know how much they could raise; thought it could be a public/private enterprise. It was important for him to meet with community people and ask them to make the effort and for him to be able to say to them that the Council would work in their direction. He wanted to carry the campaign forward and come back with what they have raised. Mayor Morton confirmed the appraisal was for the land, not the business.

Alderman Wollin recalled several years ago a realtor called the owner of Hot Dog Island and was asked to sell in the name of the community. He was ready to sell.

Alderman Wynne thought it was a lot of money to spend on a gateway. They have worked piecemeal on the Chicago Avenue streetscape for five years and made improvements when something new was built. At a time when Council has heard the direst budget description, the worst she has heard in nine years, that amount is equivalent to the budget for the two branch libraries. If people want to make this a community effort was fine, but she could not support something for public art when the South Branch Library is on the block. She is getting pelted by people who don't want to close the branch library. \$350,000 is just the beginning because the business will have to be relocated. The City is looking at cutting 15-20 jobs. She could not support it now; would encourage the public to step forward and raise funds for public art. She agreed the location is striking.

Alderman Tisdahl thought it a wonderful idea; agreed with Alderman Wynne. The North Branch library is on the chopping block. Selling the Art Center also has been mentioned. She advised the City to fix what we have if we have \$350,000..

Alderman Wollin said the people she talked to several years ago saw this as taking care of it but the City would own it in perpetuity. They expected to raise the money to buy it, but they wanted to do it under the protection of the City. She agreed that they will not close the branch libraries because there is no will to close them. People who talked to her about Hot Dog Island wanted it gone and wanted something beautiful there and were willing to do the work.

Alderman Bernstein thought it a wonderful idea; recalled acquisition of Dave's Italian Kitchen and the cost. He thought \$350,000 would be a minimal number. Alderman Moran did not think the number would be so large.

Alderman Moran asked Council if something can be done privately, would Council agree to consider the program that Alderman Wollin spoke of. The property would be placed in trust with the City. If the City does not have to make a major expenditure, would they be amenable to an approach to take the property and maintain it in the public trust.

Alderman Rainey recalled the City has had a policy that any gift must come with an endowment to maintain it. Alderman Moran asked about the Highland Garden Club donating plants and maintaining it. Alderman Jean-Baptiste urged they accept a gift.. Alderman Rainey suggested they get a proposal and Mayor Morton recommended that he get a proposal in writing.

### **Real Estate – Appraisal, 1829-31 Simpson**

Ms. Carroll reported this request was made by Alderman Holmes. This commercial building was appraised at \$150,000 (by letter). Her concept was to demolish it and expand Twiggs Park. Alderman Holmes related that this property has been vacant for years. In the past someone wanted to put in a funeral home. She could not envision anything suitable being built there and her vision was to expand the parkland.. Dino at Shorefront is interested in it in similar to the situation with the black museum at 1817 Church Street. Alderman Holmes saw it as an eyesore.

Alderman Rainey commented that Twiggs Park is large enough and they cannot afford Hot Dog Island.

**Real Estate/ Litigation – Chicago/Main**

Mr. Hill brought Council up to date on the final solution proposed for this property. He noted the City had lost in the circuit and appellate courts; reported a public hearing in the neighborhood last Thursday where the City got some input on a proposal by the Katz family, contract purchasers of the property, not the party in the litigation with the City on this property. There has been considerable input by staff on the design of the building and setbacks with the contract purchaser. The end result of the neighborhood hearing is a package that will come to the P&D Committee to authorize a negotiated settlement. At the November 27 meeting the developer will present the development proposal to the committee and thereafter to Council for final resolution.. The settlement proposal will go to the Site Plan and Review Committee. The building height is 99 feet instead of 125 feet and they have agreed to additional setbacks on both sidewalks. Further, the developer has agreed to make a contribution to the affordable housing fund and the Chicago Avenue Streetscape plan. The FAR was increased from 3 to 3.51. There is separate parking for condominiums with eight additional spaces and 22 spaces for the retail commercial.

Mayor Morton asked how much money was spent to litigate this. Mr. Hill did not have the exact figure, guessed it was around \$50,000. She asked could the Council not have been advised them that they would lose. Some voices said Jack Siegel thought the City would win. Mr. Hill noted there was a considerable lapse of time from when the financial investment was made and the zoning change occurred. The original zoning permitted a 125 foot building.

In response to Alderman Bernstein, the litigation involving a fall on Main Street grate was settled for \$75,000.

There being no more business to come before Council, Mayor Morton asked for a motion to adjourn. The Council so moved at 11:18 p.m.

Mary P. Morris,  
City Clerk