

**Evanston City Council  
Closed Session Minutes  
Aldermanic Library  
Monday, October 13, 2008**

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

STAFF: Elke Tober-Purze, Doug Gaynor, Robert Dorneker, Dennis Marino and Rolanda Russell, Chief Eddington, Beth Howlett

GUESTS: Mr. Gale Sayers, Mr. David Mann

PRESIDING: Mayor Lorraine Morton

START: 8:45 p.m.

**Closed Session Minutes**

Mayor Morton called the session to order and then asked if there were any objections or correction for the minutes, because we have to clear them tonight. Hearing none, she stated they are accepted as written.

**Real Estate**

Interim City Manager Russell stated that Mr. Doug Gaynor would make the introduction, there would be a brief power-point presentation, and then the Council could ask questions.

Mr. Gaynor reminded the Council of the proposition that was presented a few weeks ago, that Mr. Gale Sayers had proposed to him and Mr. Robert Dorneker to establish the Gale Sayers Center in the Noyes Cultural Arts Center.

Mr. David Mann thanked the Mayor, Council, and Executive Committee for allowing him and Mr. Sayers the opportunity to make their presentation. He also invited the Council to join Mr. Sayers in becoming a hero in the Evanston community, permitting them to go ahead with the proposed site for the Gale Sayers Center in Evanston. Mr. Mann then turned the next portion of the presentation over to Mr. Sayers.

Mr. Sayers started by saying that it was a pleasure to be here and that he was not going to keep the Council long, because of the long day that they have had. He then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed project and the implications of the reason he wanted to establish the Gale Sayers Center. The Center will be operated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that will provide 8-12 year old children with a well-structured environment. The three goals of the Center are intertwined in the areas of Motivation, Education and Inspiration. It will focus on the following areas: Computer Classrooms--to accommodate the student and the instructor where students will learn computer skills that will assist them later to acquire jobs; Jr. Toastmaster Program, which will introduce students to the art of public speaking at an early age; Mentoring & Motivation Program will encourage kids to develop aspirations and goals aside from sports; Nutrition Awareness Program is established to attempt to combat the problem of obesity and

other eating disorders. The Center will also be home to the Ed & Steve Sabol Theater with a 99-seat capacity, where documentaries and films of a general nature will be shown.

Mr. Mann concluded the presentation by saying that all children involved in the program must sign a statement (along with their parents or guardians) agreeing to abide by the rules and policies of the program. They have already developed partnerships with many prominent organizations that bring credibility and corporate identification to this project to Evanston. He also passed out booklets of their rules & programs. They will have weekend programs for kids who can't get there during the weekday hours. The benefits to Evanston were quoted as being increased spending dollars from visitors coming here to see the Gale Sayers Center. The City of Evanston will be featured on "dateline" originating from the Gale Sayers Center and also television features will be seen recording live from Evanston, which is another boost. They have people calling and emailing asking when will the center open and these are not just people from here. They are as far north as Toronto and Montreal, (Canada), Europe and from other parts of this country who want to come and see this place. He felt it will boost civic pride, because people will point and say they chose to come to Evanston. He thanked Council and gave out handbooks.

Mayor Morton asked if they were now open for questions. Yes. She asked exactly what do you want from us, the City of Evanston, to get your program started?

Mr. Sayers responded that they have not really talked to the Council yet. They need to sit down and do that and after things are worked out, all they would need is the Council's blessings and they could take it from there.

Mayor Morton asked if they had any other offers.

Mr. Sayers answered no they haven't.

Alderman Rainey asked if they were interested in the entire Noyes Cultural Arts Center, and did they intend to purchase it.

Mr. Sayers answered "yes" to both questions.

Mr. Mann wanted to reassure one thing that they know about the tenants who have leases that run until March 2010, and they are not going to do anything to them. They may have to move some people within the building to accommodate their needs, but it will not be like a land grab process.

A few Aldermen expressed that there were two theater programs located within the building as it stands now.

Mr. Mann acknowledged the theaters and the possibility of joining a partnership, which would also benefit their kids who are coming through the program.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste asked if the interest for bringing the Gale Sayers Center to Evanston or to the Noyes Center? If you want to place it in Evanston, we have to think about if we want to sell the Noyes Cultural Arts Center. Our interest of having you here in Evanston may be as great as keeping the Noyes Cultural Arts Center as it is. So, are you open to entertaining other options to site of the Center in Evanston?

Mr. Sayers responded yes, and said that they felt, after talking to the people in this room, that they could maybe purchase the center.

Alderman Holmes asked again have you looked at other sites, and is this your preference?

Mr. Mann stated this is their preference because it meets their needs for when they begin, and down the road they envision the program growing, and the accessibility and location and everything else about it. He felt it was home when he first looked at it. He stated that they are contemplating to accommodate 50% of the tenants already in the facility.

Alderman Jean-Baptiste viewed the Gale Sayers Center as a plus to the community. In addition he would like to see in place something that we have going on that serves the interest of a large segment of our population, which has been institutionalized over time. If you are open to having it in Evanston, then we could try to find a way to make that happen, whether it goes to the Noyes Cultural Arts Center or some other site.

Alderman Moran stated if they were to entertain selling the Noyes Cultural Arts Center, they would have major issues with a large part of Evanston who see that (facility) as the home of the Cultural Arts. So you have somewhat of a psychological as well as a location issue and we would need to reconcile those interests.

Alderman Wynne asked to what extent would this be primarily Evanston children, and wanted to know his vision in terms of serving Evanston children.

Mr. Sayers responded that about 90% of the children will be from Evanston, with others coming from other places on the weekends, but 90% during the week.

Mr. Mann expanded on Mr. Sayers answer by saying that most of the other children would come only on the weekends, because this is a weekly program mainly aimed at the Evanston kids.

Alderman Rainey wanted to know their second choice, if they had one, and would they consider new construction, would that be a possible?

Mr. Gaynor spoke concerning a second possible site where the Chandler Center is located, but the land wasn't large enough for the size of the building to be constructed, nor was the suggested site that Mr. Dorneker took them to see.

Mr. Dorneker took Mr. Mann to Elks Park and the site around there, which was also a possible new construction site.

Mr. Mann explained the reason for looking at the "El" was not mainly for the children as much as it was for the instructors who would come from different locations to reach the Center.

Alderman Bernstein asked was it to be an after-school program during the school year and also be open in the summer. He wanted to know the number of kids to be served.

Questions were also asked about the operating budget, monies they would need to raise and what kind of fundraisers would be initiated to acquire these funds?

The answer was that the fund-raisers had already been held and some were planned for the near future.

Mr. Mann said that the plans for the Noyes Cultural Arts Center are workable because they have arranged to work with the current tenants.

Mr. Gaynor said that the City has four or five studios open now. They could move the entire staff over to City Hall, which has space for them. This would leave the whole office space available for the Gale Sayers Center.

Alderman Tisdahl expressed the concern of leaving the two theaters and the circus undisturbed and still be able to accommodate the plans for the Gale Sayers Center. She would really like to see that happen, but the theaters and circus are critical.

Mayor Morton asked if they sold the building, how they could keep our people there. They would have to pay rent or a sign lease.

Alderman Bernstein wanted to know if they have the funds to buy and, with the low rent they have for the tenants, will that be enough for their acquisition of the property and operating expenses.

Alderman Moran wanted to know the timeline. The response was to have the Gale Sayers Center up and running by next September.

Mayor Morton asked if the Council could take this into consideration in private to discuss the facts of the presentation. She also noted there was no recreation for the kids in the plan of this center. The City Manager will have to be involved in this process and the Council will get in touch with you when the process is completed.

The Council returned to the Council Chamber to continue the Open Session, which was so ordered by the Mayor. Executive Session ended at 9:27 p.m. and was resumed at 11:00 p.m.

### **Real Estate continued**

Mr. Dennis Marino spoke about the property at 2423 Church St. for a rehab loan original \$10,000, Alderman Rainey moved to accept the price and was seconded by a number of aldermen. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye.

Mr. Marino continued that 1720 Chicago Ave. was known as the circus parking lot, which is zoned as D4. He would like to have the zone changed to R6, at the request of the John Buck Company. They want to build residential housing on the site--125 units approximately. He was looking for some type of interest and direction from the Council to see if there is a need to continue with the Buck Company to purchase the property.

Mayor Morton asked who is being talked about. The answer was Kent Swanson and his associates.

Alderman Wollin stated that public parking was necessary and they had mentioned to go underground with the parking, and they have the funds to do exactly that and it would be a bonus if they do.

Alderman Moran suggested they get on it because the money is needed, and they would get good value for the property.

Alderman Bernstein suggested if the City has to pay for its own parking, the Council should not continue with the negotiations.

Interim City Manager Russell indicated if the Council gives direction to not accept less than the highest appraisal amount that they had in the past and start negotiating, any parking will be paid by the developer (whatever facility they are dealing with).

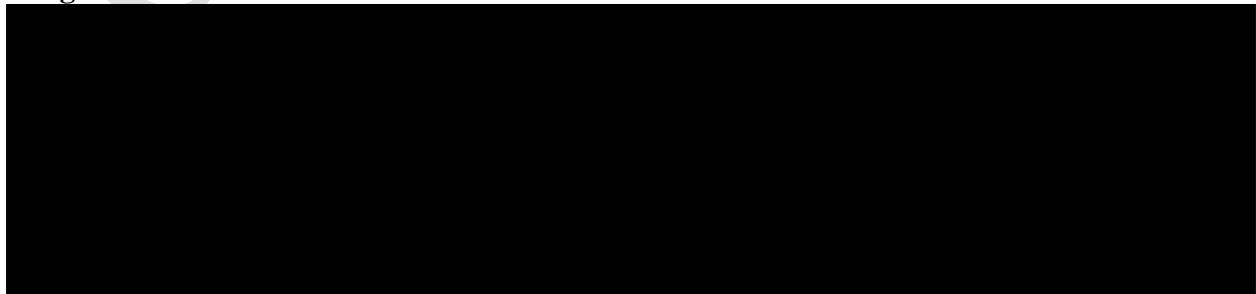
Alderman Rainey wanted to know how this project is looked at in light of the Downtown Plan and is it still in the Downtown Plan. The answer was yes and they requested green space.

Alderman Holmes commented that the D4 zoning area is incredibly dense.

Mayor Morton asked what direction should the Council give.

Ms. Russell stated they will not take less than \$5.3 million and will not bear any cost for parking. The developer will need to replace the 75 parking spaces.

### **Litigation**





Respectfully submitted,  
Rodney Greene,  
City Clerk

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