



# MEMORANDUM

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“...meeting community needs...enhancing quality of life.”

TO: Community & Economic Development Committee (CEDC)

FROM: Karen Harkness, Director

DATE: September 11, 2019

RE: Resolution #5-R-19: Rededication and Revitalization of Soldier's Square

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Resolution #5-R-19 Rededication & Revitalization of Soldier's Square was submitted by Alderpersons Schultz and Williams on May 15, 2019. It went to CEDC on June 12, 2019 and was referred to staff to complete due diligence. The Departments of Community and Economic Development, Parks, Recreation and Facilities, and Public Works, as well as the City Attorney's Office, all participated in the completion of the due diligence.

Attached are the following documents:

- Resolution #5-R-19
- Memo from City Attorney Walsh dated September 5, 2019
- Staff Memo dated June 12, 2019
- Original Deed from 1851
- Historical Newspaper Articles
- Municipal Services Minutes dated November 11, 2008
- Common Council Minutes from November 19, 2008
- Civil War Monument Condition Report
- Excerpt from Comprehensive Plan Re: Soldier Square/YMCA Parking Ramp Area
- 1922 Comprehensive Plan
- Map of Streets and Area in 1922

## Due Diligence Findings

This property was conveyed by Amos Lawrence to the City of Appleton in 1851. The City Attorney's memo states, "...it is clear that the City's use of Soldiers Square for a street and parking area is consistent with the terms of conveyance." On November 11, 2008, Municipal Services moved to deny Resolution #12-R-08 and, ultimately, the resolution was withdrawn by the author. On November 11, 2008, Municipal Services recommended Soldier Square from Oneida Street to Morrison Street to be reconstructed with concrete pavement and curb and gutter. The recommended geometry of Soldier Square was presented at the October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting and included incorporating angled parking, an enclosure for refuse collections, lowering the statue, and a "café area" along the eastern half of the north side of Soldier Square. This design was done with a great deal of input from business and property owners and Appleton Downton Inc. (ADI). Council approved this action on November 19, 2008.

Soldier Square was originally scheduled for reconstruction in 2010. Reconstruction was delayed until 2012. At that time, it was constructed as to the design discussed with the community at a cost of \$200,000 with 32 parking stalls generating \$40,000 in annual revenue.

The Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department in 2015 had the Civil War Memorial inspected, and the report indicated the scope of work and the estimated cost to repair the monument is between \$14,000 to \$20,000. It is the Department's intent to complete this work within the next five years using CIP artwork monies. This monument would not be moved due to cost feasibility and it already exists in the Soldier Square Area.

The Spanish American War Memorial that was in Soldier Square was moved to Pierce Park in the late 30's. Plans to refurbish this memorial in its 9 decades' location are currently in the planning stages. In addition, there are two other monuments in this same area that will also be restored. The Department invited Sculpture Valley to meet with staff and review these plans, which they, without seeing them, are not supportive of as a result of their desire to develop and move the Spanish American War Memorial to the Soldier Square Area. Approximately 4 years ago, the PR&F Department worked with Sculpture Valley to purchase new cannons for this monument which will be installed when the monument is refurbished in Pierce Park. It is anticipated this work will be completed within the next two years.

The 1922 Comprehensive Plan shows a design in this area for a Civic Center including the YMCA, Library, City Hall, Municipal Museum and Art Building, Women's Club, Vocational School, Lawrence Music Conservatory, two Churches and Stores. To the best of our knowledge, portions of this plan were implemented, but the core components of this concept plan were not actionized due to the cost to assemble the land, construction of several new buildings, and the natural growth of the urban core.

The 2017 Comprehensive Plan shows a concept designed for many areas in the Central Business District. The Soldier Square concept design is shown in a flexible manner to accommodate a mix of daily, weekly, seasonal and special event uses. For example, the use of retractable bollards at S. Oneida Street and Soldier's Square would allow for multiple configurations of pedestrian-only space.

In November 2016, Council directed the Community and Economic Development Department to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to develop a 200,000 square foot mixed-use library somewhere in the Central Business District. In January 2017, the City received 8 proposals from 5 developers. Subsequently, Council accepted a proposal from Commercial Horizons to redevelop the Soldier Square Ramp site for a mixed-use library. Staff and developer were then directed to continue due diligence required to redevelop this site. Resources were spent towards this endeavor until Council directed to hold any further due diligence until development of Bluff Site One was better developed.

**Staff Recommendation:**

For all of the facts stated above, staff recommends Resolution #5-R-19 **BE DENIED**.