

Minutes of the Property Committee Meeting

The Property Committee of the McLean County Board met on Thursday, August 1, 2002 at 4:00 p.m. in Room 700, Law and Justice Center, 104 West Front Street, Bloomington, Illinois.

Members Present: Chairman Salch, Members Bostic, Hoselton, Selzer and Owens

Members Absent: Member Nuckolls

Other Board Members
Present: None

Staff Present: Mr. John M. Zeunik, County Administrator; Mr. Terry Lindberg, Assistant County Administrator; Ms. Martha B. Ross, County Administrator's Assistant

Department Heads/
Elected Officials
Present: Mr. Jack Moody, Director, Facilities Management;
Mr. Bill Wasson, Director, Parks and Recreation Department;
Mr. Bill Gamblin, Administrator, E-911

Others Present: Mr. Greg Koos, Director, McLean County Museum of History;
Mr. Jeff Koerber, Historical Architect, Wiss, Janney, Elster Associates, Inc., Chicago, Illinois

Chairman Salch called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Chairman Salch presented the minutes of the July 2, 2002 and July 23, 2002 meetings. Hearing no corrections or additions to the minutes, Chairman Salch declared the minutes of the July 2, 2002 and July 23, 2002 meetings of the Property Committee to be approved as submitted.

Mr. Bill Wasson, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, presented his General Report on COMLARA Park usage. He stated that there have been no significant changes from July 2002 and there is consistency with the figures from the past few years. He remarked that exceptionally cool weather in April, coupled with a few fee increases may have had a minor effect on usage at the park. He remarked that it is expected that the Parks and Recreation Department will finish the year on budget for revenues and expenses.

Mr. Wasson commented that there is still a problem with a heavy population of geese at the COMLARA Park facility. Although attempts to alleviate the problem have been considered, and population control methods have been discussed with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the goose population remains high. Mr. Wasson explained that August is when the goose activity is expected to be highest. Buffer strips and restraining lines will be utilized, but it is anticipated that more strident methods will also be needed.

Ms. Bostic asked whether the use of a dog to patrol areas used by park patrons would be a possible solution. She noted that some airports and golf courses utilize dogs for this purpose, although it may present a problem in keeping the dogs away from park patrons. Mr. Wasson responded that some of the park areas might be well-served by the use of dogs to keep the geese population under control. He stated that containment of the dogs might be a problem, but their use is still a possibility.

Mr. Jack Moody, Director, Facilities Management, stated that the Preliminary Report on the condition of the Old Courthouse is ready to present to the Committee. The report is submitted by the firm of Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. ("WJE"), Chicago, Illinois. The firm was hired by the County Board to do an exterior renovation study and research on the Old Courthouse. He noted that WJE investigated the domed roof; the drum of the dome; the main roof; the balustrades; the main building walls; the approach steps and sidewalks; the east and west entrance vestibules; the interior scagliola wall panels; the interior marble stairs; the laboratory testing of original tuck pointed mortar joints; and baseline drawings. The set of AutoCAD baseline drawings of the building were also done by WJE.

Mr. Moody noted that WJE is in the process of finishing their recommendations for repairs and the accompanying estimates for those repairs. He stated that cost estimates will be available in mid-August. Mr. Moody introduced Mr. Jeff Koerber, Architect, Wiss, Janney, Elster Associates, Inc., who presented a slide presentation illustrating the areas of the Old Courthouse which were studied during the investigation phase of the project.

Mr. Koerber began the slide presentation with the drum of the dome located atop the Old Courthouse building. He stated that much of what was noted regarding the drum, and indeed the building overall, was extensive corrosion of the anchors. Mr. Koerber illustrated his point by showing a piece of serpentine stone that exhibited brownish discoloration, indicating ferrous corrosion. Some of the cracks in wall panels are also attributed to such corrosion.

Mr. Owens asked what can be done to repair such cracks. Mr. Koerber noted that the discoloration is not as much a problem as the cracks. The presence of iron minerals which occurs naturally within a stone can actually cause cracking as the iron expands. This is a more complicated situation to deal with.

Mr. Koerber presented the slides showing the inspection openings. He noted that he and his crew examined both distressed areas and undistressed areas in the drum, and the limestone clad main building wall in order to compare conditions. Corrosion of the existing lateral anchors was found, which manifests in spalls which are visible. The condition of the anchors, as they extend into the brick back-up wall, as well as the overall condition of the brick back-up wall itself, was

carefully examined. He noted that most of the anchors examined did not exhibit much corrosion

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on the parts that extend into the brick back up wall. When repairs take place, the corroded portion of the anchors can be removed at the face of the brick back up wall, coat the rest of the metal that is inside the wall, and leave it in place after the repairs are done. It is not necessary to remove the entire anchor from deep inside the back-up wall.

Mr. Koerber stated that the drum of the dome exhibits much more corrosion and distress on the limestone. Here some of the anchors have become badly corroded, which results in poor lateral anchorage. He further stated that there should be concern over the condition of the lateral anchors in the upper portions of the main building walls. To address this condition, new anchors could be installed at the existing mortar joints.

In the preliminary scope of repairs, which was submitted to the Committee last autumn, Mr. Koerber stated that the building would need to be repointed. This was underscored in the recent investigations. He noted that the original setting and pointing mortar has shrunk and disappeared over time. The original setting mortar was softer than the subsequent pointing mortar, which is located on the surface. Very hard pointing mortar can lead to localized distress because it does not allow for any stone movement. Mr. Koerber remarked that as a result of this condition, all mortar joints in the building would need to be repointed.

Mr. Koerber commented that the balustrade has been inspected. A portion was dismantled to determine what sort of existing anchors were inside the wall. It was discovered that the balustrade could not be repaired in place. Rather, it must be dismantled and then reassembled, once the repairs are complete. It was already known that there were some corroding pins in the balustrade construction. However, the only other things that were found were some existing galvanized strap anchors. It would normally be unusual to find galvanized metal from this time period. These may be from an earlier repair, or they may be original to the building, since no documentation was available regarding repairs to this part of the building.

Mr. Koerber explained that it was discovered that the top rail, the bottom rail, and the center members of the balustrade are not pinned, but rather, are just resting in place. It is recommended that this condition be corrected. The top and bottom rail can be reused once repairs are completed. However, many balusters and half balusters should be replaced.

The knee wall is of masonry construction and was not of top quality originally. The north entry way is in the worst condition, showing cracking and displacement, including displacement and settling of the granite steps. The north entry way is judged to be the worst of the entrance step areas, and will be the most extensive of any of the areas. For the other entry areas, removing and resetting the facing stones will be the primary requirement.

The area beneath the steps was examined to determine why the stone steps have settled. It was discovered that the east and west entrance steps were more secured by the foundation. On the north side, there was somewhat less foundation for the steps, and the bricks in the foundation have fractured, subsequently causing the steps to shift out of position. The brick back-up wall will need to be rebuilt and then the stone steps may be repositioned.

The sidewalks leading up to the building were examined and found to need some repair to be sure there were no tripping hazards.

Mr. Koerber reported that the sheet metal dome was the most interesting part of the inspection. During the initial inspection that took place in autumn 2001, it was thought that the entire sheet metal dome would need to be replaced. Now, however, two options are being considered: remove and replace the dome; or, recondition the dome that is already in place. There are problems with that option, but the subject will be addressed in the WJE report, as they are too extensive to address in this brief presentation.

Mr. Koerber explained that the dome is constructed with an inner plaster dome and an outer sheet metal cladding. He explained that this is unusual because the structure does not have any sheathing – it is clad only with the frame and then the sheet metal. He recommended that sheathing be added in order to shield the building from water that can get into the building as it is presently constructed.

The sheet metal dome is approximately 100 years old and does exhibit some holes and corrosion. However, the basic structure is in good condition. The construction consists of flat copper sheets that are detailed with ribs and other embellishments. The ornamental features are in good condition, but would need to be reconditioned. The ribbing, however, is not in quite as good condition. The flat portions will need a lot of work, as many of the joints have cracked and no longer keep out moisture.

Mr. Koerber stated that much of the sheet metal will most likely need to be replaced. He noted that as much of the original materials as possible are to be reused. He recommended the addition of a sheathing material if the original metal is to remain in place, either in whole or in part.

The lantern at the top of the dome is in need of repair. Some of the ornamental work is still in acceptable condition, but some will need to be replaced. The sheet metal connections have deteriorated considerably. Mr. Koerber noted the presence of a very large bell, which is located in the dome. He stated that the recommendation that will appear in the cost estimate will be to

reattach the bell to the structure above. There has been a fair amount of corrosion that has occurred to the bell's connective structure, which needs to be addressed.

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The roofing is currently in acceptable condition. However, it is reaching the end of its expected service life. Cuts into the gutter membrane revealed that water has been retained beneath the surface. On top of the steel structure of the roof, there is a clay tile sheathing system. It is believed that it was originally meant to hold the roof deck in place. Underneath the clay tile, lead sheet linings for the gutters were observed. Replacement with new lead-coated copper is recommended.

An inspection of the marble steps on the inside of the building revealed cracking of the steps. A few of the treads have cracked. On one of the steps under the east entrance leading to the basement, displacement of the step can be felt. Many interior step risers can also be moved around easily.

Many handrails inside the building exhibit significant wobbling and will need to be made more secure. It will be necessary to make these repairs architecturally appropriate.

Mr. Koerber remarked that the interior scagliola panels are an ornamental plaster panel which are finished with a faux marbled surface. It is approximately one inch thick. The panels which are of the most concern are those which are found in the stairwells, which are visibly displaced or loose. It is apparent that previous repairs have been attempted. However, some of the early attempts at repair have actually resulted in more problems. For example, anchors which were set in place during previous repairs have been determined to cause further cracking.

An investigation into how the scagliola panels were anchored was conducted. There is some historic detail for this situation, but it is not known whether there were any pins holding the panels on the wall or anchoring them to each other. Mr. Koerber commented that many of the panels exhibit vertical cracks, which leads him to hypothesize that there are some metal reinforcing rods inside the panels.

The marble at the entrance vestibules is a source of concern. The soffits that have marble trim work, as well as mosaic panels, will need reinforcement. The plywood patch was removed from where the mosaic panel had fallen a year or so ago, which provided a view of the construction method for this part of the building. It is recommended to remove and rehang the panels on a new suspension system.

Mr. Selzer asked when WJE's full written report will be available to the Committee. Mr. Koerber stated that the full report would be ready in approximately two (2) weeks.

Mr. Moody noted that the full report would be ready for the next regular Property Committee meeting. Mr. Koerber commented that he could return at that time to address the recommended repairs and estimated costs in greater detail.

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Mr. Moody stated that earlier in the year, WJE had thought some construction could be accomplished prior to the end of the current year. He asked whether that was still an option. Mr. Koerber responded that WJE had recommended addressing some items that were imminent hazards. However, the bulk of the repairs and large scale work will need to be done during the upcoming year.

Mr. Koerber remarked that some of the work on the interior of the building is of significant priority to be addressed immediately. He stated that stabilizing the interior scagliola panels and entrance vestibules, which could be accomplished over the winter, was a particular priority. Documents for this work could be developed and sent out for bid, prior to the commencement of construction on the exterior.

Mr. Hoselton asked whether any electrolysis could be done on the dome. Mr. Koerber responded that several of the clips that are located in the dome, which are corroded, are actually not in as bad condition as originally believed, and such action should be considered carefully.

Mr. Owens asked whether the Committee members could receive a copy of the final report prior to the September's Committee meeting. Mr. Selzer concurred. Mr. Owens noted that he would like to have additional time to study the material in detail before the regular Property Committee meeting. Mr. Koerber stated that he would attempt to provide advance copies of the report to the Committee members.

Chairman Salch asked whether there were any further questions for Mr. Koerber or Mr. Moody. Hearing none, he introduced the next agenda item.

Mr. Bill Gamblin, Administrator, Emergency Telephone Systems Board ("ETSB"), presented his status report on the ETSB's award of a monetary bonus to a temporary employee. He stated that his status report is provided at the request of the Property Committee and is included in the Property Committee's packet of materials.

Mr. Gamblin stated that he also participated in a conference call to address the issue of security at the MetCom Building. The building portion of the rules change will remain as it is. However, it will contain a grandfather clause. It is hoped that the information will be provided to JACAR. However, two members of the Illinois Commerce Commission have retired, and it is unknown how those retirements will affect the approval process. Mr. Gamblin remarked that his

recommendation to the ETSB, regardless of the grandfather clause, will be to move forward to meet requirements.

Mr. Selzer asked whether the ETSB has some type of strategic plan which illustrates population trends, current growth overall, or rural growth trends for the upcoming three, five or ten years.

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Mr. Gamblin responded that the ETSB is looking at space requirements for the future, so growth trends would be included in any such report. Mr. Selzer remarked that he would like Mr. Gamblin to suggest that the ETSB consider preparing a strategic plan for the future.

Mr. Gamblin explained that the ETSB has already considered its equipment needs for the next five years, and has also considered its building's needs for the future. He explained that the upcoming new technology is "voice over IP." It is thought that through the use of this technology, telephones will become obsolete, while computers and Internet providers will provide a video/audio communication method. He noted that such a system is expected to be more easily secured.

Mr. Selzer requested to speak under Other Business and Communications regarding the Government Center Building. He stated that he would like to address some of the criticism that has been leveled at the County regarding the purchase of the building. Mr. Selzer noted that Mr. Gene Asbury, architect, Paul Young Associates, inspected the building prior to the County's purchase, and was employed by the Public Building Commission to do so. He noted that Mr. Jack Moody, currently the County's Director of Facilities Management, was employed for many years in the Government Center Building, and is very familiar with the building's structure and systems.

Mr. Selzer remarked that the County purchased the building at a cost of \$24.00 per square foot. Even with renovations and improvements to the building, which are estimated at a rate of \$50.00 per square foot, the building is still quite a bargain when compared to the cost of constructing a new building. New construction is estimated at \$140.00 per square foot.

Mr. Selzer stated that the main criticism is that the County purchased the building without fully inspecting it prior to the purchase. He further stated that the reality is that the County purchased an existing building, which is appropriate for its needs, for less than half of the cost of what new construction would cost.

The space study, which was conducted well prior to the building's purchase, clearly indicated that additional space is needed for County Offices and Departments to accommodate the growth that has taken place in the past few years. Mr. Selzer noted that the County has made every

attempt to look at and act upon its options to accommodate growth in the most cost effective way.

Ms. Bostic remarked that the County could have approached the sellers of the building and made demands to update the heating and cooling systems prior to purchase. However, she noted that such demands would not have been well-received or entertained.

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Mr. Selzer stated that in his review of the minutes of past meetings, several items were discussed and examined prior to the purchase of the building. He stated that the heating plants in the building were discussed, as well as the presence of tenants in the building and how to handle that situation. Also discussed were space allocations throughout the building and how to utilize the room dividers that remain in the building.

Ms. Bostic stated that any citizen who has a question or comment regarding the purchase of the building or its renovation, is cordially invited to attend any Committee and County Board meetings to hear the same information and discussions that the Committee members hear.

Mr. Hoselton remarked that he had specifically spoken with the seller regarding the heating and ventilation systems in the building. He stated that the seller's response was that everything was working.

Mr. Selzer commented that there are still many decisions to be made before the building will be ready for occupancy by both City of Bloomington and County offices. Proposals for repairs have not even been reviewed at this time.

Mr. Owens stated that he will tour the building on Monday, August 5, 2002. He noted that he requested a copy of the inspection checklist, so that he could verify all of the items that were inspected. Mr. Selzer noted that a mechanical engineer was not specifically employed to inspect the mechanical systems prior to purchase of the building, but the buyers were assured by the seller that everything was working. Mr. Hoselton concurred that he was also told by the seller that everything was running.

Chairman Salch asked whether the existing mechanical equipment will be adequate, considering the proposed needs of the building. Ms. Bostic responded that it will not. Mr. Selzer stated that in one section of the building, the system will probably need to be replaced. However, in other sections, the units may function adequately for several years before they will need to be replaced.

Mr. Hoselton noted that he had previously requested to see a schematic drawing of the mechanical systems, but has not yet been provided with that information. He stated that return air will be a large problem in this facility.

Mr. Selzer remarked that a complete report will be available at the September 2002 Property Committee meeting.

Chairman Salch noted that Illinois State University previously attempted a conversion in the heating system in one of its residence halls. Following the conversion, it was discovered that

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different areas of the building received varying levels of heat. If the system was adjusted to address the lack of uniformity in heat, further problems were created in other parts of the system.

He asked who the City of Bloomington (the "City") would call upon to address such problems with a converted heating system. Mr. Zeunik responded that the City has the same information that the County has. The Council members have been informed that a tour of the mechanical systems is available to them. Mr. Tom Hamilton, City Manager, has not, to date, scheduled such a tour.

Ms. Bostic asked Mr. Zeunik to inform Property Committee members when the Bloomington City Council is scheduled to tour the building to inspect the mechanical systems. She stated that some of the Committee members might like to attend that tour.

Mr. Selzer stated that, overall, the County and City have made an auspicious purchase. He stated that when all of the modifications to the building are complete, and both the City and County offices occupy their respective spaces, both governmental entities will have a building which will serve the public well.

Chairman Salch noted that when the final report is available, the Committee can examine it and make its recommendation to the full Board.

Chairman Salch commented that the recent newspaper and radio reports on the subject of the Government Center Building have been so derisive to the Property Committee members and the County Board in general, that it appears there is a movement afoot to publicly embarrass both the Committee and the Board. He stated that the Committee is charged with the responsibility to take the Board forward, and it must not allow the media to dictate its actions. He explained that to not take action, in the face of continued growth, would be more of a dereliction than to move forward with plans to occupy the Government Center Building.

Mr. Hoselton stated that the Committee should draft a "fact sheet" for Board members to use when discussing the Government Center with constituents and voters. Chairman Salch suggested that such a fact sheet could also be disseminated through the local print media.

Mr. Selzer concurred and suggested that once a decision is made on how to proceed with the Government Center, a press release should be drafted and signed by all Committee members, and published in The Pantagraph.

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Chairman Salch presented the bills, which have been reviewed and recommended for transmittal to the Property Committee by the County Auditor.

Motion by Owens/Bostic to recommend payment of the bills as presented by the County Auditor. Motion carried.

There being nothing further to come before the Committee at this time, Chairman Salch adjourned the meeting at 5:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha B. Ross
Recording Secretary

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