

## **CENTURY MANOR TASK FORCE 2**

**13 April 2015**

**6:30 p.m.**

### **Hamilton City Hall, Rm. 192**

Present: Pat Saunders, Madeleine Mant, Robin McKee, Christina Begley, Frank Bernt, John Kajaste, William Sommer, Helen Kirkpatrick, Howard Rabb, Terry Whitehead

#### *1. Call to Order, Greetings, & Welcome*

Howard Rabb and Terry Whitehead introduced themselves. Terry referred to politics as more than a job: it's a cause.

Pat introduced the idea of "Century Manor Task Force 2" to Terry. She referred to the lawyer who has gathered information under FOIP.

#### *2. Information from Terry Whitehead:*

- the whole Century Manor complex is being declared surplus
- appropriate agencies need to be consulted before it can be sold on the open market
- Mohawk, the hospitals, etc. are possible buyers
- Mohawk is unlikely to put an interest in for the whole property
- Hospital has shown no interest
- Likely that the city will be the last institution in line to buy
- Landbanking is rare in Hamilton due to the cost
- E.g. from Saskatoon – zoning and selling off land, made lots of money
- Municipalities can offset costs by buying and value adding to land
- If the city controlled the whole chunk of land, value add, and then declare what the city doesn't need as surplus – the city can recoup money and likely create a profit, those additional monies could be dedicated to a heritage reserve account for the preservation of Century Manor and maybe Auchmar
- Big picture
- Jason Thorne, Chris Murray, real estate rep, rep from planning – these individuals have met to discuss the possibility of the city buying the lands
- Everyone agreed that this may be a good opportunity
- Many limitations on finding the dollars to "do the right thing"
- Chris Murray's staff are working on it
- The city has put a letter in to acknowledge an interest in buying
- Next steps: city staff need to take a closer look at the valuations and come up with a plan
- Council will have to approve the plan
- Land will be sold for "highest best use"
- Could be \$200,000 per acre or more

- \$200,000 per acre would be non-premium land; the premium land could be up to \$500,000 per acre
- city planning: how much of the land is not developable (due to storm water etc. various policies, flood plains, natural heritage assessment)
- city planning has to do due diligence
- city council has to make the money available
- because it's a city there may be some leeway in buying the land for the lowest value – negotiations
- the province is also on the hook (or should be)
- Chedoke House – city is paying for maintenance, but it's a provincial site
- Heritage fund for all three heritage facilities on the mountain – trying to get the province to cooperate
- Century Manor as Mohawk student house? – there is no business case for it, it would be too expensive to maintain – rent money couldn't cover it; management group would have to be brought in to manage it
- First goal: stop the decay, second: make the investments, third: decide what the best use choice is
- Ongoing costs should not end up on the taxpayers' books – major concern of the city council
- Halifax city councilors: city knows it cannot be there for everything
- Agrees these three buildings need to be saved, but a profit has to be made
- Thought process as to what makes sense for the three buildings
- Think tank groups that could generate employment
- It's not just about building houses in prime locations – thinking outside the box

Land is most valuable when the hard lifting is done – the zoning. The true value of lands is realized during the zoning. The key is getting the upfront money.

Robin noted that Chedoke house is part of Doors Open Hamilton.

Helen and Bill noted that these three heritage buildings could be a tourist attraction.

Bylaw – demolition by neglect. Property standards would have to match up the assessment of the facility to see if the bare minimum is being done. Pat and Robin note that the bare minimum is not being done – vermin are getting in the building.

Regardless of what the FOI says, Terry notes that property standards could be sent up to the building to see what the condition of the building is.

Helen queried what we should be doing. Terry said a letter writing campaign would be useful. Reach out to the members of the city council. Say that we understand the limitations of council and the financial situation of the city. We understand that there are not many opportunities like this that come by and we support the resolution to purchase the land. Support the concept of setting aside funds to create a heritage fund. Also write to the province. Ask the council to consider purchasing the Century Manor lands.

The reason would be preserving Century Manor and bring it back to its former glory. The major issue is getting the building to a place where it's useable.

Terry noted the example of an Ancaster purchase of a surplus school property. Shortage of parkland in the area. Bought the whole piece, developed the balance of the land, and the money paid for the park. There is a precedent for this type of issue.

The lands have become surplus and we are encouraging the city to buy them in the hopes of saving Century Manor.

Bring Ted McMeekin and Andrea Horvath into the loop.

Robin queried about getting inside the building. Terry noted that that would be part of the city's due diligence. Terry said he could see if a member of Century Manor Task Force 2 could get inside, but there might be a restriction to city employees (e.g., structural engineers). Some might argue that Century Manor (since it requires so much work) is a drawback for the lands. Terry thinks we can use the building as a tool for keeping the land prices down.

Key point: The city has to buy all 29 acres of land. The city is not just going to buy Century Manor.

John noted the Elgin County example of a similar building that was successfully redeveloped. It is possible to maintain heritage and architectural value.

One: operating, two: capital. Possible to just use the interest to pay for maintenance. The ongoing operating is a key issue. Maintenance through the trust fund. Possibility of a model where \$10-15 million is in an account – makes at least \$200,000 year in interest. Robin notes that slow maintenance is better – fix the roof, keep the building safe from water. John notes that the “glory” repairs can be done at later dates. Terry notes that roof and windows (outside infrastructure) could likely be paid for by the city. The landscaping and repairs inside could be funded through fundraisers and grants. Robin notes that security is an issue. Terry says that buildings that are occupied and used are less likely to be broken into.

Pat queried Terry on the next steps.

Terry wants to ensure that Hamilton is treated fairly by the provincial government. He wants to look for creative solutions.

The trigger point will be when city staff provide their preliminary report on all the options. Terry will inform Pat when this report is available. Time frame is three months. The city has already indicated its intent to buy.

### *3. Next Meeting*

20 April 2015

Christchurch Cathedral (James Street North, near Colborne)

Geddes Room

7:30 p.m.

Adjournment: 7:33 p.m.