



Wheaton Park District

Wheaton Park District Board of Commissioners Special Meeting
Wednesday May 24, 2017 4:00 p.m.
Dupage County Historical Museum
102 E. Wesley Street, Wheaton, Illinois

CALL TO ORDER – President Vires called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. Commissioners Fahey, Frey, Kelly, Morrill, and were physically present. Commissioners Mee and Hodgkinson were present via phone conference call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nancy Flannery 816 W. Elm Street, Wheaton, IL

Ms. Flannery stated that she commended the Wheaton Park District on their leadership in preserving Wheaton's history. We are a unique community with many historic sites like the Chicago Golf Club. She stated that if the house is destroyed, Wheaton's history is destroyed. She felt the mansion could add to tourism in Wheaton. She stated that she will personally commit the Wheaton Historic Commission to fundraising for the house. She stated that she has received phone calls and emails from many people outside of the Wheaton area asking that the house be saved.

Ronald Almiron 455 W. Front Street Unit 201 Wheaton, IL

Mr. Almiron stated that this is an opportunity to re-purpose this property for the residents of Wheaton. He thought it would be a great place to hold special events and possibly a bed and breakfast. He asked the Wheaton Park District Park Board of Commissioners to do what they can to make this happen.

Robert Lyons 1245 Golf Circle Wheaton, IL

Mr. Lyons stated that he didn't think the preliminary estimate of a \$50,000 fundraising figure is low. He stated that if it does get approved he thought that that figure should be higher.

Mark Plunkett 1000 S. Hale Street Wheaton, IL

Mr. Plunkett applauded the Wheaton Park District for their efforts. He thought that this would be good for the entire community.

Bill Dabovich 540 Riva Ct Wheaton, IL

Mr. Dabovich stated that he is a photographer who has photographed the mansion in the past. He thought it would be a shame to lose the house because of its historical impact. He thought it could be used as a banquet facility. He is in favor of preserving the house.

George Carr 320 Browning Ct Wheaton IL

Mr. Carr stated he didn't understand how the loan could be paid back in 12 months. Executive Director Benard stated that under one scenario, the park district would take out a 5 year loan with the bank to pay back the resident that provided the money to move the house. The use of a loan is suggested as a means to demonstrate that the new property tax revenue and impact fees (from

the pulte development) would be used for the project rather than existing capital and operating dollars. Mr. Carr asked if the cost to move it is correct. Benard stated that he has in his possession the proposal from Wolfe Movers indicating the move cost but that total related costs would need to be researched.

Ronald Brushcoyler 633 Brighton Drive

Mr. Brushcoyler was concerned with the lack of vehicular access to the mansion. Executive Director Benard stated that while not ideal, the use the parking off of Winner Cup Circle was possible. We could use 2-3 8-10 passenger golf carts to shuttle people back and forth (Cantigny and the Arboretum use this method successfully). He also stated that it was a short walk for those who would rather walk. The catering trucks could access the building off of Brighton or Winners Cup Circle .

Barbara Dutton 418 E. Evergreen Street Wheaton, IL

Ms. Dutton stated that she appreciates the Wheaton Park District's efforts in historic preservation.

Champ Davis 24 W. Ogden Ave Hinsdale, IL

Mr. Davis thanked Pulte and applauded the Wheaton Park District for considering the matter of rescuing the mansion. He stated that we cannot underestimate the historical significance of this property. He stated that the other mansions that have been saved and utilized as banquet venues have done really well. He stated that the Katherine Legge Lodge in Hinsdale is booked out for two years in advance. He stated that the Seven Gables house could be used year round to create revenue. He stated that when people think of Frank Lloyd Wright they think of Oak Park, when people think of Jarvis Hunt they will think of Wheaton.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review and Possible Action: Agreement or Agreements related to the Donation of a Structure Located on the Loretto Convent Property to the Wheaton Park District and the Subsequent Relocation of Said Structure on to Land Owned by the Wheaton Park District

Executive Director Benard stated that he was made aware last week by preservationists from Wheaton and Hinsdale that an effort was underway to attempt to re-locate the mansion. He stated that some residents offered the park district a bridge loan to relocate the house to Seven Gables Park 800 feet to the south. After considering the matter, Benard came up with an outline of a plan to use the new money the park district would see from the Pulte development to facilitate the rescue of the mansion along with local fundraising efforts and operating net revenue of a restored mansion rental facility. (Please see report from Benard dated 5/24/17 for additional details included as part of these minutes).

After sharing the possibility with Park Board President John Vires, a special meeting was called by Vires so the whole board would be able to learn about the possibility and react to it. Subsequent to sending the same report referenced above to the City Manager to keep him in the loop on the matter, Benard was notified by Wheaton's City Manager that the City was willing to pay 50% of the moving costs or \$114,000 to assist in the preservation effort if it gained approval. This resolution allows for the park board to move forward with conditions that would need to be met in order for the deal to go through.

Commissioner Kelly stated that although Benard did a good job outlining the possibilities preliminarily, he didn't think the \$150,000 was enough and would want to see what condition the mansion is in. He was also concerned with the lack of parking and thought it could be perceived negatively. He would like more time for staff to obtain answers to questions. He did think the mansion could receive over flow business from Arrowhead. He is not opposed to this he just wants more information. He would like to see a business plan. He also didn't think we would need to borrow the money to pay back the bridge loan that the park district has the money to pay that.

Commissioner Frey echoed Commissioner Kelly's concerns and was concerned that we might be taking money away from Arrowhead. He agreed that he needed more time.

Commissioner Fahey thanked Executive Director for all his hard work on the project. He is in favor of preserving the mansion but agreed that he needed more time. He would also like to see a business plan. Fahey stated that we should tap into the Jarvis Hunt community to generate money for the mansion.

Commissioner Morrill stated that he lived where the mansion would be moved to. He is 100% in favor of preserving it but he believes parking will be an issue. He also thought that it's very dark in that area at night therefore we would need to add lights over there. He also thought it would be competing for parking with soccer on the weekends. He would like to see a foundation created to fundraise for the mansion. He thought that the district needs to prioritize the projects we already have going. He would like more time like the other commissioners to have more questions answered.

Commissioner Hodgkinson agrees with preserving the building but has the same concerns as the other commissioners. She would like more time also.

Commissioner Mee stated he couldn't support this resolution without more information. He agreed that the park district needs to prioritize the projects they are already working on. He thought that the mansion will need repairs to be used as a special events venue. He wasn't in favor of a shuttle service. He agreed with the rest of the board that he needs more time.

Rob Getz from Pulte Builders stated that they closed on the property today. He stated he has talked to a lot of people over the past year about moving the mansion. Pulte needs the mansion off of the property by July 10, 2017. The moving company would need 3 weeks to move it and 1 week to stage it. They need a decision by June 12 to stay on their timeline. They are willing to surgically remove the chapel. That would need to be done by June 12. Pulte has offered to at no cost build a 40X100 hauling road. They need 4-5 days to do this and clear the trees.

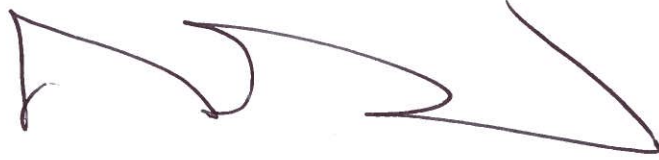
Commissioner Kelly stated that we would need to have the money in place by June 12. Benard stated that he will talk to fundraisers and look at the house and study the matter over the next 5 days.

The Wheaton Park District's attorney Phil Luetkehans stated that it would be easier for the park district to pay Pulte directly then to have a donor pay and have the park district pay the donor back. Luetkehans recommended scheduling a Special Meeting for next week and he will draft a letter of intent for that meeting if the Board wishes.

President Vires called a Special Meeting to be held on Wednesday May 31, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Dupage County Historical Museum 102 E. Wesley Street, Wheaton, Illinois.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5:15 p.m., Commissioner Morrill moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Frey seconded. Motion passed by voice vote.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Morrill', written in a cursive style.

TO: Board of Park Commissioners
FROM: Michael J. Benard, Executive Director
RE: House of Seven Gables Acquisition and Operation Proposal
DATE: May 24, 2017




SUMMARY: Pulte Builders will develop the 15 acre Loretto Convent Property into 48 homes adjacent to Seven Gables Park this year. Among the structures to be demolished to make way for this development is an historic structure known as the House of Seven Gables (const. 1896/7) which was designed by Jarvis Hunt who is an architect of some significance who also designed the Chicago Golf Club and several other important buildings in Wheaton and in other cities across the country. See **attachment 1**. Historians and Preservationists agree that the House of Seven Gables is a rare and important part of our local heritage and is architecturally valuable.

Late last week, a group of preservationists shared with me their desire to save the House of Seven Gables from the wrecking ball via a plan to relocate it. Pulte Builders had previously made it public that they would give the house to anyone who would pay to have it relocated within their development timeline which calls for the clearing of the property (including the house) in June and July.


Through discussions with this group, Pulte Builders and WPD legal counsel, I have become aware that, if it so chooses, the Wheaton Park District Board through appropriate direction to its staff and legal counsel, could act to save the house and, with some assistance from the historic preservation community, maintain it as a community asset in a financially sustainable manner.

Two local resident preservationists, Bob and Katy Goldsborough, are willing to purchase the house from Pulte (for \$100), front the cost of relocating it to Seven Gables Park which is adjacent to the Loretto Convent Property, and then donate the House to the Park District. See **attachment 2**. The Goldsboroughs indicate that they are not able to donate the costs to move outright, but would pay the expense if they could be reimbursed in 12 months. The cost to move the house is \$228,000. The move alone saves the house from destruction but does not complete the preservation effort. The costs of reimbursing the relocation expense, as well as paying for restoration expenses related to making it a building suitable for assemblage, can be accomplished without the use of existing park district capital or operating dollars. Instead we will leverage the new money that will be available to the Wheaton Park District via the development of the 48 homes on the Loretto Convent Property by Pulte Builders and also via the proven expertise of the district in the realms of hospitality services and event rentals.



FUNDING IMPLICATIONS: I propose the following as a plan to save the House of Seven Gables and maintain it as an ongoing business and historic preservation concern in a manner that is financially sustainable.

1. Reimbursing the Goldsboroughs: The 48 new houses will generate approximately \$50,000 in new property taxes for the Park District annually after the development is completed and occupied. I propose that the district engage its Banking Institution, Wheaton Bank and Trust, for the purpose of borrowing the \$228,000 with a 5 year repayment schedule to reimburse the Goldsborough's within the 12 month timeframe. The new property tax revenue will be used to meet the loan Principal and Interest (appx 4%) and then be available for other park purposes thereafter.
2. Meeting the additional Restoration Costs: The 48 new houses will generate approximately \$150,000 in one time impact fees for the Park District via the Land Cash Donation Ordinance. The appropriate place to spend these dollars is Seven Gables Park. I propose that it be used to meet the costs associated with making the house again suitable for assemblage including;
 - a. Foundation Construction
 - b. Natural Gas Service Connection
 - c. Electrical Service Connection
 - d. Water Service Connection
 - e. Sanitary Service Connection
 - f. Storm-water Permitting



Pulte will be addressing these same concerns as part of the construction of the housing development and have committed to cooperative efforts.

Ornamental gardens and possibly statuary could be added as dictated by revenue generation.

3. Fundraising for additional needs: Any gap between the cost of a-f above and the total impact fees generated by the development will be met through a short term focused fundraising effort conducted by the local historic preservation community prior to the move of the house. Should those efforts fail, the deal will be terminated. Additionally, if a major element of the structure was found to be requiring capital expense prior to the move of the house (such as the roof or other building envelope item) which could not be paid for as described herein, the deal would be terminated. A date certain would be worked out between the parties and Pulte as a deadline for fundraising and assessment of additional costs as well as a study of the building envelope.
4. Ongoing Costs for maintaining the House: The House of Seven Gables will be utilized for community and family events as one of the Wheaton Park District's Rental Facilities. The administration of the rental facility can be folded into existing staff responsibilities. I offer the following examples from other nearby communities of similar uses of Historic Mansions/Homes:

- a. Cheney Mansion - Park District of Oak Park
 - i. Gross Revenue 2016 \$216,334
 - ii. Net Revenue 2016 \$ 47,610

- b. Wilder Mansion - Elmhurst Park District
 - i. Gross Revenue 2016 \$238,553
 - ii. Net Revenue 2016 \$ 88,655

Please see attached promotional information from Oak Park and Elmhurst to give you an idea of the possibilities. See attachments 3 & 4. Upon the Board's direction, I will immediately craft a business plan for such an enterprise.

- 5. Parking and Access Considerations for Rental of Mansion: Existing parking in Seven Gables Park near the Tennis Courts would be utilized for rental event parking. A short walk to the mansion would be required or a golf cart multi seat unit utilized as needed for elderly or disabled. Catering and other supply drop off would use the same access road off of Brighton similar to when Staff lived on the property 12 years ago.

LEGAL REVIEW: I have reviewed the preceding with Special Counsel Phil Luetkehans and he has found the proposed to be within our abilities legally as a Park District. I have asked him to draft an Ordinance that would authorize the negotiation of acquisition should that be the will of the Board. Ordinance included as part of this report.

Please see attached photographs of the subject property.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me prior to the meeting if you wish to discuss this matter in advance.

Attachment 1

DATA FORM FOR SURVEY OF JARVIS HUNT BUILDINGS IN WHEATON, ILLINOIS

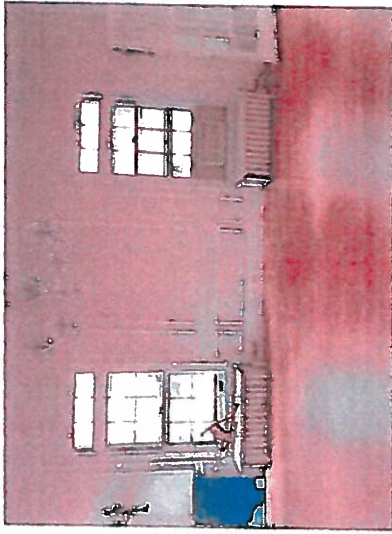


Architect: Jarvis Hunt
Building Name: House of Seven Gables/Loretto Convent
Address: 1600 Somerset Lane, Wheaton
Original Owner: Jay C. Morse
Original Use: single-family residence
Current Use: convent
Construction date: 1896-97
Architectural Style: Tudor Revival
No. of stories: 2 1/2
Roof form: gabled
Cladding material: brick
Noteworthy features: multi-gabled roof; two exterior brick chimneys; parapeted gables; slate roof; three lancet windows on front elevation; jack-arch lintels above windows.

Notes: This house was originally part of an 80-acre parcel purchased by Jay C. Morse, a member of the Chicago Golf Club, which became known as Seven Gables Farm, the name of which referenced the seven gables of its estate house. The House of Seven Gables was intended as a seasonal residence for Morse's daughter and son-in-law, Carolyn Morse Ely and Arthur Ely. It was converted to a convent in 1946 after ten acres of the original estate were sold to the Ladies of Loretto, a Catholic Order of teaching nuns known as the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Sources: Jarvis Hunt, undated basement plan for the Arthur C. Ely House. "Houses of Golfers at Wheaton: New Residences Near the Grounds of the Chicago Golf Club," *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 21, 1897.

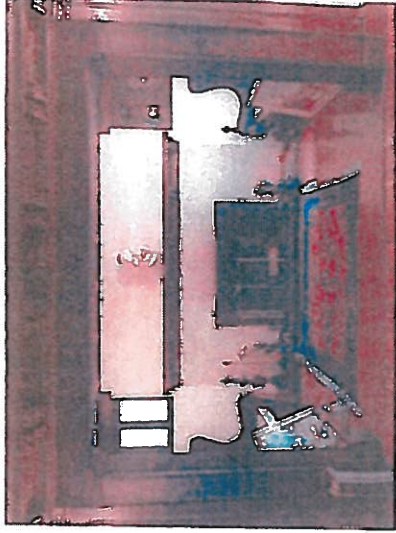
Date of photo: 6/20/16



West Room: 867 SF



East Room: 704 SF



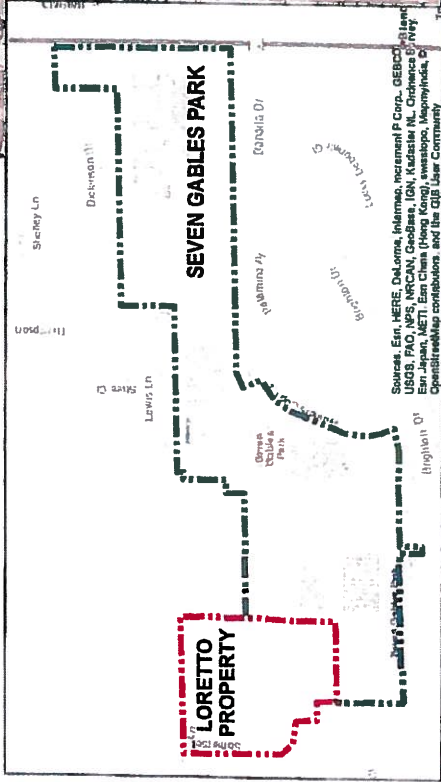
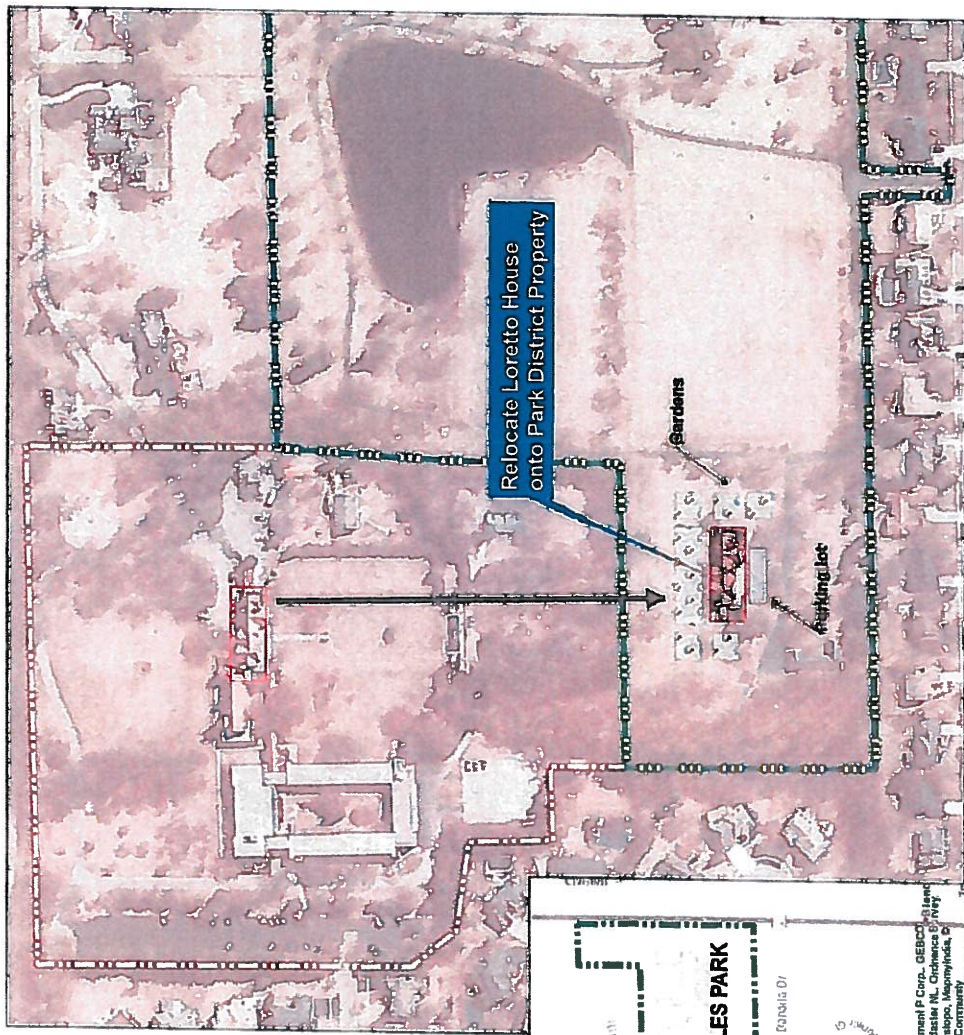
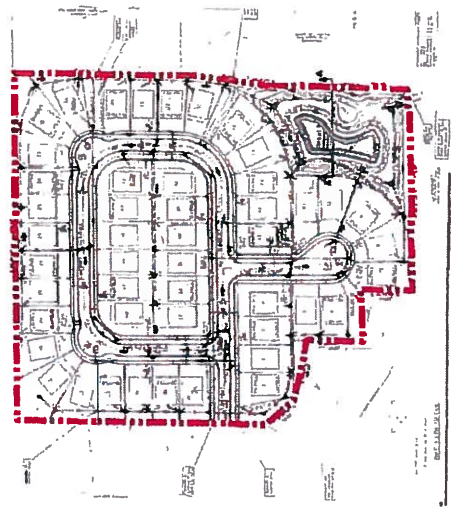
Fireplace nook (in east room): 60SF



Entrance

A Handout 2

Loretto Property Redevelopment Plan

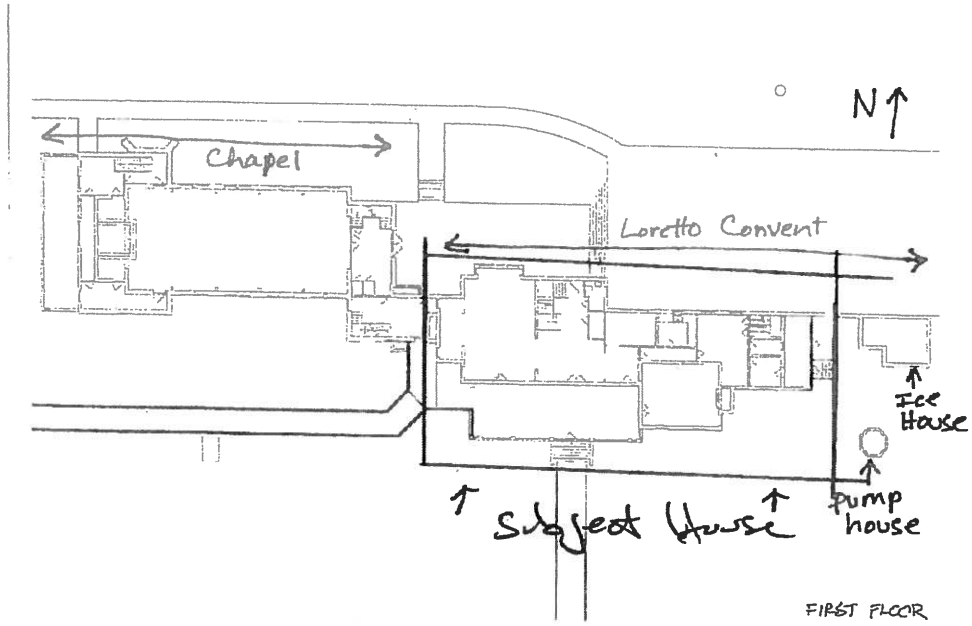


Sources: Enr. HERE, DuLoma, Indiana, Inc./McMurry P. Corp., GEBCO, Inc. (1998), PACON, Goble, IG, Kulas, N.L. Chalmers, J. W. Engrs., Inc. (1998), and the GIS User Community.



Seven Gables Park & Loretto House

SEVEN GABLES FARM (aka Loretto Convent Property)
DuPage County, Illinois
Illinois HABS No. DU-2016-1 (Page 75)



Environs, First Floor Plan of the Chapel (left) and House of Seven Gables, showing Ice House and Pump House on the right, 2000.