



Property Committee Agenda
Room 400, Government Center
Thursday, May 1, 2014
4:45 p.m.

1. Roll Call
2. Chairman's Approval of Minutes – April 3, 2014
3. Appearance by Members of the Public
4. Departmental Matters:
 - A. Jack Moody, Director, Facilities Management
 - 1) Items to be Presented for Information:
 - a) Report on "Grant Application for Heritage Tourism Center at the Old Courthouse Museum of History"
 - b) General Report
 - c) Other
5. Other Business and Communications
6. Recommend Payment of Bills and Transfers, if any, to County Board
7. Adjournment

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OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

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115 E. Washington St., Room 401 P.O. Box 2400 Bloomington, IL 61702-2400

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members of the Property Committee

From: Bill Wasson, County Administrator

Date: 04/24/2014

Re: Old County Courthouse: Tourism Visitor Center Project

The McLean County Courthouse, 200 North Main Street, in Bloomington, Illinois, located on the courthouse square, now houses the McLean County Museum of History. It ceased being a courthouse in 1976 when the Law and Justice Center was opened. After the completion of the Law & Justice Center expansion, the Museum began operations in the old Courthouse in October 1991 under a long-term lease agreement with the County. The Building was deeded by the County to the Public Building Commission in 2004 as a portion of the Dome and Roof renovation project. The County remains as the tenant/operator of the building and sub-leases the premises to the McLean County Museum of History. This building is listed on the National Registrar of Historic Places.

The 1987 McLean County History Center agreement between the County and the McLean County Museum of History states that parties agree that the objective of this agreement" includes "g. to provide an attraction which will promote and stimulate economic activity through tourism..... and delegates that the Museum " shall pay the cost of appropriate and feasible interior restoration of the Courthouse.

The request to submit a grant application to the State of Illinois for funding of renovations to the create a Heritage Tourism Visitor Center in the basement of the Old Courthouse, including landscaping renovation, renovation of public restroom facilities was initially provided to the County Board Property Committee in May 2012. The initial grant request in 2012 was not successful.

In March 2014, the County Board Property Committee reviewed a proposal for a grant request to renovate restroom facilities of the Old Courthouse. This grant application is currently under consideration by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Museum Grant program.

The McLean County Museum of History has identified funds to provide for landscape and basement renovations (less the restroom project currently under consideration) if the April 30th, 2014 Tourism Grant request to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is successful. Under the DCEO Grant, the McLean County Museum of History is eligible and would act as the fiscal agent for that grant and would be responsible for performance of the grant outcomes, working in cooperation with the County Facilities Management Department.

www.mcleancountyil.gov



McLEAN COUNTY MUSEUM OF HISTORY

200 North Main Street • Bloomington, IL 61701 • Phone: 309-827-0428 • www.McHistory.org

April 24, 2014

Attn: Members of the Property Committee, County of McLean

The McLean County Museum of History has continued to work to obtain funding for the project initially reviewed for Grant Submittal by the County Board Property Committee on May 3, 2012. The Museum intends to develop a Heritage Tourism Visitors' Center in its ground floor corridors and ground floor rotunda. The Center will interpret Historic Route 66 and Abraham Lincoln in the McLean County area. This grand space of marble clad walls and marble floors is underutilized. In order to make an attractive entrance for the visitors' center the grounds will be landscaped and a plaza will be built at the south entry of the building. The original exterior façade of the building will not be impacted. Russell Francois, AIA, designed the project. The interior work will include the installation of *Cruis'n with Lincoln on 66*. This exhibit will promote Abraham Lincoln and Route 66 tourism. It will include 8 exhibit units, a mini-theater, a children's activity area, a rest area and a reception station. These interior components total 1,200 sq.ft. .

The mini-theaters utilizing a large screen monitor will interpret local heritage tourism sites. The long and wide corridors will feature 145 linear feet of interpretive exhibits interlaced with books, maps and other sales items which visitors may purchase to enhance their knowledge and enjoyments of Historic Route 66 and Abraham Lincoln. We will install a 10x10' Reception Station, which will be staffed at the same hours of the Museum, featuring visitor's lounge area with tables and chairs and a children's activity area with toys and activities relating to Route 66. Aside from the south entryway improvements, extensive re-landscaping will enhance the grounds of the Museum.

This project is being developed to support two key Illinois tourism themes which cross in our community: Abraham Lincoln and Route 66. Heritage tourism is a market we can access. It is known that 78% of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling, a figure that translates to 118.3 million adults each year. Cultural and heritage visitors spend, on average, \$994 per trip compared to \$611 for all U.S. travelers. This will be the only visitors' center in Illinois cross marketing these two themes.

Route 66 studies show aggregate spending by visitors on 66 is about \$132 million a year. Pontiac is attracting 20,000 people a year. They are coming to see: historic sites/monuments, vintage restaurants and motels, and small towns. Congress has established an Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. McLean County is part of it. The recently developed management plan for the area calls for the kind of facility we are developing. This puts us in a lead position.

The museum is partnering with the Bloomington Normal Convention and Visitors Bureau on this project. They have financial involvement and they have made a commitment to support his project for a period of four years. The museum currently has a grant under consideration for support of this project from The Illinois Office of Tourism. We anticipate receiving favorable response to the grant which will allow us to place this project out to bid around May 15.

Sincerely Yours,

Greg Koos
Executive Director