

Elmhurst Park District Board
May 22, 2006
7:00 pm to 9:40 pm

All Commissioners Present
Visitors: 50+ ; Staff: 8; Press 1
Observer: L. Kratz

The meeting was called to order by Board President Goworowski at 7:00 pm

14 citizens addressed the Commissioners regarding the future use of the vacant Wilder Mansion, former site of the Elmhurst Public Library and property of the Park District. The first speaker presented a petition with 213 signatures opposing the use of the Wilder building for the Historical Museum. The second speaker referred to another petition with 400 signatures that also opposes using the Wilder Building for a historical museum. The overwhelming majority of the rest of the speakers urged the Park Board to use the building for Park District activities and to maintain the Park as a recreational facility and green space. Several speakers also pointed out that the Park Board had already asked the community for its ideas and that recreational use had been the citizens' priority for the park. One person suggested converting the old part of the Wilder building to a bed & breakfast as an income source.

Following Public Comments, the Commissioners quickly approved the Consent Agenda and ran through a series of Commissioner Information Items including

- People for Elmhurst Parks (PEP) are reviewing 3 applications for their Joanne B. Wagner scholarship
- Renovations are going well at Lazzadro Museum; the museum will receive a new mineral exhibit from the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. that will be on permanent loan;
- Gateway has approved hiring a new staff person to be in charge of the Special Olympics; the position may be shared 50/50 with the Ray Graham Association

The Commissioners then voted to move to the Committee of the Whole, Continued Discussion of Wilder Mansion, Item 3d on Workshop Agenda – City/Historical Museum Presentation of Their Request for Wilder Mansion Usage. City Manager, Thomas Borchert, and Elmhurst Historical Museum Director, Brian Bergheger, made the presentation.

Mr. Borchert pointed out that no decisions have been made regarding the Elmhurst Historical Museum (EHM) Strategic Plan; the city and the museum staff are talking with various governmental bodies and community groups to determine if and where the Museum could or should move.

Regarding the projections for the City's share of costs for the now vacant Wilder building, Mr. Borchert said the City is obligated to pay \$250,000 for a fire sprinkler system and upgrading/replacing the elevator under the inter-governmental agreement. As far as code compliance is concerned, he said the City and Park Board would have to work on existing non-compliance issues but it would not be to such a degree as to bring the building up to new building standards.

Mr. Borchert then reviewed the 15 existing City/Park District joint ventures that have

been very successful, including the City's contributions to Wilder Park expansion.

The focus then turned to the Historical Museum itself. The vision calls for 3 separate locations to serve different functions:

- . The Glos Mansion: The first floor, a museum and events space, would be open to the public. Period rooms would be recreated to portray the time period when the home was inhabited. The facility would be open for public tours and programs and available for events on a rental basis. The second floor would house offices and community meeting spaces.
- . The Churchville School House: The one room school will open for public programs this summer. Immersive history programs will be available to Elmhurst students and other school districts that will pay a fee for its use.
- . EHM Heritage Center: The vision for the EHM is to expand its services to include public access archives, an interactive time line exhibit, a children's history gallery, and a history lab for adults. (The Plan is available at the Elmhurst Public Library or online at <http://www.elmhurst.org/whatshot/ESP.pdf>).

Attendance at the current EHM is about 11,000 per year including 2,000 elementary school students. Projected attendance for the new Heritage Center is 30,000 per year which Mr. Borchert pointed out will be much less than the library's attendance when it was in the Wilder Mansion.

Currently, the Museum relies on the City for 95% of its funding, with 5% coming from Foundation and other sources. By the 2009-2010 fiscal year, it is believed that the City's share of funding could drop to 60% with 20% coming from grants, gifts, sponsorships, annual fund and memberships, and the last 20% coming from admissions, user fees, and a museum store.

Mr. Borchert noted that moving the EHM to Wilder Park would be in keeping with the City's plan for a cultural campus that includes the library, art museum, Lizzadro, Elmhurst College, YMCA and surrounding schools and churches. If the Park District does not agree to housing the Heritage Center in the Wilder Mansion, the City will look for another location north of Wilder Park to maintain the Cultural Campus idea.

Commissioners questioned several aspects of the plan including financial projections and impact on park use. The replies were ambiguous because the plan is in the concept stage; details will be worked out if and when there is a decision to go forward.

Commissioner Goworowski noted that the next meeting will be used to discuss the Park District's options and staff proposals for Park District use of the Wilder facility. He then reopened Public Comment and eight citizens spoke. Most were again opposed to the Museum moving to Wilder Park although one person favored the Cultural Campus idea and another suggested the issue be taken to referendum.

The Commissioners then voted to return to Open Session and the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 pm.