

MEMORANDUM

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

TO: City Manager

SUBJECT: Request for Special Use Permit for 700 22nd Street

Date: December 5, 2011

The Karpeles Manuscript Library is requesting permission to apply for a Special Use Permit to operate a manuscript library museum at the former First Church of Christ, Scientist located at 700 22nd Street, zoned R-3 (one and family residence) district. The former church structure has been vacant for over 15 years.

The attached letter identifies background information on the history and operation of 11 other Karpeles museums located in nine other states across America. All museums are open free of charge to the public (including school group programs) and exhibits are rotated continually among all the locations. The first Rock Island exhibit is proposed to focus on Mark Twain's writings.

The library is expected to employ between two to five employees and operate from Tuesday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Other than school groups it is expected that general public attendance will be in the range of five visitors at any one time. There is an improved parking lot on the north side of the site with access off of 22nd Street. That has approximately 24 parking spaces. The museum is also expected to request an attached sign for the museum.

The building is also a local historic landmark. The Rock Island Preservation Ordinance allows the Preservation Commission to comment on the Special Use Permit request at the public hearing stage (if the council grants the permission to apply for a Special Use Permit). The Preservation Ordinance also requires the Commission to review and consider a Certificate of Appropriateness for any exterior changes to the landmark structure (e.g. exterior façade, windows, signs ect.).

The impact of the use on neighboring and adjoining property owners can best be determined by a public hearing. Staff believes that a Special Use Permit request is more appropriate than rezoning to business zoning for the property

Recommendation:

That Karpeles Manuscript Library be allowed to apply for a Special Use Permit.

Submitted by: Alan Fries, Urban Planner II

Gregory S. Champagne, Community and Economic Development Director

Approved: Thomas Thomas, City Manager



The Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum of Rock Island, Illinois
700 22nd Street
Rock Island, Il. 61201

Christopher Kelly, Senior Director
Email: KMuseumRkl@aol.com
Phone: 716-425-8593
Website: www.karpeles.org

The City of Rock Island,
City Council Members
Mayor of Rock Island
1528 Third Avenue
Rock Island, Il. 61201

December 2nd, 2011

Dear City Council Members and Mr. Mayor:

The Karpeles Manuscript Library, a 501c3 non-profit corporation, would like to formally request permission to apply for a Special Use Permit for the above-mentioned property. The building, a former First Church of Christ, Scientist, is a designated Landmark and is also part of the National Register Broadway Historic District. The current zoning of the property is Residential. The proposed use is Museum.

The Karpeles Manuscript Library preserves the largest private collection of original manuscripts in the world. Dr. David and Mrs. Marsha Karpeles originally founded the Museum in 1983, in order to stimulate an interest in learning, especially in our children. All of the Karpeles Manuscript Library services, including admission and school programs, are provided FREE of charge to the public.

The Karpeles currently has 11 Museum locations, in nine states across the United States. Rock Island will be our 12th location. On-site exhibits are continually rotated amongst all locations, and are changed approximately every four months. Exhibit subject matter includes a wide range of topics, including literature, science, religion, history, and art, and examples of materials displayed include everything from 5,000-

year-old clay tablets to Harry Potter-related items. The first proposed exhibit for Rock Island will focus on the writings of Mark Twain. A description of the exhibit is available for viewing online at <http://www.rain.org/~karpeles/RIcur.html>.

The Karpeles also offers a variety of free programs to schools in the community. One of our most popular programs, the Mini-Museums program, consists of educational exhibits of manuscript reproductions and accompanying descriptions, which are provided to schools on an on-going, permanent basis. 233 schools across the United States are enrolled in the Karpeles Mini-Museum program as of December 2011.

The Karpeles aims to be an asset to our neighborhood. Besides providing a free cultural destination and free educational programming, the addition of the Museum may also benefit the local community in other ways, such as increased property values, as has happened in other Karpeles Museum locations. It is our hope that the Karpeles will bring increased visibility to our neighborhood, and that once our building is re-purposed, another investor may be stimulated to adaptively re-use and develop the nearby Lincoln School. The Karpeles also serves to invest in our local community by becoming a local employer with a staff of approximately 2-5 permanent employees, and by retaining the services of local businesses to aid in the rehabilitation of our building and property.

At this time, the Karpeles Museum of Rock Island is undergoing various repairs, under the guidance of the City of Rock Island planning, building, and preservation officials. Initially, the Karpeles plans to open the foyer area as a preliminary exhibit space, while the remainder of the building is addressed. The preliminary exhibit space is projected to be ready early in 2012. The proposed hours of operation will be Tuesday-Friday from 11:00a.m. – 4:00p.m., and the Museum would be closed holidays.

Sufficient parking for Museum visitors is already available. Attendance in all of our locations is generally low, with approximately five visitors at any one time, scattered throughout the day. The parking lot on the north side of the Museum, on the corners of 7th Avenue and 22nd Street, will provide ample parking space to accommodate our visitors. The parking lot is approximately 75' x 150', and can serve approximately 24 vehicles. Although we do not expect that it would be necessary, there is additional parking available on the north and east sides of the building, on 7th Avenue and 22nd Street.

The Karpeles organization is very excited to become a part of Rock Island! Although the sale of our building was finalized only last week, we have already experienced an outpouring of support and enthusiasm in Rock Island and in surrounding areas, including neighboring property owners, historical society members, preservation enthusiasts, and local media. We are in the process of assembling a local community advisory board, which will serve to assist the Karpeles in best serving Rock Island.

We ask that you carefully consider and grant our request to apply for a Special Use Permit. Please feel free to review our website at www.karpeles.org, or contact us if any further information is required.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature consisting of the letters 'CKM' in a cursive style.

Karpeles Manuscript Library

816 – 22nd Street
Rock Island, IL 61201
December 2, 2011

Alan Fries
Planning & Redevelopment
Rock Island City Hall
1523 Third Avenue
Rock Island, IL 61201

Dear Mr. Fries,

We are very supportive of a special use permit for the historic Christian Science Church at 7th Avenue and 22nd Street in Rock Island.

As an adjacent property owner we have no problems with its anticipated use as a specialized museum, one of the facilities of the Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum. Indeed we view this acquisition as a positive cultural amenity for not only our neighborhood, but for the entire city and Quad City community.

Sincerely,

Charles Oestreich
Diane Oestreich

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane Oestreich". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed names.