



DATE: May 10, 2022

Agenda Item # **11.1**

MEMO TO: Angelo D. Kyle, President
Board of Commissioners

FROM: Rebekah Snyder
Director of Community Engagement & Partnerships

REQUEST: Provide policy direction on proceeding with (i) a potential grant application to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and/or (ii) a master plan for the Adlai E. Stevenson Historic Home.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED: Public Access and Connections; Organizational Sustainability

FINANCIAL DATA: The proposed grant presents an opportunity to apply for \$1,100,000.00 in funding to support capital improvements to the Adlai E. Stevenson Historic Home. The cost of a master plan is estimated to be \$100,000.00.

BACKGROUND: In October 2019, the District solicited competitive bids for exterior renovations to the Stevenson home. The project had been estimated at \$550,000.00, but the lowest responsible bid for the work was \$597,838.00 when bids were opened on December 10, 2019. The potential contract award was discussed by Committees in February and March 2020. At its March 5, 2020, meeting, the consensus of the Finance Committee was for staff to investigate opportunities for grants that would finance some or all of the renovation work and to ask the lowest responsible bidder to extend its bid through the May 12, 2020 Board meeting date. The bidder complied.

However, the first statewide emergency proclamation due to COVID-19 was issued on March 20, 2020. The bid extension expired with no action taken.

On May 24, 2021, a Joint Committee meeting was held at the Adlai E. Stevenson Historic Home to reconsider renovation of the home and adjacent service building in conjunction with the District's annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) program review. As part of the discussion, it was estimated that the cost of the exterior renovations to the home had likely escalated to approximately \$700,000.00 (from \$597,838.00 the year before) based on further aging of the structure and increases in material costs. In addition, a rough estimate of \$400,000.00 was provided for renovating the exterior of the service building. The total rough estimate for exterior (only) renovations to the two Stevenson buildings was \$1,100,000.00.

At that meeting, the Committees ceased discussion of renovations and instead recommended funding in the amount of \$100,000.00 within the FY 2022 Capital Improvement Plan to develop a master plan for home, service building, and surrounding landscape.

Shortly after the Joint Committee meeting, the District was notified that State funding may be available for the Adlai E. Stevenson Historic Home. On May 26, 2021, President Kyle then sent the Lake County General Assembly delegation a letter identifying \$1,100,000.00 in deferred maintenance costs, including for immediate improvements necessary to ensure the integrity of the house and adjacent service building. The letter also identified approximately \$20,000.00 in annual maintenance costs.

Funding of \$1,100,000.00 was approved in the State budget for “capital improvements to the Adlai E. Stevenson Historic Home”. Notably, District staff has clarified with the State Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) grant officer that “capital improvements” may include capital improvements to other areas of the 40-acre site, not just the house and service building.

Since May 2021, material prices have continued to increase and the buildings have continued to deteriorate. No additional analysis of the needs of the buildings or updated estimates for the cost of repairs has occurred because it was unknown when the State’s grant commitment would become available.

In February 2022, staff received an invitation to submit grant application documents to the DCEO, requesting the \$1,100,000.00 grant. The grant application documents that must be submitted by the District include a detailed project narrative, project budget, and proposed timeline. As with other State grant applications, after submission, the application will be reviewed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office for any adverse effects.

At the April 4 and April 7, 2022, Committee meetings, staff sought direction whether to proceed with the grant application. The opinions of Committee members varied and there was no clear consensus from the Committees.

Staff is now seeking direction (through a motion of the Board of Commissioners) on how to proceed. If the Board directs staff to file for the grant application (and assuming approval of the application), staff would bring a resolution accepting the grant back through the Committee and Board review process.

Staff recommends that the Board provide direction on one of the following two options:

Option 1: File the grant application now and prepare a master plan in the future. Staff would develop a grant application and project budget not to exceed \$1.1 million, which prioritizes stabilizing the home to prevent further degradation. Based on updated cost estimates, additional work on the service building may be included, up to the limit of the available grant funding.

With this option, the District would be committing to the long-term ownership and maintenance of the Stevenson home and service building. It is unlikely that the funding would be sufficient to address the improvements needed at the site identified in the District's 2019 ADA supplemental Transition Plan, which totaled \$181,164. These costs have likely increased significantly since 2019.

A master plan, which is already included in the CIP at an estimated cost of \$100,000, will be developed in the future. Through that process, staff will seek to identify (i) options for making the site more energy efficient, (ii) more efficient parking operations, and (iii) opportunities for better public access, including a potential trail connection to the Des Plaines River Trail and ADA improvements.

Option 2: Prepare the master plan for the site now (with a goal of including any project improvements in the 2023 CIP) and then apply for the grant.

The master planning process would consider all options, from maintaining the current structures to demolishing them, but making new improvements that interpret Stevenson's life, impact, and significance in a new way. As with Option 1, the master plan would identify (i) options for making the site more energy efficient, (ii) more efficient parking operations, and (iii) opportunities for better public access, including a potential trail connection to the Des Plaines River Trail and ADA improvements.

Staff would then prepare the grant application to include all bondable capital improvements, up to the \$1.1 million appropriation. If completing the build-out of the master plan would cost more than \$1.1 million, then the grant application would identify the source of matching funds for such excess costs.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Director of Planning and Land Preservation, Director of Operations and Infrastructure, Corporate Counsel.