

Committee on Special Facilities

May 1, 2025

A meeting of the Committee on Special Facilities was held on this date, beginning at 4:00 p.m. over Zoom.

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

PRESENT: Councilmember Robert Mitchell (Vice-Chair), Councilmember William Tinkler, and Councilmember Stephen Bowden

Also Present: Romaine Heyward - Special Facilities Director, Matthew Frohlich - Deputy Chief, Magalie Creech, Melissa Cruthirds, Elizabeth Dieck, Philip Clapper, and Donna Constance

Vice-Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order.

Invocation

The meeting was opened with a moment of silence led by Vice-Chair Mitchell.

Approval of the February 6, 2025, minutes

On a motion by Councilmember Tinkler, seconded by Councilmember Bowden, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the February 6, 2025, Special Facilities meeting minutes.

Special Facilities Update

Ms. Heyward said that they were still facing elevator issues in some buildings. Mr. Youmans, the director of the Old Exchange building, met with the head of the Department of Archives and History in Columbia to discuss the possibility of a \$250,000 grant from the 250th Commission. They agreed to support everything the Old Exchange wanted to pursue, particularly the renovation of the elevator system, which had been deemed beyond repair. Mr. Emerson stated that the elevator costs could be included in the grant for the Old Exchange building. In recent weeks, both the Old Exchange and the Old Slave Mart have experienced a drop in attendance due to the annual slow period, which occurs this time of year.

In February, Powder Magazine was closed by the Daughters of the Confederacy on the 28th. They wanted to discuss with the Mayor the possibility of taking over the building. Mr. Frohlich would give them an update on their plan. Ms. Katherine Pemberton, the Director of Programming from the 250th Commission, sent a letter in February explaining that the money and attendance generated by the building were not enough to keep it open.

The IAAM had cosmetic work done on the second floor of the Maritime Center. They installed new wood floors, painted, and delivered new furniture. Several meetings took place regarding the docks at the Maritime Center. They met with Applied Technology and Management to discuss potential actions. A member involved with the renovations of the Maritime Center 15 years ago had inside knowledge. They were considering a Dredge Program, but testing was still ongoing.

conducted to see if it was feasible and worth doing. They were experiencing issues with the elevator, but did not know what the problem was. When Otis was contracted with the City, they did not have issues or long downtimes with the elevators.

The Angel Oak lost a huge branch after the park closed on April 2nd. A neighbor called and sent pictures to alert them of what had happened. The arborist knew the limb was compromised, and the plan was to go back to hoist it and secure it before it fell. They closed the park for half a day so that Mr. Kronsberg and his crew could be there early the next morning to clean up and work with the arborist to ensure the tree was safe and that no other limbs were compromised.

The Dock Street Theatre's elevator has been out of service for two months. American Elevator informed them that they were waiting for a part to be shipped and would get it running once they received the part. American Elevator had been alerted to issues well before the elevator went down. During the last storm, water damage occurred in the conference room on the third floor, which had already been repaired. Several weeks ago, they noticed the damage had returned, and it was worse than before. The Parks Department sent a roofing company to fix it. They brought Spoleto in to assess the damage before moving into the building. Mr. Steve Curry has served as their maintenance person at the Dock Street Theatre, and after 26 years, he will be retiring. They organized a breakfast that was open to anyone interested in attending.

Councilmember Bowden said hearing the word elevator more times than he could count was a huge concern. When he heard that the contractor was notified multiple times that there was an issue with an elevator and they had not repaired it, it was a massive red flag. He asked if an executive session would be appropriate and to what extent they could talk about the contract in public, and if those issues were being addressed.

Mr. Frohlich said that there were widespread elevator issues throughout the City and in some parking garages. They had a maintenance and inspection contract via Procurement, which was held by American Elevator. Other elevators were serviced not by American but by Otis and KONE. The issue with those two vendors was that their equipment was proprietary, meaning they maintained their elevators. The City aimed to avoid proprietary equipment in its elevators to allow more bidders and avoid reliance on a single contractor. Some elevators were aging and deteriorating rapidly due to exposure to saltwater, particularly at the Maritime Center and certain garages, unlike those at Dock Street and the Old Change building. The BFRC, through Real Estate, was collaborating with Procurement on the parking garage elevators and was also partnering with Parks and Procurement on the elevator contract Citywide to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

Councilmember Bowden said this was an accessibility issue that was striking potential safety cords.

Councilmember Mitchell said that being near the salt border and having old elevators made it difficult to obtain parts, especially when they had to be shipped from another country. This created a dilemma for the older elevators, as they required shipping for the necessary parts. The elevators require these parts for accessibility and to support the people who rely on them.

Mr. Frohlich said the elevators for the two parking garages and the Old Exchange building would be full replacements. They held a meeting of the Old Exchange Commission, and the Daughters of the American Revolution, who were part of the commission, and were the original owners of the building, which they had leased to the state. They had a management agreement through the state and had elected not to support the grant for the elevator because they wanted to self-fund

it. That meant they would be dipping into the endowment, which would expedite the process by avoiding the wait for the grant.

Councilmember Tinkler asked if Legal was aware of this issue or if they had looked into this.

Ms. Cruthirds said they were aware the elevator was out of order at the theatre, but could look into this further.

With there being no further business, the Committee adjourned the meeting at 4:19 p.m.

Donna Constance

Clerk of Council's Office