

## Observer Report

**Council or Committee:** City Council

**Date:** September 21, 2020

**Observer:** Sue Calder

**Aldermen Present/Absent:** All were present.

**Staff Present:** Richardson was the only one who was referenced. Reid read some letters that were sent

**Meeting Began:** About a little after 6 pm

**Meeting Ended:** After 9:00 pm

**Harley Clarke Proposals:** Basically the proponents of the four proposals presented an overview of their ideas with a few (light) questions from aldermen. All addressed the need for parking with some stating they would “rent” space from NU and have bus transportation available from those lots, some mentioned the EL stop four (long) blocks away and that activities would be scaled down when the beach was being used in the summer but evening events would use the parking lot. All also would work on the Gardens.

- 1) Artist Book House - This would focus on books - paper/book making, library, book store and other space used for some other activities like yoga. Seem to have a large, strong board which would be helpful in fundraising. Would have Curt’s Café run the dining. Estimate that the cost to renovate would be \$8 - 10 million. The chief spokesperson had run a similar operation at Columbia College for 25 years which was cut when the college had financial problems. She stated this would be a draw for a larger than Evanston audience.
- 2) Evanston Community Lakehouse and Gardens - This group is very local with the proposal stating they have 2,000 members and they would raise the money for renovations from the community. The concept would be HC would be for community events with about 15 - 30 meeting rooms for a multiplicity of uses. It would be a “draw” to the Black community. They would secure a \$1 million loan and then raise \$5 million more with renovations done in phases with the first floor done the first year. They currently have \$50,000 and pledges of \$3 - 8 million. The renovations would include restoration of the Garden. Revenue from events would be \$4 million.
- 3) Evanston Conservancy - The building would be totally filled with tenants paying up to \$4.9 million. One tenant would be Covenant Nursery School who would open a 2<sup>nd</sup> program with a focus on the environment (they would have a drop-off and pick up plan and not plan on parking for the school). They would like a 99 year lease. The plan also calls for rentals for smaller meetings (not to take away from the larger Women’s Club) of 15 - 30 people (NU and others would be interested) during the week and perhaps larger events (meetings, weddings, etc) on weekends.
- 4) ONE Community Museum - This would include an ecology, children’s and farm museums with food from the farm used in the dining areas and an overall focus on sustainability education. Would have a locally based board and a council with members from each of the 9 wards. The renovation would take 3-4 years with the first year focusing on the needs of the tenants. Would like a \$1 per year lease. Would raise \$500,000 and would seek to continue funding from raising \$10 million in an endowment fund.

Questions from Council included funding, # of events and impact on neighbors, parking. Concern about renovating the Garden. There was to be no money from the City. Some of the renovations had to be completed immediately since they would be needed to protect the building. The decision was to pass all four proposals to staff and for them to do the usual rating system and then come back to Council for discussion.

**Citizen Comment:** Started at 9 pm and had 15 speakers supporting, each supporting one of the proposals.

This is just the beginning of a “work-in-progress”. There was no date for staff to get back to Council. From my view, each of the proposals has interesting concepts with some being stronger than others. Money is obviously a hurdle and again, some seemed stronger at being able to raise the money. Also they will need to address the neighbor issue and parking.