

:OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS:**:OF THE CITY OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS:**

A Special Meeting of the City Council was held on Wednesday, June 25, 2003, at 6:33 P.M., in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 419 Fulton, Peoria, Illinois, with a Presentation by Chad Floyd of Centerbrook Architects, LLC Regarding his Findings on the Sears Block for the Potential Lakeview Museum Site, proper notice having been given, Mayor David P. Ransburg presiding.

ROLL CALL

Roll call showed the following Council Members present: Grayeb, Gulley, Morris, Nichting, Sandberg, Spears, Teplitz, Thetford, Turner, Mayor Ransburg – 10; Absent – Ardis - 1.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Ransburg requested a moment of silent prayer then he led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PETITIONS, REMONSTRANCES & COMMUNICATIONS

**(03-360) PRESENTATION BY CHAD FLOYD OF CENTERBROOK ARCHITECTS, LLC,
Regarding His FINDINGS on the SEARS BLOCK for the POTENTIAL
LAKEVIEW MUSEUM SITE.**

Mayor Ransburg stated the purpose of this meeting was to receive a conceptual design report from Mr. Chad Floyd of Centerbrook Architects, LLC, who had been working with Lakeview consultants to devise a plan that would take care of the museum's needs in terms of space, programmatic issues and would also include an attractive park and space for other developments which would help attract people to the Museum. He said he hoped within a short period of time the City would enter into an agreement with the museum so they could continue on to the next phase which would allow them to begin the fund-raising process and initiate a search for architects for the museum project.

Interim City Manager H.B. Ewert said this was a very important project proposed by Lakeview Museum. He said he has had personal experience with the manner in which a downtown could be revitalized and fully rejuvenated with the development of a project such as the proposed museum. He said he felt the museum would help existing retail businesses in the area. He said Mr. Floyd was a man of great talent and his firm had won national recognition by being awarded the National Firm of the Year by the American Institute of Architects, which was the highest award given by the Institute. Mr. Ewert then introduced Mr. Chad Floyd.

Mayor Ransburg added that Mr. Floyd's presentation was his architectural conception plan for Council input and questions and there would be no discussion regarding the terms of an agreement with Lakeview or financial issues relating to the project. Mayor Ransburg said there would be an opportunity for public comments at a later time.

Mr. Chad Floyd said it was a pleasure to be able to present his plan to the Council and Staff and he enjoyed working on this report. He said he came to Peoria in May of this year to meet with the principals involved in the museum project, both on the City side, museum staff and other community leaders and had come away with a very good understanding of issues regarding the Sears block and surrounding areas. He said he had worked with White Oak Associates, the museum planner, to understand the issues with respect to the program needs of the museum, size of components of the museum and how these components needed to relate to the rest of the City, and various practical issues regarding the street system that surrounds the Sears Block.

Mr. Floyd said the presentation was not meant to be an architectural design for a particular building, but an analysis or feasible study of the site illustrating how a sizeable museum could be developed on this particular site.

Mr. Floyd said he had created a report which was on file with the City Clerk's office, and he then proceeded with a power point presentation of the graphic elements from the report. He said the total area within the curbs of the Sears Block site was 7.2 acres, and with the removal of the sidewalks, became 6.8 acres of developable area. He explained the important aspects and features of the site location that made it ideal for the development of a museum. He pointed out the Sears block site was an urban site and not a natural site, that involved both parking areas and structures.

Mr. Floyd explained some of the major elements relating to the site were the street system, the floodplain, the structural system of the museum, parking areas, sidewalks surrounding the site, breathing space, and the misconception regarding the river view from the site.

Mr. Floyd further explained the museum had a demonstrated need for approximately 240 parking spaces. He said in conversations with City Staff, the idea of diagonal parking had been discussed for the streets surrounding the site. In addition to the 240 diagonal parking spaces, Mr. Floyd said he did an analysis of existing parking structures within a block radius of the site that would allow for a total of 1,000 available parking spaces that could utilized by the museum.

Mr. Floyd said another major issue was the importance of Fulton Street, which is the City's civic street, and its access down toward the museum site. He said he felt the mall interrupted the flow of traffic and the importance of the continuity of that civic avenue extending towards the museum site. Therefore, he recommended that Fulton Street be re-opened with limited two-way traffic to allow for the park-like setting on either side of the street which would complete the street grid leading toward the museum and blend in with other civic buildings on Fulton Street.

Mr. Floyd further suggested raising Water Street up two feet to bring it out of the floodplain, which would make the buildings on the south side accessible to the public.

In determining how big the museum's portion of the block should be, Mr. Floyd referred to a sketch of the museum's program and some of the major elements of the building, which included a lobby, galleries, planetarium, learning center with auditorium and meeting rooms, drop off areas for buses, large format theater, outdoor plaza with a stage and sculpture garden, future retail and concession parcels, café, museum store, book court and library, other functional areas and provisions for expansion in the future. He said all of the above elements added up to about 243,000 gross square feet. He added, the building itself was not 243,000 square feet; that included the site area and open space as well.

Mr. Floyd gave a brief explanation of what determined the size of the footprint. He further described some of the proposed various elements and what the approximate gross square footage would be for each element, bringing the total to 148,000 gross square feet. He said this area would consume about three-fifths of the total site, which would leave two-fifths of the site for other activities. He said he proposed a very clear devising line to allow for breathing space between the two sites, and he described the important issues in placing the museum on the east side of the site, and some ideas for development of the remaining 2/5 of the site.

In determining the development of the dividing line between the two sites, Mr. Floyd proposed a Mews, which consisted of a walking street where no cars were allowed. He said the Mews could be landscaped with an alley of trees, with the private development site on the left and the museum on the right opening on to the area, and would create breathing room for both sites.

Mr. Floyd further explained the drawing illustrated how the site could be developed from the point of view regarding setbacks. He said to envision the museum site as having an inner site and outer site, with the outer site as the zero lot line that allowed a major breathing space between the lot line and the street. He further explained that at least one-third of the façade along Washington Street should be at zero setback and the remaining setback should be no more than fifty feet. He added there should be a similar setback arrangement on the east side, whereas on the west side there would be two-thirds of the façade that would be at the zero lot line, so the Mews would get the strength of a façade defining it more consistently. He said the question would then be how those zoning rules might result in a footprint of the size described of 3.2 acres. He said the private development should be all zero lot line setback, in keeping with the urban design plan which existed in the area. He pointed out the museum was different because it needed to have civic breathing space.

Mr. Floyd concluded his presentation and reiterated this was his illustrative plan of how a museum might fit within the guidelines described for the Sears block site.

Interim City Manager Ewert added there would be additional surface parking on Water Street in the area of the proposed museum site.

Council Member Gulley expressed concern regarding what would happen to the truck route on Washington Street with the installation of diagonal parking.

Director of Public Works Steve Van Winkle explained the City would have to obtain permission from IDOT to relocate US 24 and IL 29 from Washington Street onto Adams Street and Jefferson Street, and then the truck route would remain on Washington Street for an extended period of time not to be determined at this point. He said it would depend on how Washington Street developed and what other opportunities the City might have to accommodate for the trucks. He added that a portion of a truck route was currently not on the route system, so for the time being, the trucks would remain on Washington Street.

Council Member Sandberg questioned if the traffic patterns on Washington Street had been researched in conjunction with the I-74 update.

Director Van Winkle stated there would be a connection to Washington Street from the new I-74 ramping system and this ramp would be utilized by vehicles wanting to reach the riverfront area.

Council Member Sandberg said there was an enormous amount of truck traffic on Washington Street and he questioned how the trucks would get onto the interstate from Adams or Jefferson Streets.

Director Van Winkle said the new ramp would intersect with Washington Street when coming in for Adams Street, and the transfer would need to take place at that location. He added the trucks might have to utilize intersecting streets to reach the interstate.

In further discussion between Council Member Sandberg and Director Van Winkle regarding a continuation of diagonal parking in other areas to maintain the theme of the proposed museum, it was determined that parallel parking would be more feasible in the areas of the Franklin Street Bridge and Michel Bridge.

Council Member Thetford said she felt some positive concepts of the presentation were usable green space, the zero lot line and the suggestion of a multi-story building. She expressed concern regarding the issue of parking. She said there was a contractual commitment, should the City acquire the Sears block, to provide 175–200 unrestricted public parking spaces that would be in addition to the parking spaces established for the museum. She inquired if the proposed planetarium at the museum site was larger than the current planetarium at Lakeview.

In response to Council Member Thetford's question, Mr. Floyd said the new proposed planetarium would be 3,700 square feet, which was significantly larger than the one at Lakeview.

Council Member Morris said he felt the plan embodied many elements valued by the community and the Council. He requested further elaboration regarding the connection of the architectural structure of the Civic Center and the Fulton Street Corridor leading to the museum.

Mr. Floyd said he felt it was important to maintain the visual connection between the Civic Center and the Civic Museum. He said by opening Fulton Street to only two-way vehicle traffic and maintaining wide sidewalks and planting areas and a row of trees on either side, it would allow the public to either drive or walk down Fulton Street to the museum.

Council Member Morris questioned the importance of open space.

Mr. Floyd said the museum's program diligently called for a very significant open space. He said he felt the best location for open space should be in the center so the building surrounded and structured it on all sides to prevent it from opening onto a street or another development. He said the character and atmosphere of the open space would then be under the museum's control to be used at their discretion.

Council Member Morris further inquired about the relationship between the museum site and the private development site.

Mr. Floyd said he felt when families visited a museum that offered a variety of attractions, those families were ready for a multi-dimensional experience and he said he felt it would benefit the City to expand the facilities and services on the private development site.

Council Member Teplitz thanked Mr. Floyd for his presentation and said he took a very complex situation and made it very appealing.

Council Member Grayeb inquired if Mr. Floyd would elaborate on the concept of this particular site having post-card potential.

Mr. Floyd said he felt post-card potential for a such a great civic museum was very important and this particular site had great potential for an iconographic architectural statement making it the foreground of downtown with respect to the river. He compared Peoria's museum site with the Metropolitan Museum in New York City.

Council Member Nichting referred to the setbacks creating a mosaic type picturesque setting in a downtown urban area.

Mr. Floyd pointed out that many of the surrounding blocks near the museum site were all zero lot lines. He said usually cities did not break the urban code; but for a great civic museum, you need to break the code and allow the museum to pull back from the sidewalk and have breathing room. He said the museum had to separate itself from the context of the city and should be a centric and not a background building.

Council Member Sandberg indicated one of the major issues of Mr. Floyd's report was to make sure the City had allocated enough land for the museum. He pointed out that in the footprint issues section of the report, the amount of gross square feet of all the museum components totaled 148,000. He asked if Mr. Floyd could refine his definition of gross square footage. He said usually when dealing with fourteen or fifteen gross square feet areas that have to interrelate, some of the area was lost, due to circulation and other elements, and then you lose net to gross. He questioned if the 148,000 square footage assumed inefficiencies of net to gross.

Mr. Floyd said he had conversations with White Oak Associates regarding this issue. He explained that each of the component elements was a gross square footage element, meaning it had been grossed up from net and each of the building elements had within it provision for circulation, fire exits, thickness of walls, etc. He said this was a sum of a series of gross components enabling them to arrive at the final gross figure.

In response to Council Member Sandberg's question regarding the available parking spaces, Mr. Floyd said he did not think this was a serious problem. He added this was not an exhaustive parking and traffic analysis, but a study of the situation on a feasible level. He said he had met with managers of City garages and private garage owners within a one block radius of the site and had determined, along with the museum's 236 parking spaces, there was approximately 1,000 available parking spaces in the area which would more than meet the needs of the museum.

Interim City Manager Ewert added there had been a detailed study completed regarding available parking which was available for anyone to review.

Council Member Spears inquired what the City's cost would be for the museum.

Mr. Floyd stated he had not completed a detailed cost analysis, but with demolition costs, construction of infrastructure of the streets in the area, and the Mews development, he calculated the amount to be approximately 5.5 million dollars.

Interim City Manager Ewert stated the total cost would include demolition of the existing structures, raising Water Street out of the floodplain, development of the Mews and surface parking area. He said there was a grant in the amount of \$3,000,000, plus the potential of other additional funds, and there would be a sharing with Lakeview regarding the costs. He said that cost analysis was not completed at this time.

Hearing no objections, Mayor Ransburg granted Privilege of the Floor to Mr. Brad McMillan and State Representative Ricca Slone.

Brad McMillan, District Chief of Staff for Congressman LaHood, said negotiations had been worked out with White Oak Associates regarding the proposed plan. He said because the museum was conceptually going to be four or five levels, the City would be able to take advantage of significant panoramic views from within the facility itself. He said there had been discussion regarding having walk out terraces from the art gallery components that would be on the upper floors, and there would be a view looking over the bridge and down the river as well.

Mayor Ransburg stated the City Manager and Staff had been working with museum representatives regarding the terms so an agreement could be brought to the Council within the next few weeks.

Council Member Sandberg inquired if there had been discussion among the Council regarding what terms and issues should be included in the agreement.

Mayor Ransburg stated there had been a previous meeting with Council members which resulted in the current term sheet.

Ricca Slone, State Representative, complimented the City and everyone involved with the museum plan in moving this idea forward to this point. She said she was looking forward to working with everyone in making this vision a reality.

Council Member Spears suggested the Council be given minutes of the meeting that referenced the term sheet.

In response to Council Member Morris, Mayor Ransburg said it was the intent of the Interim City Manager to bring back to the Council an agreement regarding the museum.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Thetford moved to adjourn the Special City Council Meeting; seconded by Council Member Turner.

Approved by viva voce vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Mary L. Haynes, MMC
City Clerk of Peoria, Illinois

/js