

## **Avoca Center Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q. What is the exact parcel under consideration?**

- A. Cook County property tax parcel 05-29-303-031. Only the section highlighted in yellow at [this link](#).

### **Q. How long has the Avoca Board of Education been looking into this topic?**

- A. Avoca Boards of Education have discussed this topic to some extent for well over a decade. Back in 2013 when the district participated in a life safety survey for Avoca West and Marie Murphy Schools, the BOE asked our architect to also evaluate Avoca Center. It was after that report was compiled that the district began to study this issue in detail.

Avoca Center appears as a stand alone discussion item on almost 20 official, public Board of Education meetings since the 2013 life safety survey. It has also been discussed several times in conjunction with other facilities and financial updates.

### **Q. Will Avoca Park, the 6.5 acre green space directly south of Avoca Center, still be able to be used by the Wilmette Park District?**

- A. Yes. The school district currently has a lease with the Wilmette Park District allowing them use of that land. At this time the district has no intention of changing that agreement.

### **Q. Can the district meet the needs of all of the students with their current facilities if there is a significant influx of children?**

- A. Currently Avoca has 4 sections of students at each grade level averaging approximately 20 children per section. If the district found itself in a position of needing to add a section at each grade level, an influx of approximately 180 children (25% more than our current enrollment), we would most likely reconfigure which grade levels are served at which building and build additions onto both schools for the additional classes.

Having looked at the capacity of our current buildings with our architects and considering the land we have surrounding each school, we would have the open space to add to the existing structures to meet the needs of a much larger student population.

**Q. How much would it cost to renovate and modernize the facility for the purpose of continuing to use it as a rental property?**

A. Approximately \$6,751,830 for just the projects.

**Q. How long would the renovation take?**

A. The building would need to be unoccupied for approximately 6-8 months.

**Q. Could the tenants continue to use the facility to some extent while the renovation is taking place?**

A. The architects recommend that the building be unoccupied during the 6-8 months of renovation. Also, according to our current rental agreement, Avoca would have to absorb the costs of having our tenants displaced during the renovation project, unless the current lease was renegotiated.

**Q. If the building were renovated, would the district renegotiate the lease?**

A. Yes

**Q. Why is Avoca Center in such disrepair?**

A. The building has been in use for almost 60 years in one capacity or another. However, since the district was no longer using the building as a school for our students, capital improvement dollars were, and continue to be, prioritized to address needs in the two operating schools. Work on Avoca Center has mostly been limited to only those projects required to keep the building functional.

Realize that the steam boilers at Avoca West have only recently been replaced (2007), and just this summer we began replacing the original casework and asbestos tiles in the classrooms and hallways.

All three district buildings are in need of bathroom renovations and branch pipe replacements, as well as flooring replacement.

**Q. How is the property zoned, and what limitations does that zoning reflect?**

A. The property is zoned R-A, Single-Family Detached Residence District with minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet and minimum lot width of 60 feet, maximum building height of the lesser of 35' or 2.5 stories. According to [Wilmette Code of Ordinances](#):

Purpose of the R Single-Family Detached Residence District. The R District is established to protect, promote, and maintain the development of single-family detached housing and limited public and institutional uses that are compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood. The development standards and range of allowable uses for this district are designed to maintain a suitable environment for family living at the low density of development characteristic of the current pattern of development in the district, which consists of large lots with abundant open space.

Property zoned R-A could also potentially be used for:

- Accessory Living Unit
- Adaptive Reuse Senior Housing/55+ Development
- Dwelling, Single-Family
- Group Home
- Cultural Facility
- Day Care Center, Adult or Child
- Day Care Home, Adult or Child
- Educational Facility, College
- Educational Facility, Primary
- Educational Facility, Secondary
- Park/Playground
- Place of Worship
- Public Safety Facility
- Recreation Center
- Parking Lot (Principal Use)
- Planned Unit Development
- Unusual Recreation Equipment
- Utility
- Wind Turbines
- Wireless Telecommunications Equipment

**Q. How much does the district receive in rent from the tenants, and how much does it cost to maintain the facility?**

A. The district rents Avoca Center for \$13.67/square foot. Over the last 8 years we have received an average rental income of \$392,201. However the district incurs significant costs to maintain and operate the facility, including:

- Utilities
- Services
- Maintenance
- Repairs
- Supplies
- Staff: Custodial, maintenance and administration

Over the last 8 years it has cost the district \$230,971 to operate Avoca Center, leading to an average net profit over that time period of \$161,230 annually.

**Q. How much advance notice does the district need to give its tenants before it can terminate the lease?**

A. One Year.

**Q. Why did the District go back eight years in figuring the average revenues and expenditures?**

A. No two years are alike. Some had higher than typical costs and others demonstrated greater returns. In 2014 when the BOE began discussing the future of Avoca Center and entertaining the possibility of selling the building, the District stopped making any major capital investments in the facility. Because of that, the last two years show an abnormally high return.

Also, 2008-2009 is the first year that the district began to separate all Avoca Center expenditures, as opposed to combining them together with other district capital projects. The dollar amounts are much more precise for that period.

**Q. What are the revenues and expenditures for the last 14 years?**

A. The District changed its finance system in fiscal year 2003, which is why we chose to go back to 2003.

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Revenue</b> | <b>Expenditure</b> | <b>Net</b> |
|-------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|
| 2016        | \$431,881      | \$180,618          | \$251,263  |
| 2015        | \$394,664      | \$170,135          | \$224,529  |

|      |           |           |            |
|------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 2014 | \$421,381 | \$275,930 | \$145,451  |
| 2013 | \$397,108 | \$204,848 | \$192,260  |
| 2012 | \$371,196 | \$149,195 | \$222,001  |
| 2011 | \$380,045 | \$187,647 | \$192,398  |
| 2010 | \$372,041 | \$234,755 | \$137,286  |
| 2009 | \$369,291 | \$444,641 | (\$75,350) |
| 2008 | \$355,649 | \$164,448 | \$191,201  |
| 2007 | \$348,591 | \$199,287 | \$149,304  |
| 2006 | \$341,155 | \$190,695 | \$150,460  |
| 2005 | \$325,149 | \$144,711 | \$180,438  |
| 2004 | \$318,831 | \$156,872 | \$161,959  |
| 2003 | \$311,758 | \$158,495 | \$153,263  |

**Q. What is the market value of Avoca Center?**

A. That is difficult to determine. By definition, market value is the amount for which something can be sold on a given market. It is typically discerned by comparing that facility/property to a similar one that has recently sold.

Unfortunately there are no properties similar enough to ours to compare. Though the building is approximately 35,000 square feet, it is in need of significant repairs; however, the land, located in Chicago's North Shore community is very valuable.

**Q. Does the district already have a developer in mind?**

- A. No. By law, the District must go through an open bid process, as follows:
- Following the Board's approval of a resolution declaring the property surplus and putting it up for sale, they have 60 days to sell the parcel.
  - A bid notice would be run in the local newspaper for three consecutive weeks.
  - The Board would then publically conduct a bid opening where each submitted offer would be revealed, along with the identity of the bidder.

- Each bid would be reviewed to assure that it meets the criteria listed in the district's original bid.
- After reviewing all of the bids, the leading developers' would be vetted to assure that they are able to complete the project at the level of quality expected of this community and in a professional, timely manner.
- Within 60 days of the BOE's resolution, they would have to either accept a bid or reject all of the bids.

**Q. If the single-family homes were built on the property, would the community's municipalities receive property taxes from those households?**

- A. Yes. The district conservatively estimates that homes built on that parcel of land would generate approximately \$120,000 annually for the school district.

**Q. At the Community Open House on October 26, the District referred to 12 lots of approximately 13,400 sq/ft. How did it arrive at that number?**

- A. The District has not set the number of houses that can be built on the property. As a matter of fact, the District does not even have an obligation to do so. However, in order to put the idea of single-family homes on that property into an easy to picture context, we looked at the houses that border Avoca Center and attempted to identify the most similar scenario.

The District looked at the lot sizes directly to the west of the Avoca Center property on Virginia Lane and those on Iroquois Road, which is due south of the lot across Avoca Park. The largest lot on Virginia is 13,404 sq/ft. By comparison, the smallest Iroquois lot 13,782 sq/ft. At 13,400 sq/ft lots, 12 single-family houses could potentially be developed.

**Q. How many homes can fit on the lot?**

A. In the appraisal report that was drafted in October of 2014, a range of lot sizes is offered:

| New Lot Size (sq/ft): | Number of Lots: |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 10,000                | 16.04           |
| 11,250                | 14.26           |
| 12,500                | 12.83           |
| 14,500                | 11.06           |
| 16,000                | 10.02           |
| 25,000                | 6.42            |
| 30,000                | 5.35            |
| 35,000                | 4.58            |

**Q. What other options did the BOE consider?**

A. The BOE also considered:

- Maintain the status quo for as long as we can
- Raze the building and keep the land
- Sell the building and property to another Wilmette municipality
- Sell the building and property to the highest bidder allowed by the current RA zoning
- Sell the building to our current tenants
- Sell the building, the parcel and part of Avoca Park (various depths were considered)
- Sell the building and as small a parcel of land as possible
- Renegotiate the lease to share costs for maintenance, upkeep and utilities