

Hillmoor AdHoc Meeting 12/07/2023

Attendance

Present:

Mayor Klein

Dave Quickel

Skip Atwell

Henry Sibbing

Adam St. Marie

Cherie Borowiec

Michael Krajovic

Fred Gahl

Celine Lillie

Karen Yancey

Norine Smyth/Betty V.

Peggy Schneider

Excused:

Paula Porubcan

Deborah Beagle

Lawrie Weed

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve. All in Favor

1. Presentation of YMCA - Mike Kramp

- The Y has submitted a letter of intent to purchase property at the Hillmoor Golf Course. It is our preferred location. We feel that a potential agreement between the city and the ymca is exciting. The letter of intent was to the city council, we did this because it was what we were advised to do as the decision makers. We just hope to keep the conversation going. We learned some exciting things this last week. We met with Mike Krajovic and the ABCs group.

Any questions

Fred Gahl: My question is that our understanding is that you would come to us with a specific revised proposal from you because there's no full disclosure or details. We need to know what to do with it. There will be potentially a lot of people 365 days a year. The idea of carrying on discussion is confusing to me because we don't know how big the building is.

Mike Kramp:

Thank you. We came to this committee twice. The second time we came back with a revised request. The footprint we are looking for is about 54,000sf total 70,000sf and about 300 parking spaces. It is a modest sized building.

It could include an outdoor pool. Right now we service about 6,500 members. A larger facility would have some more members we believe but not 15,000 members.

Yes, we did purchase the property on H but that was our best location at the time. But now that this is available we

Out of all the ideas presented the YMCA is the only one that would not cost the City any money. If there are doubts about the YMCA's fundraising abilities respectfully that would not stop this process and we would be given the opportunity to raise that.

Jim Gauggert:

In response to Fred's inquiry. We know this isn't a fight about loving or not loving the YMCA. The letter of intent was meant to take it to the next level and get into the details. To your point Mr. Gahl, if we need x square footage and y acreage we want to be able to talk about that.

Originally we thought that a big rec center was needed in this community but we found out with deeper conversations with the community that a large complex is not necessary for us. Here's why it is worth a conversation: As people change, and time changes, there might be a council in 5, 10 or 15 years that says, "Let's sell that property to a non profit from Illinois or Nebraska or something." The YMCA has been here for 140 years and you know who we are, we are your neighbors. We maintain the property, it would be pristine. If the building is put in the back, you wouldn't even see it. You can put it back that and make an unbelievable setting and have an incredible partnership between the YMCA and the City that everyone in this room could truly be proud of. And you say the word "preserve" a lot in these meetings and you have a chance to preserve a little lot in this property for the next 100 years plus and you don't know what the next council can do. I had a 100 year lease there at one point and it got ripped up. There are no guarantees. If you put a building there you have a guarantee that there would be a section preserved. Let's come up with some sort of commitment in the next 60 days to have this discussion so that the citizens who deserve to hear more can be informed. Monday night we want to have a commitment to spend the next 45-60 days to have developed conversations and see what could work.

Hank Sibbing:

We have been talking about Hillmoor for about 15 years now. This committee, the FOH, everybody in the committee have been trying to keep this greenspace for about 15 years. Many many people and the City Council have been impassioned to keep this space a greenspace recreational area. This committee has been meeting for the last 12 months and sometimes arguing but trying to do our best to assess what is best for this community. We have invited the Y several times to hear from you and you were very welcome, no one was against that. We welcome it in the spirit of trying to put all of our heads together and compromise and we will continue to. I personally do not know why the Y feels it has to go over our heads to go to the Council directly. I find it disrespectful to the committee and to the council. You came to the committee and you perhaps got some negative vibrations. If we as the AdHoc committee decide to sell any part of the property, it would be such a hard task to acquire it, it would be a huge

disservice to this community to commit to any group right now as to what we are doing with that property. We can't just sell that without going through this process. We're willing to discuss that more but to be so audacious as to go over our heads and ask for them to sell the property.

Mayor: Any other questions

Karen: How much have you raised so far?

Mike Kramp: We have early commitments of 4 million at this point.

Jim Gauggert: We believe parking lots, buildings and everything is about 10 acres. I also want to respond to Hank Sibbing. The term disrespect was the farthest thing that we had in our minds. We even went to the City attorney to discuss what we were going to do. I'll be transparent, maybe the Hillmoor is not the right spot, the letter of intent was sent to the body that makes decisions about selling City property. The City council in the statute says, the City Council controls the purchase and acquisition of land. And understanding that they can share it with the Park board, the AdHoc committee, they can share that with whoever. We did not do that in any effort to disrespect any of you. We sympathize with you in a positive way. You have 192 acres and another 30 with the dog park and frisbee park and you have to make decisions for 8,000 citizens. That's not an easy decision to make. The letter of intent was meant to just have a conversation. We know that not one person here despises the YMCA, we do know you all have a high level of respect for what you are doing. There isn't one person here more passionate about golf than I am. You're going to need a clubhouse, you're going to need a maintenance facility, that pristine green you are trying to preserve will be disrupted. We are not asking for the fourth green. We are asking behind Dunkin Donuts, behind Home Depot.

Hank Sibbing:

With that being said would you be willing to remove your intent of purchase and come back to our committee and discuss this without.

Jim G:

I would be 100% willing to go back to the board and ask them if they would be willing to do that. We just want to be able to really have that conversation.

Mayor Klein:

Point of clarification, are you asking in your intent are you asking for 10 acres or 30 acres?

Jim G:

The letter of intent is not meant to be binding.

Fred Gahl:

To Hank's point it was insulting to us. You then went to the open market and went out to survey. It was an aggressive way to get in. We are tasked with the goal of preserving this land. We are focused on representing the community. The sooner you folks can realize we don't need to sell

this property. It's shocking to me that your group can't see what our parameters are. Not 70,000 not 60,000 sf building.

Dave Quikel:

I would like to respond as an AdHoc member, I resent Hank saying, "This is the way we think." I have missed one meeting. Hank does not speak on behalf of us. The committee does not necessarily feel bullied. We don't even know what the alderman would like as being on this committee.

Celline Lillie:

I know you are talking about purchasing the property, are you willing to look at a long term lease. Purchase or lease?

Jim Gauggert:

That's the point of the letter of intent. Nothing is off the table. That could be discussed in the letter of intent. We would discuss those details. Everything is open to discussion.

Karen Yancey:

30 acres is a big portion. What is the minimum acreage?

Jim Gauggert:

I'll share with you, someone suggested to me that we can be in the 10 acre range and we wanted to have some areas for summer day camps that we can share with other events in the community. So to answer, if we did 10 and whoever is controlling that land could preserve a certain amount of acreage for day camps, outdoor yoga, and youth day camp centers. All of that would be discussed as we got into the final details. At this point we are talking about concepts.

Betty V:

Are you willing to slow this down a bit and honor the process? As I understand it we are trying to understand the process, we are not done with our own findings yet. We could fold you into this process.

Mike Kramp:

I'll answer your question Betty. We are excited about the process. We just want the City to know that the letter of intent is our formal way to say we want to continue the discussion with the letter of intent.

Michael Krajovic

Mentioning that you were directed by the City attorney, I find that helpful. Just from experience, 60 days isn't a whole lot of time. If it is decided that we work together to figure out a proposal let's at least shoot for 90 days to do that.

Mike Kramp:

We would be open to that.

Hank Sibbing:

Jim, you are holding us hostage here, are you going to go over our head? What is going to happen here is we are going to the City Council in 3-6 months to approve?

Jim Gauggert:

The way I see it is if the City Council were to say "Yes, go and continue this to the AdHoc committee." I expect to be sitting with some of you to actually put a formal plan together.

Mayor Klein:

Ok thank you very much everyone.

Karen Yancey:

I want to update everyone on the status of our trail system and work days. I want to address some misconceptions out there, and one is that "Trails should not be put in flood plains." Almost all the trails from Kishwaukee to Zion National Park have trails in wetlands.

Second misconception was that entrance should be from the Eastview parking lot, in talking with the superintendent Marcy, that will not happen as long as she is there. She said it would be a nightmare with people coming back and forth all day with their cars going through the school.

Misconception #3 At the last meeting the last group said there would be a potential botanical garden, Mike are you going to be doing the trails because the committee said that the Conservancy would be handling that.

Mike Krajovic:

There's no sense in beautifying the area if we don't know where the trails were going. It was not

Celline:

I would make a point because I definitely remember there was a deadline for the grant and we were told as I recall that it's ok, we can make changes. So we said, ok if it's not set in stone and we can make changes then let's get the grant to fund the trails and the location to set the trails and to say that we approved the trail system. I resent being told that we agreed to trails that we didn't see.

Karen:

We can move the trails around.

Celline:

Again you say we already approved the trail system.

Karen:

Good, I think we can and I want people to take a closer look at that part of the river. Rather than the straight part of the River.

Mike K:

And the idea of adding three bridges, maybe can we just add one? There is a difference between wetlands and floodplains.

Karen Y:

I was just surprised that so much of your presentation was a criticism of our trails. Let's keep going then. Continues with Misconceptions presentation *See powerpoint.

Mike K:

By the way no one says "not" we just said a warning sign should be put up that there is a 250' long culvert. Just to be warned, that's all we were saying.

Karen Y: Powerpoint continued. Access to a Hidden Hillmoor spring 2024. Cart path trails will not be open until 2025. All of these upland trails will be limestone. GLG will be applying for federal grants in 2024 and 2025. Any questions:

Hank Sibbing:

I have been confused since day one because of my lack of knowledge, the total trails are 3.5 miles and the total cost is 475k? Of that, how much is going to be funded by others? Have you talked to Mr. Earl about mowing the trails? What does that cost?

Karen Yancey:

Knowles Nelson covers half. The Conservancy will budget 10k for this year, Eastman is going to provide 20k, so there is a balance that the City will cover about 200k when it's end? 200k that will go into the City budget to match. It is in the 2024 budget but is not approved. We will cover the first mowing.

Betty:

I was just trying to clarify for everybody that it's a matching grant?

Adam St.Marie:

What is the Knowles process? If we do not get it are we on the line for the entirety of the cost or can we pull the plug?

Karen Yancey:

They typically just say here is what you need to do to get approved for next year.

Mike Krajovic:

Are you open to talking about not having 3 bridges? Can we just do one bridge? One of your presentations mentioned 3 bridges and we would like the opportunity to just talk about what we would actually be doing there. Can we talk to the Conservancy about this more?

Karen Yancey:

Yes, we would welcome that.

Hank Sibbing:

Do we know what each individual taxpayer would be looking at? \$200,000 would be a lot for someone's home but when you have 4,000 people sharing that cost with you it's very doable.

Peggy S:

The original mowings being paid by the grant, what about subsequent mowings?

Karen Yancey:

We wouldn't be able to take on the sustained mowing of the trails.

Mayor Klein:

Betty, do you have a Friends of Hillmoor update?

Betty V:

We do have some more work days lined up and there are people seeing the improvement.

Celline:

I motion that we ask the City Council to respectfully decline the request to consider the sale of the property and leave the third paragraph and remove "for the next 48 months." and remove "Imposing a 48 month moratorium on."

No lease or sale of the property until the AdHoc committee has made the due diligence.

Motion to Pass the Amendment to the YMCA Letter of Intent

Motion to pass the amendment to the letter of the third paragraph of the intent to purchase property at the Hillmoor from the YMCA,

"To this end, we respectfully request that the City Council refrains from considering the sale or lease of any portion of the Hillmoor property until the AdHoc committee has made its final recommendations.

Such decisions will allow the Ad Hoc Committee ample time to develop a comprehensive master plan...etc."

Unanimously approved by the AdHoc Committee.