

Carol Chaudier, 1129 Cliff View Place gave a presentation to the Commission on the initial design of the new downtown 4th and Adams park. She expressed a desire to hear from the public and the commission on any ideas for the park design. Chaudier noted that the park was being designed so that it could be built in stages as the funds were available. She recommended that the first phase of construction include: the retaining wall, grading of the lot and installation of the restrooms.

Griswold commented on the importance of designing the park to discourage use by skateboarding enthusiasts.

Janke reiterated that the City purchased the property to help revitalize the downtown area, as well as to provide public restrooms, and a covered bus shelter for tourists.

Notice of the public hearing as posted and published as required by law was noted, and the public hearing was opened. No one requested to be heard and the public hearing was closed.

Review of the current status of the Jesse Lee Home, and discussion of the options available to the City regarding the future of the Jesse Lee Home properties.

Janke gave an overview of the current situation of the Jesse Lee Home property between the City and the current owner Frank Irick. He stated that the City was in a foreclosure issue with the owner and summarized the different scenarios that might occur in the process of the City getting the property back. He noted that there would be liability issues that come with ownership of the property and further noted that the three options for the City had if they took ownership were as follows: to sell the property, to restore it, or to set the property aside for public use. He recommended having a work session with one of the city attorneys in attendance to advise the commission and to answer questions on the legal aspects of the property. In answer to questions from the commission, Janke noted that past engineering reports were a cursory review, not full structural engineering inspections.

James reiterated the zoning and land use options available for this property.

Notice of the public hearing as posted and published as required by law was noted, and the public hearing was opened.

Stu Clark, 1129 Cliff View Place, asked for a clarification on what would happen if the city did nothing, the Kenai Peninsula Borough foreclosed on the property and wanted to turn it over to the City. Did the city have to accept the property from the Borough.

Janke reported that the City was looking into the question on whether they can refuse to accept the property from the Borough.

Tim Szawinski, Woodland Hills Subdivision, noted that there were two important historical aspects to the Jesse Lee Home property; the building itself and as the site of the first Alaska State

Flag raising. He stated that restoration money was available, making reference to \$14,000,000.00 from the National Endowment of Humanities that went into restoring historic buildings last year. He commented that possibly the State of Alaska could be encouraged to become involved in restoration due to the fact that this was a state historic site. He reiterated the emotional aspects of the property and encouraged the City and residents of Seward to be more creative in raising the monies to restore it.

Stu Clark 1129 Cliff View Place, noted that many residents of the community have made reference to money available to restore the building, he suggested these residents make the owners of the building aware of the financial help available. He commented on the fact that past owners had not been able to implement viable plans to restore and operate a business on the site.

Janke reiterated that the city administration did not favor any particular option, and that this was the first step in reviewing all of the options available. He noted that the current owner had explored tax incentives available when restoring a historic building and found that those available would not amount to much help. He further noted that there may be environmental issues that arise in the restoration process, such as, asbestos and/or oil in the ground.

Roger Long, 602 4th Avenue, stated that he was interested in the Jesse Lee Home and finding a way to restore it. He reported that he had sent information to a firm in Boston that writes business plans for non-profit organizations, and they concluded that it would be a viable project, however they need more engineering information and they stressed the importance of strong local support. He reported that he was researching the idea of a consortium of non-profit organizations who could use their grant writing capabilities to make it a viable proposition. He voiced interest in any information available on the situation. He emphasized the fact that for a project such as this to work it had to have strong local community support.

No one else requested to be heard and the public hearing was closed.

After much discussion about the aspects and costs of restoring the buildings or clearing the property the Commissioners agreed to take a field trip to the site to see the building and the property and to set up a work session with the city attorney to discuss the options available.

Note: The Chairman suggested taking New Business, Resolution 2001-03, denying the sign variance request by Glacier sign and Lighting out of order to accommodate the representative from out of town.

New Business

Resolution 2001-03, denying the sign variance request by Glacier Sign and Lighting for Safeway, Inc. to allow an oversize freestanding, internally illuminated sign on Lot 6A, Block 3, Jesse Lee Heights Subdivision

James reviewed the staff report included in the agenda packet and recommended Commission approval of Resolution 2001-03 denying the variance request.