

Dreams For Saving Old Schoolhouse Fall Apart

Inflated costs, the time element, and an "Oreo cookie" building put an end to the Save Our School (SOS) project, Wednesday.

The project which sought to move Lombard's 1861 school house to a spot on the present Lincoln school grounds was dissolved by the SOS committee which then dissolved itself.

Richard Brandt, committee chairman and Jaycees member, reported that while most of the leasing difficulties between his committee, School District 44 and the Village had been ironed out, new problems had been created by Village building and fire codes and school Life-Safety codes that would result in about \$10,000 additional expenses.

Brandt said that the Jaycees would have to bring the restored structure into compliance with village codes which require ramps necessary for wheelchairs to enter public meeting places. A ramp to service the facility would need to be 80 to 100 feet long, he said.

The doors at both the front and rear entrances would have to be widened to accommodate wheelchairs as would the washroom facilities the Jaycees would install.

To comply with fire codes for buildings in the central business district a planned basement meeting room on which the old house was to be placed would need a cement fire ceiling capable of containing a fire for two hours, Brandt said.

The plan could be continued under the auspices of the county schools he

said, but their requirements under the Life-Safety code are "stricter" than the village codes.

Brandt indicated that a special use permit might be petitioned for at a hearing by the Zoning Board of Appeals but the next ZBA hearing will not be held until February and a

permit would be likely only if the building was classified as a museum.

If it could meet the requirements stipulated in the various codes, the committee would still have to move the school house by Jan. 1. At that

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time, the buildings owners plan to dispose of it.

Brandt's breakdown of costs were for moving the building from its present site on St. Charles rd., to Lincoln School \$4,800; construction of a basement meeting room about \$7,000, two metal beams and concrete for a fire ceiling about \$3,000.

Heating and electrical costs about \$4,000 excluding the costs of handicapped equipment, he said.

An architect would have to be hired to draw up specifications showing that all codes would be complied with in construction before the building could be moved.

To top matters off, Brandt reported that after speaking to a man who had lived in the school house from 1920 to 1930 he found that an extra addition had been made to the building.

Its front 11 feet were known by the committee to be an addition to the original room but further inspection of the beams showed the rear 18 feet, where the kitchen is located, to be an addition also.

"Basically we have an Oreo cookie," said Brandt, with the historic site "in the middle." The dimensions of the original site would be about 17 X 21 feet.

Committee members who offered possible solutions to the problems were George Raetzke, who suggested that even though the building was not as historic as originally thought it could still serve the Jaycees purpose as a meeting room and an educational site.

Dave Miller suggested the walls of the originally room be dismantled and then rebuilt in a warehouse type structure which could also contain the office space the Jaycees required.

In light of the increased expenses, Ken Dole said the Jaycees might not be willing to spend the additional funds anyway.

Others in attendance at the final meeting were committee members Tom Chapman, Barbara Graves, and Joan Masterson. Robert Chelseth, Dist. 44 superintendent, also attend-