

City Council Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2017
Special Session
6:30 p.m.

The Xenia City Council met in a Special Session on February 9, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Administration Building, with the following members present: Wesley Smith, Edgar Wallace, Dale Louderback, Sarah Mays, Jeanne Mills, Marsha J. Bayless, and Michael D. Engle.

Update on Carnegie Library: Mr. Merriman said Council has articulated its goal to be vigilant in efforts to preserve local historical and cultural treasures; particularly in light of many facilities lost over the years due to natural events. The Carnegie Library presents both a challenge and an opportunity; therefore, staff's goal is to try to fulfill Council's wishes to find a way to preserve the Carnegie Library treasure and find a reuse that can be meaningful to the community. He tasked Mary Crockett, Development Department, to coordinate the effort, and Council has been supportive in some of the efforts in regard to what the Historic Structure Report (HSR) will show tonight. He turned the presentation over to Ms. Crockett.

Ms. Crockett said she is excited about the evening's presentation. She noted a majority of the current Council members may recall when they had the pleasure of finding out that Josephine Reno and Barbara Bradfute have been champions of the Carnegie Library and the Carnegie neighborhood. In 2014 Ms. Reno and other volunteers put together a nomination to the State Preservation Office to get the Carnegie Library listed on the National Register. Afterwards, they began a conversation about how to take the site to the next step. The County has owned the building for the last 20 years and have kept the building safe, but now volunteers wish to turn the historical site into a use that the entire community could once again enjoy. Steven Avdakov, Heritage Architecture Associates, assessed the building for possible restoration and has been instrumental in helping the City with design work in the downtown area, get funds and discretionary grants, and historic tax credits for Xenia Shoe and Leather. They heard about an Historic Structure Report (HSR) and felt it was a way to further the group's desire to get the building repurposed. She thanked Council for their support and funding through the Community Development Block Grant allocation with planning in 2015 to help pay for the HSR. The volunteers also elected to write a grant through the National Trust for Historic Preservation and received the Daniel Thorne Reinvention Fund Grant, which is paying for the master plan portion of the project. She turned the HSR presentation over to Mr. Avdakov.

Mr. Avdakov said it has been an honor to be involved in the project. The building is a beautiful treasure for Xenia's historic legacy. He then gave the following presentation:

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT (HSR):

- A logical long-term plan to guide a building's Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation, and Adaptive use.

PURPOSE OF AN HSR:

- Provides a long-term, well-considered guide to the future work on the property
- Provides documentary and graphic information about a building's history and condition
- Provides a basis for selecting the most appropriate approaches to treatment

VALUE OF AN HSR:

- Primary planning document to guide the long-term future of the building
- Provides a comprehensive analysis of the building and a basis for proposing physical changes
- Can be used as a fundraising tool

ITEMS INCLUDED IN AN HSR:

- Introduction and methodology
- History of the building and historic context
- Architectural description
- Analysis of historic features
- Conditions description and assessment
- Recommended treatment options for each condition

Xenia Carnegie Library, c. 1907

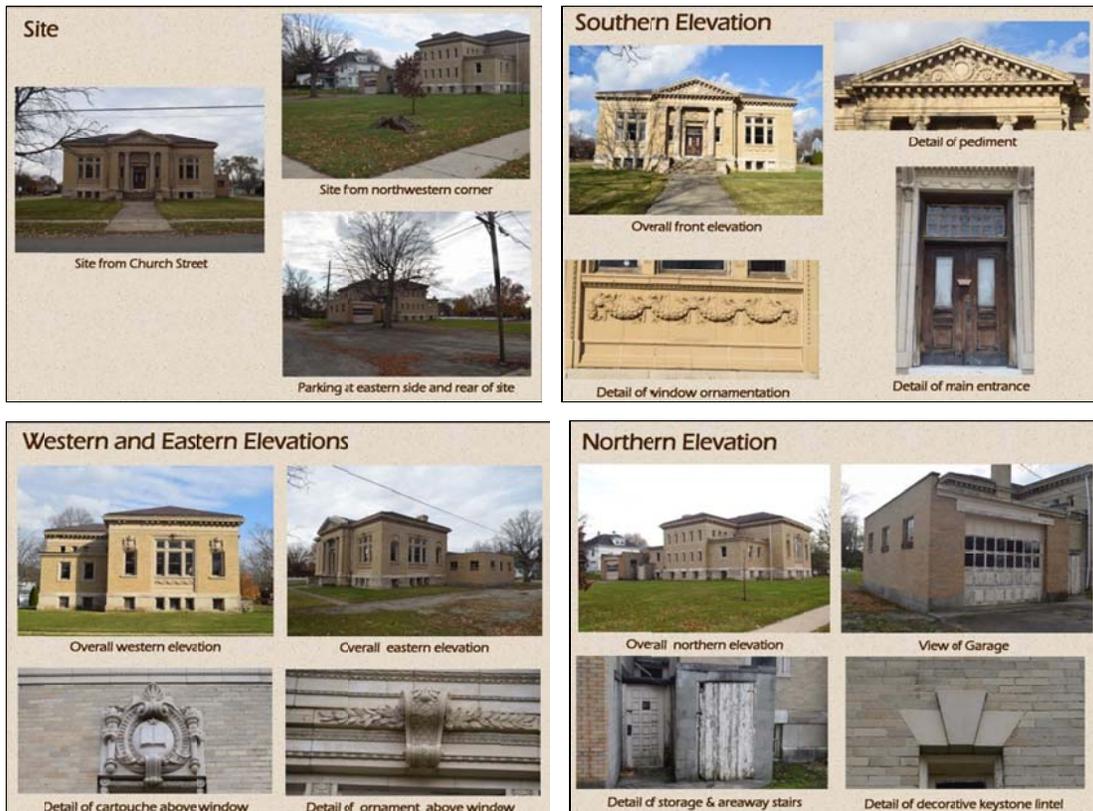


HISTORY AND CONTEXT:

- 111 Carnegie libraries were built in Ohio small towns and major cities; most are still standing
- Xenia’s building was started in 1904 and opened to public in 1906
- Vision was for it to be a community building and was used continuously as a library until 1978
- History of building and site; original drawings were obtained
- Dates of building modifications
- Building’s history in relation to larger context (region, state)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION & ANALYSIS OF HISTORIC FEATURES:

- Description of site, exterior and interior spaces
- Significant architectural features to be retained
- Non-contributing features should be removed (addition/garage)
- Missing features that should be replicated



Basement



Detail of original tile and wood beams



Detail of Original Doors & Transoms

Interior – Main Space



View of Main Space from Vestibule doors

Interior – Main Space



View of Main Space looking toward Children's Reading Room



View of Main Space looking toward Vestibule

Interior – Main Space



Detail of column capital



Detail of plaster clock surround



Detail of mosaic tile floor



Detail of ornamental plaster at walls

Interior – Main Space



Detail of vaulted ceiling with ornamental plaster



Detail of stained glass skylight

Interior – Vestibule and Stairs



Detail of transom in Vestibule



Detail of plaque at Vestibule



Detail of stairs from Basement

Interior – Stack Room & Mezzanine



Detail of glass ceiling in Stack Room



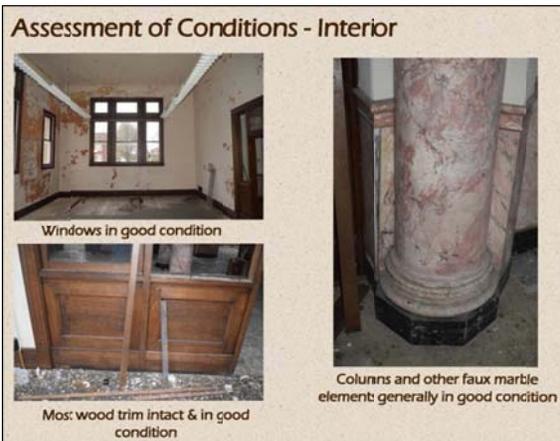
Detail of shelves in Stack Room



Detail of glass floor in Mezzanine

CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT:

- Identify and assess conditions: Site, Exterior, Interior, Systems (electrical, plumbing, mechanical, life safety), Structural
 - Recommend treatment options for each condition
 - All systems need to be replaced: Plumbing, Electrical, Mechanical, Life Safety
 - Assessment of Structural Engineer:
 - Basic structure of the building is very stable and structurally sound
 - Very good condition with only a few minor areas that require any attention
 - Very feasible that minimal structural repairs would be required to allow it to be renovated for community reuse



CONCLUSION:

- The Xenia Carnegie Library ...
 - is a significant historic resource in the community
 - has a high degree of historic integrity
 - is in very good structural condition
 - has damage primarily associated with water ingress
 - is an excellent candidate for adaptive reuse
- Next Step – Master Plan
 - Examine potential options
 - Determine eventual use
 - System upgrades, code and accessibility issues to be addressed based on new use
 - Develop concept designs, opinion of probable cost

In conclusion, Mr. Avdakov said they found the Carnegie Library to be a significant historic feature and resource for the community. It has architectural integrity and is in good structural condition with most of the damage being associated with the ingress of water. Therefore, they feel the building is an excellent candidate for adaptive use, and once the use is determined, they can implement a master plan for that use. Ms. Crockett said they want to have some fun with the project and seek input from the community on approximately three uses for the building so they can produce a legacy for citizens to enjoy for generations to come. Council was then invited to make comments and ask questions.

Councilman Louderback asked who owns the property because the discussion seems to imply that the City owns the property. Ms. Crockett said it is owned by the County. Councilman Louderback asked if the information and presentation had been presented to the County. Ms. Crockett said it has not yet been presented to the County because City Council awarded the funds for the HSR; therefore, they wanted to present the information to City Council first. She noted the information will be made available and accessible to the County, and added they are working on a master plan with various members of the County. The County was involved with the selection of the architect and provided access to the building for the assessment and study. If the County feels there is something specific that should go in the building then they certainly have that right; however, the Committee is hopeful that this process will help to determine a use for the building that will benefit the community.

Councilman Louderback said Council is at a disadvantage because the HSR information was just provided to them. He asked if the water ingress could have produced mold in the building and if there were any signs of mold or asbestos found inside. Mr. Avdakov said they did not investigate for either of those, but they did not see any signs of mold during the assessment. Councilman Louderback said the ultimate decision for the building still goes back to the County; many ideas for repurposing the building could be identified, but the City does not own the building. Ms. Crockett agreed, but in many cases this type of building can be restored through some type of partnership between the County, City, and end-users to identify the available resources in order to make the building something useful for the entire community. She thinks the County needs help in determining what the best course of action is for the building and since it is located within the City, then it would be beneficial for everyone involved to work together. Everything starts with a vision and a dream before figuring out how to get the funding to make it come to fruition.

Councilman Louderback said he is all for restoring the building, but the County holds the property. He asked if anyone from the City had talked to the County regarding the property. Mr. Merriman said he talked to the County Administrator and thinks the County is desirous of coming up with an alternative plan for the site because they do not want to be liable for the building. The County is not putting a ton of money into it, but they keep the exterior maintained. The County Administrator has told him on multiple occasions, as recent as last week, that if a viable plan was put together then the County may be interested in gifting the property over to the City. He would concur that the City would like to see a viable reuse that involves some private assistance for a reuse that matches public need. The County nor the City wants to dive into this process and pay to have it rehabbed because it will be a big project. Again, the County may be interested in divesting themselves of it if a plan comes forward. Councilman Wallace recalled the County stating in the past that they would be totally cooperative in disposing of the property to whomever was willing to repurpose the building.

Councilwoman Mills asked where citizens can go to provide input on the project. Ms. Crockett said there is a Facebook page listed under “Xenia Carnegie Library,” and they are working internally to include it on the City’s website (www.explorexenia.com) for additional information about Xenia’s historic districts and buildings. Additionally, they hope there will be a link for people to take a survey and a way to keep people informed throughout the process to help determine a final repurpose.

President Engle encouraged Ms. Crockett to get with the County Commissioners to make sure they have the HSR and other information; he invited the County to participate in future meetings and groups.

At 7:02 p.m., the Council adjourned their Special Session to prepare for their Regular Session immediately following.

Michelle D. Johnson
City Clerk

Michael D. Engle
President, Xenia City Council