Memorandum 13-058 HERC Building

Memorandum ID: 13-058
Memorandum Status: No Status

MEMORANDUM 13-058
TO: Mayor Wythe and Homer City Council
FROM: Walt Wrede
DATE: April 17, 2013
SUBJECT: HERC Workshop
The Council has scheduled another workshop to discuss the future of the HERC Building on April 22nd. I regret that I do not have a whole lot of new information to provide however, I think that this discussion is timely nonetheless. The future of this building is very much up in the air as you know. There is pressure to upgrade the building and keep it open, but very limited money to do so. Funding for capital improvements and for maintenance and operations are in very short supply. To refresh your memory, I have attached old memos from Mike Illg which address potential uses and community interest in the building.
Updates:
1. The Fire Marshall did not make an appearance in March as promised. At the time this was written, I was trying to contact him. Hopefully, I will have more to report at meeting time.
2. You will recall that Council authorized us to apply for a Community Development Block Grant to make upgrades in the Boys and Girls Club section of the building. We received notice that the grant application was not approved.
3. There seemed to be very little interest among legislators this year in providing funding for upgrades to this building.
4. The Boys and Girls Club Lease expires at the end of the school year. At the time this was written, I was attempting to contact the Executive Director to better understand their status and future plans.
The staff is fully engaged and has been focused on other pressing priorities and as a result, this issue has been lingering for some time. The Council is sending out confusing and sometimes contradictory messages about its intentions. The administration probably is as well. The purpose of this memo is to chart a course of action and get the Council on a path that leads to a decision. It seems that in order for the Council to make an informed decision about the future of the building, it needs to have the best and most complete information it can get so that it can adequately weigh the options. There are still many information gaps that need to be filled. Following is a list of steps that can or should be taken in order to fill those gaps. I am hoping that the discussion at the workshop can include these steps and provide us with an indication of which ones, if any, the Council wants us to proceed with.
• Demolition costs estimates, including the cost of Haz-Mat removal.
• Review of architect/engineer estimate for bringing building up to code by local contractors/cost estimators with an eye toward cost savings and a phased approach.
• A complete Fire Marshall Report
• Possible Borough assistance with Haz-Mat removal
• Borough assistance amending the property transfer agreement so the option of selling the property is available.
• Review costs and benefits of natural gas conversion
• Include future of building, Community Recreation, and Parks and Rec generally in strategic planning effort
• Review alternatives such as saving the gym and demolishing the rest of the building.
• Explore Borough Recreation Area idea.
• Take steps to measure the level of community support for all options including demolition, demolition and construction of a new Community Rec Center, upgrading the existing building etc. The most important part is to ask about willingness to pay. Both construction money and maintenance and operations funding will be needed. This could be done through surveys or an advisory vote this October.

Source URL (retrieved on *2014-04-23 06:16*):
http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/memorandum/memorandum-13-058-herc-building