

Memorandum

Department of Planning & Development Services

To: Planning and Public Works Committee

From: Justin Wyse, Director of Planning and Development Services

Date: December 7, 2017

RE: **Chesterfield Historic and Landmark Preservation Committee (CHLPC)** – Request to Lease Space at Chesterfield Mall for “Museum”



Summary

The Chesterfield Historic and Landmark Preservation Committee (CHLPC) has forwarded a recommendation that the City of Chesterfield enter into a lease with the Chesterfield Mall for a space to create a museum space for their collection of items to be displayed in a way that is accessible to the public. During the discussion on a future museum space, CHLPC members first discussed the current capabilities and facilities in storing their items. It was unanimously recommended that something needed to be done to better care for and display the items that have been donated over the years. A subsequent motion to pursue a space at the Chesterfield Mall was recommended with all but one member voting to recommend pursuing the opportunity.

Background

The City of Chesterfield has received numerous donations of historic items over the years and the CHLPC has generally been the committee to recommend action on these donations (it should be noted that prior setup of the two groups that merged into the current CHLPC did not require Council authorization to accept donations). Since the formal creation of the current makeup of the CHLPC, committee members have been working to catalog, scan, and provide descriptions for each of the items in their possession. This task has been complicated as the items are stored in various City facilities and are located within various areas of those facilities, as space allows.

This topic was last discussed by the Planning and Public Works Committee in 2011. The Staff Report from that time laid out numerous concerns with the facilities and current staff capacity to handle historic items. For example, it was noted that the City simply does not have museum quality, temperature

controlled locations available for storing these items. As a result, it has been very difficult for CHLPC members to catalog current items.

Discussions on finding a museum space to appropriately store and make items available for public viewing have been unsuccessfully circulated for years; however, the need for additional space has remained a problem for appropriate storage. In response, the committee has again begun exploring options for the items. An opportunity arose through a mutual connection where it was found that the Chesterfield Mall would lease the City of Chesterfield an approximately 5,000 square foot space for \$100 per month. The City would also be responsible for utilities. After working with the management of the mall, it was determined by CHLPC that rent and utilities would not exceed \$4,000 per year. The lease is a one year lease with a clause to allow either party to vacate the lease within 30 days.

The \$4,000 expense is not a budgeted expense. As such, the CHLPC has offered to cover the first year of costs. Future requests through the City's budgeting process would be presented to City Council if the request for City funding is desired in the future. While the future of the mall is certainly in question, the CHLPC thought that a temporary location would be beneficial for several reasons.

- The additional space (portion for display and portion for storage) would allow for easier inventorying of the items.
- The plan would allow a temporary, low-cost solution to determine future needs if the effort is successful.
- The space would allow for public displaying of items.

Additional expenses would be covered through volunteers and donations. For example, display units are available at vacant spaces in the mall that would be available for use within the location and the space would be staffed by volunteers, including members from the CHLPC. Staff has indicated we simply do not have the capacity to currently assist in the effort in any meaningful fashion and the committee has developed this recommendation without the need for staff members from the City to make the effort successful.

If the effort is unsuccessful for any reason, the items would be returned to their current storage areas at City facilities.

Finally, Staff and CHLPC members have begun discussions on the impacts of being a citizens advisory committee for City Council. No recommendations have been developed at this time, but Staff will continue to work with CHLPC and a potential future recommendation may result from this effort. A reconstitution of the committee may be beneficial for CHLPC (e.g. if the

museum is successful, not having to run a facility through the City's process will allow for flexibility). A reconstitution of the committee could also address tensions that arise from process, access to items, and storage space that have existed for many years.

Recommendation

I recommend that this item be forwarded to the Planning and Public Works Committee for direction to Staff and the CHLPC. If the Planning and Public Works Committee is supportive of the proposed course of action, Staff will continue to work with the CHLPC and management from the Chesterfield Mall to present a lease to the City Council.

Attachments: CHLPC – History Museum Plan

CHLPC – History Museum

Mission of CHLPC – is to educate the public on the history of Chesterfield and raise awareness of our earliest being. We believe that gathering memorabilia, objects, and stories, and then displaying them in some venue will be one of the best ways the city can promote this goal.

Our plan for a history museum addresses the following points:

1. Amount of needed space – Approx. 4,500 sq. ft
2. Volume and type of items in inventory, to be displayed. Acquisitions include clothing, furniture, pictures, interview statements, publications, Early American artifacts, and other memorabilia.
3. Costs – Estimate for the space offered to us at Chesterfield Mall are: Rent \$100/mo. Good for 2 years. Utilities \$100-\$250/mo. Insurance, TBD, but as an attachments to City liability and loss insurance. In addition there will be small renovation expenses, moving and set-up expenses, and incidental expenses.
4. Manning – Several groups have been approached and have agreed to support the manning requirement. Organized and supervised by CHLPC members.
5. Curating – Don Wiegand has agreed to be Curator/Exhibit Designer. In return for that professional effort, we would allow him some space in both the front and the rear. He will coordinate the visuals. Displays will be rotated from time to time. The City/CHLPC will have control of the space. No cultural partnerships are being encouraged at this time. And any which might be formed in the future will be for only one purpose, that of enhancing our historical perspectives. No retail activity will ever be permitted.
6. Managing – Members of CHLPC will be responsible for rearranging displays, general housekeeping, opening and closing, scheduling workers, scheduling tours, additional acquisitions, and other requirements of this open-to-the-public facility.
7. Areas of display – Sectioned off would be display cases, shelves, a corner for children's activities, gift shop, a small stage for presentations, table/chairs arrangement for research and for reading and studying.
8. Future space – We have been assured by the Mall manager that this space will be available for a year, perhaps two. If and when this Mall space is no longer available to us, other sites are likely to be made available to us also at the Mall.

Other spaces elsewhere also become available from time to time. We do not see the current state of the Mall as a problem

9. Fundraising – many opportunities have been suggested for raising funds to help pay for maintenance and other expenses. We would hope that the City cares for the ongoing expenses as this is a City venue, but additional money already is available to supplement and support this City program.

10. Since many of the artifacts and memorabilia are very valuable, extreme care will be given to safe-keeping, both in display and in storage, with a carefully listed inventory sheet, checked and updated regularly.

This project has the support and enthusiasm of the members of the CHLPC. We now are asking for support from the City. We believe keeping the historical treasures in boxes is no longer an option.