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Meeting Notes – Hall of Waters Steering Committee

March 25, 2013

Attendees:

Bill Ahrens, Planning and Zoning Department Director
Chad Birdsong, Public Works Director
Ambrose Buckman, Mayor
Bob Gerdes, Creek Side Inn
David Haugland, City Manager
Brenda Hembrick, New Age Skincare Spa
Sonya Morgan, City Council, Historic Preservation Commission Representative
Larry Murry, Inspections Department Director
Katie Noyd, Parks and Recreation Director
Denise Siegel, Excelsior Springs Museum and Archives
Susan Richards Johnson, SRJA
Angie Gaebler, SRJA
Julie Garvey, SRJA

Agenda and Discussions

- Introductions were made.
- A Sign-in Sheet was passed around. Two members who are planning to participate on the Hall of Waters Assessment and Feasibility Study Steering Committee were not available for today's meeting – Keith Winge and Molly McGovern. JoAnn Radetic and Elizabeth Freese Watkins from the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will also participate with the Assessment and Feasibility Study from a review standpoint. The SHPO has given previous grant monies for work on the HOW building and has a current preservation easement on the property to review future work.
- Susan and Angie introduced the Design Team who are working on the Assessment and Feasibility Study:
 - Susan Richards Johnson & Associates, Inc. – Project Lead / Preservation Architect
 - Structural Engineering Associates, Inc. – Structural Engineers
 - Henderson Engineers, Inc. – Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Engineers
 - SK Design Group – Civil Engineering
 - Construction Management Resources – Cost Estimating
 - Code Consultants, Inc. – Independent Code Consultation
- Julie will be putting together a DropBox account for use in file sharing. Copies of the studies, existing conditions drawings and preservation zone drawings discussed during



today's meeting will be posted on the DropBox account for Steering Committee members to download for their use. Julie will send instructions for the use of this account.

- Susan and Angie discussed the purpose of the Assessment and Feasibility Study. The 70% Draft Assessment and Feasibility Report was presented to the City Staff in November. There are two primary sections, the first being the existing conditions documentation which was completed in the fall of 2012. The second section is the treatment recommendations and costing section. The Steering Committee has been brought together in order to provide direction and recommendations for potential uses for the building and to establish priorities for its rehabilitation.
- The report will touch on the history of the building, but it will not be comprehensive. Betty Bissell had mentioned in previous discussions with Angie that another historian had begun writing a more comprehensive history of the development of the site and the building. She was not able to locate this draft report. Angie asked if there was anyone else who might have access to this history. If so, it would be helpful for our team to review this in order to establish important dates and changes to the building. Julie and Denise discussed other information that will be required for the report that Denise is assisting with acquiring information from the Excelsior Springs Museum and Archives.
- Angie recapped the work that has been completed to date on the Assessment and Feasibility Study.
 - Interior and Exterior Physical Existing Conditions Survey and Assessment
 - Heating, Cooling and Plumbing Conditions Survey and Assessment
 - Structural Existing Materials Survey and Assessment
 - Civil Existing Conditions Survey and Assessment
 - Preliminary Code Review of Existing Conditions
- During the fall 2012 presentation of the existing conditions to City Staff, the rehabilitation of the tower was discussed as being a high priority.
- David mentioned that there is a possible grant which may become available from the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office that could possibly assist with a project. He will keep in touch with the SHPO in order to be alerted once the applications are issued. Perhaps this grant could provide funding to get started with the tower rehabilitation.
- There are three additional building and site studies which have been ongoing in conjunction with the Assessment and Feasibility Study and a fourth report which was conducted in 2004.
 - The first was a North Terrace Well Pump Room Structural Condition Assessment, completed by Structural Engineering Associates, Inc. (SEA) in July 2012. This study focused on the pump room that is below the sunken north courtyard. The historic Siloam Spring pump is located in this space. Several other wells are piped into this room as well as the Hall of Waters primary City water service. Due to the extent of deterioration of the concrete columns and beams in this area, SEA recommended the use of the courtyard be limited to small groups until more permanent measures to address the structural deficiencies are completed. Three options presented in this report include:
 - Temporary Shoring – Lease or Purchase
 - Permanent Shoring – Purchase



- Construction of a new room surrounding the well and demolition and infill of the remaining subterranean area.

A fourth option would include raising the existing well to the surface of the courtyard, collapsing the roof structure and permanently infilling the entire subterranean room. This would include a new foundation along the south wall, infilling the entry door to the east, addressing drainage and also construction of a new well gazebo or building in the courtyard.

This is considered to be a high priority for the safety of the Hall of Waters site and building. The costs associated with this repair project will be significant.

- Last summer, SRJA wrote a grant, which was sponsored by Keith Winge with the Downtown Excelsior Partnership, to apply for a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. This grant was awarded for the 14.2 acre Hall of Waters site. The assessment is funded by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and was completed through a contract with Terracon, sub-contracted to American Osage Consulting, Inc. This detailed report was completed in December of 2012. This report addresses historic site uses, as well as adjacent site uses, ground water, site storage tanks, lead based paint, asbestos and other important environmental factors. There are many issues, typical of historic buildings, that need to be addressed. Costs have not been attributed to the abatement requirements associated with these recommendations. The report recommends that the pool area, including the mezzanine, be permanently closed until a full clean-up of the area can be done. The DNR has inquired as to whether a Phase II study might also be done on site. Angie and Keith will discuss this further and make a recommendation to the City.
- The third study is proposed by Structural Engineering Associates, Inc. which would include an in-depth assessment of two large portions of the concrete suspended slab ceiling located above the swimming pool. This area is directly below the water bar. There are large sections of the concrete slab that are delaminating and appear to have the potential to fall. Also, there are concerns about the loading in the Hall of Springs above these areas. In order to explore these areas, scaffolding needs to be erected for access. Proposals for this investigation have been given to the City for their consideration. This is a high priority, as there are safety concerns associated with the delaminating concrete.
- A fourth report was conducted in 2004 on the possible rehabilitation of the pools. This report pricing was well over \$2,000,000 in 2004, which would be much higher in present day costs.
- Angie discussed the existing building layout and presented the 'Preservation Zone' mapping which will be included in the report. These maps outline the respective areas within the building and surrounding site which have historical significance. Each area is colored with the degree of importance, with orange being hugely significant spaces which should be preserved and blue being the spaces of lower historic value that can accommodate the most rehabilitation changes. This mapping is to be used for formulating the proposed treatment recommendations. The Steering Committee is asked to review this mapping and let SRJA know if they see any areas that require



changes or further discussion. These maps will be posted on the Dropbox for the Steering Committee to download PDF files.

- It was noted that this facility represents over 50,000 square feet of space, which currently only houses between 9-13 City employees.
- The previous space which leased space was located on the first floor and closed approximately six years ago. It might be useful to talk with Vickie and Bob Bates who operated the spa and bottled water about the logistics of the spa and the requirements to update and open a potential new spa.
- Chad stated that in order for a new spa to be opened on either of the two spa floors, the drains, piping and hot water production would need to be completely replaced.
- The mixture of air conditioners is not ideal. There are roof top units for the second floor chambers, while the rest of the building is cooled through window units or is not cooled at all.
- In order to make final HVAC system recommendations for the report, Henderson Engineers needs to have a treatment recommendation for the overall use of the building.
- There is currently no water heating system in the building. Water for each sink is heated with an in-demand water heater. This is efficient to use for the restrooms and kitchens, but the potential spa use would require a new water heating system.
- It was mentioned that the pool once had a temporary floor that could be installed over it. There were beams that could be installed in the pockets on the sides of the pool and the floor could be installed on top of this. People in town remember going to dances and having games in this space. Perhaps someone remembers this use or has photographs? This would be useful to include in the report.
- Bob asked if it would be possible to consider solar power in the future.
- There is no guarantee with any of the possible site and building solutions that future flooding can be 100% prevented. The existing site conditions and issues were discussed, including the existing pumps which exit into the adjacent Fishing River, but which, during high waters, are actually located below the river water line. To prevent flooding of this structure would require the Army Corps of Engineers to work for many miles outside of town with a significant investment of time and money. This is not a priority of the Corps at this time. There are some changes that could be made to the existing pumps and drainage, which may assist in heading off some water, but these alterations will be very expensive. These will be suggested by SK Design Group, Inc. in the report.
- After the flood of 1993, all of the damaged pool and therapy pool piping, pumps and related equipment were removed. Due to the possibility of a future flood situation, restoring pool equipment is not a cost that the City is willing to expend.
- A proposed new City Community Center is in the works, which would accommodate more modern amenities (exercise room, indoor track and gymnasium), including a high-end pool with lots of modern features that the existing Hall of Waters pool cannot include (lazy river, zero-entry, diving boards, slides and ADA accessibility). The City does not believe it can support both the new Community Center and the historic Hall of Waters pool.



- Other potential uses for portions of the building were discussed, such as moving the Chamber of Commerce into the building and possibly the Parks and Recreation Office (although they will likely move to the new Community Center). Having the Chamber of Commerce in the same building as the Visitor's Center seemed to make sense to everyone.
- Parking at this building for large volumes of people is an issue, as the lot in the rear of the building is very small and difficult for most people to locate.
- There is a strong interest in restoring the spring waters into the Hall of Springs. This would include the Siloam Spring water (Iron Manganese) which is currently located under the North Terrace, as well as piping in adjacent springs. At one time, there were perhaps as many as 10 types of spring water pumped into the Hall of Springs water bar.
- There is a belief by many tourists that the water bar still dispenses these many types of water.
- While the exploration of the potential 40 local springs is not a part of this report, it would be useful to have a separate study by an experienced contractor to investigate this potential. This study might explore several individual wells, the yield of the specific wells, the safety of the water and its dispensing at the Hall of Springs water bar, as well as on-site bottling opportunities.
- Spring water availability would be important for any future spa vendor in the building, in order to market mineral baths.
- David discussed a study that was completed on a local Ameren property that restricts ground water use for a certain distance from the site. This HOW may be within this zone. This information should be shared with the contractor who prepared the Phase I report, in order to be included within their findings and recommendations.
- Installation of a new foot/bike bridge over the Fishing River would be a wonderful site amenity and would connect the HOW site to the trails across the river.
- Several committee members suggested that the lighting throughout the building needs to be improved for safety and usefulness. Currently, extra lights are brought in for special events.
- Covering the pool with a transparent material would be interesting, in order to still see the pool below.
- Molly McGovern (Steering Committee participant) will perhaps be able to recommend potential rehabilitation funding and grant sources for the City. Are city bonds an option for rehabilitation funding?
- David agreed that planning for moving City offices to one floor would allow for easier division of the building for potential additional tenant(s). There are existing storage requirements that need to remain on the upper floors, due to the flooding concerns.
- Potential uses and amenities that were discussed included:
 - Health Tourism /Spa
 - Bottling Mineral Waters
 - Micro-Brewery using mineral waters
 - Recreation/workout facility (either City or private vendor)
 - Conference space with breakout classrooms for many potential uses (summer camps, meetings, etc.)



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- Expand upon the connection with the Elms Hotel for additional function space (dinners and meetings)
 - Catering kitchen
 - Bike shop/rental
 - Dining venue
 - Fundraising venue
 - Wedding ceremonies/events
 - Dances and parties
 - Games
 - Art Gallery/Exhibits
 - Art Center for Classes
 - Senior Center dining and functions
 - Special events (BBQ, Waterfest, Gastby Days)
 - Stage/Presentation space
 - It is possible that many of these potential uses could be incorporated into a single design for the larger pool room and adjacent spaces.
- There are several other meeting/party spaces in Excelsior Springs, but nothing as large as the pool space would offer besides the school gymnasium.
 - Sonya offered to be the Steering Committee Chair. She will work on posting information on the City's website. Also, there will be an effort to publish information in the newspaper to let the community know about the ongoing study. This article will also request that ideas for the potential use of the building, as well as history and photographs be sent to the City. Denise mentioned that the Museum is hosting a First Friday event requesting everyone to bring historic postcards.
 - Our next goal as a Steering Committee will be to narrow down the possible uses and prioritize projects.
 - The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 22nd, 1:30 pm. The location will be determined prior to the meeting.