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1995 Strategic Plan for Museum

Tractor Museum

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AGENDA FOR TRACTOR TEST AND POWER MUSEUM BOARD MEETING

Check from Mr. Gerst - For Fall tractor renovation
Letter from Dr. Omtvedt
Estimate from Landscaping
Meeting with John Klosterman
Plan for renovation
Decision to replace roof
Other topics

4-6 Wiring seems to be OK. Only minor items to be fixed.

$200,000 endowment / $10,000/year for students.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Bill Splinter, L.W. Chase Hall (0726)
FROM: Wilbur Dasenbrock, Director, Landscape Services
DATE: November 13, 1995
SUBJECT: Former Tractor Test Landscaping

If restoration of this building should proceed, removal of at least four and probably all eight of the cedar trees should be removed because of their size and close proximity to the south and west exterior building walls.

Tree removal, site restoration and minimal landscaping is estimated at $1,000 to $2,000.

Outdoor lighting if needed is estimated at $2,500 per light.

A standard building sign will cost approximately $415.

ADA access is an additional concern you may need to address.

pc: Vi Schroeder
Vice Chancellor Omtvedt
Dr. William Splinter  
220 BSE Lab  
East Campus 0832  

Reference: Tractor Test Museum  

Dear Bill:  

I provided copies of the strategic plan for the Tractor Test and Power Museum to Glenn Hoffman, Alan Moeller, Darrell Nelson and Dale Vanderholm for their review and response. We met on November 9, 1995, to discuss your proposed strategic plan and your request to proceed with roof renovation. Our discussion centered on: (1) the preservation of the old tractor test building as a tractor test and power museum and (2) the provisions to store and display the remainder of the tractor collection.  

Consistent with earlier communications, IANR is willing to work towards developing an acceptable lease of the original Tractor Test Building for the Friends of the Museum (Friends) if certain conditions can be met. It is our administrative responsibility from a University perspective to be cautious because this is a long term commitment which will limit the spatial flexibility for future administrations and because the financial climate will not allow IANR to assume any financial responsibility for the museum building or operation in the event hidden costs are exposed at a later date. Therefore, it is critical that before a long term commitment is made that we are assured the Friends know what the total cost of the project will be, including annual operation and maintenance. A long-term lease would also need to assure that the funds have been generated to cover the restoration and that an endowment is in place to cover the annual operating expenses. With these provisions, we would permit establishing a temporary lease for a two-year period during which the Friends must raise adequate funds for renovation and operation of the museum, and funding to provide space to store the additional tractors which would not be located in the Tractor Test Museum or the old Livestock Judging Pavilion. We assume this storage will most likely be off campus, either at the State Fairgrounds or at some other suitable site.  

Immediate action should determine specifically the plans and budget to restore the old Tractor Test Building to a suitable museum building as outlined in your strategic plan. Planning must also incorporate any specific requirements for ADA or other access and safety issues as may be required by law. Provision must be made for suitable landscaping and parking areas.  

When the plans and budget estimates for the above requirements are complete, the provisions to require Friends to raise the funds will be identified as part of the lease. The lease will provide that the Friends will have two years from the date of signing of the lease to raise adequate funds to move forward with the total renovation.  

The formal designation of this building on the National Historic Register must be approved and initiated by the building owner (UNL) and must not be pursued without expressed approval by the Board of Regents. We are in no position to make this request to the administration or the Board of Regents until the ultimate plans for the building are finalized.
We strongly recommend that no roof repair should begin until there is substantial agreement on the projected costs for total development and operation, and agreement reached on the lease provisions. However, if the Friends are willing to take the risk of losing their investment in repairs, we would consider giving you permission to proceed with the roof repair before the long term lease is approved with the clear understanding that if the conditions required for a long term lease are not reached within the two years, the building would be demolished even if the roof had been repaired. Although I am not excited about this approach, the Friends could go ahead as long as they understand we would tear down the building if the lease conditions could not be met. However, roof repair cannot begin until Facilities Management approves the design and the contracting process.

All tractors and other materials currently stored in the building which are subject to deterioration due to the roof conditions or other causes should be removed from the building as soon as possible. Dale Vanderholm indicates there may be storage available in Load Line 1 at ARDC. Similar action needs to be taken relative to a plan for the removal of the tractors stored in the Livestock Judging Pavilion, since the Pavilion is structurally deteriorating and demolition will probably have to occur in the not-too-distant future.

Dale Vanderholm and Tom Johnson will work with you to obtain the cost estimates for the repairs and renovations, as well as the other operating costs. They will try to accomplish this as quickly as possible so as not to delay the opportunity to move forward with roof repairs. However, this information is necessary before agreement to proceed can be reached. The remainder of the provisions are still as outlined in my letter to you of July 17, 1995. This arrangement is also still contingent upon agreement by Facilities Management and the Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance to provide the utility connections as specified in the earlier draft lease. Entry to the Tractor Test Building must be approved by Facilities Director Rich McDermott. This will require confirmation as we negotiate to reach a final agreement.

Please let me know if there are any questions regarding these conditions and the process.

Sincerely,

Irvin T. Omtvedt
Vice Chancellor

c: IANR Administrative Council
   Interim Vice Chancellor Paul Carlson
   Dr. Glenn Hoffman
   Dean Darrell Nelson
   IANR Facilities Director Dale Vanderholm
Strategic Plan

The Friends of the University of Nebraska Tractor Test and Power Museum propose to enter into a lease agreement with the University to rent the building. The Friends have initiated a funding drive to finance the renovation of the building to represent tractor testing as it was in 1920. This has the approval of the Nebraska State Historical Society who have expressed their interest in preserving the building. They have it on their listing of Nebraska Historic Buildings and plan to place the building in the National Historical Register.

The Friends have maintained close contact with the Nebraska State Museum (Morrill Hall) and there is a mutual interest in having Master's students in the Museum Studies program involved in the planning and operation of the Tractor Museum. As previously mentioned, one of their students was hired to develop an inventory of current holdings. She also submitted a plan of action for developing exhibits and setting up operation of the facility. This past year the Friends supervised the renovation of a 1925 Model T Ford Pickup which had been willed to the Museum. The Friends would continue interacting with this excellent resource.

Upon renovation of the building the Friends would operate it by volunteer effort to provide a scheduled availability for visitors. Parking for approximately eight cars is available immediately north of the building, an area not being used for any other purpose. There has been a history of visitors and this number of spaces should be adequate.

The Friends intend to develop a continuing budgetary support structure through dues from individual members and industry or organizational membership. The Friends would develop educational programs which would support public interest in renovation of antique tractors and farm machines. Another source of income could be derived from sales of books and memorabilia related to antique tractors and farm machines. The Friends already have received notification that an interested couple have included the proposed Museum in their will.

As a service to the community the Friends would establish and maintain a reference library of historic developments related to agricultural power. A first resource would be a set of the original applications for tractor tests which includes specific details not found in the official test report and which would also include details on tractors which were withdrawn from the tests for failing to meet performance criteria or for other reasons. There are a set of reference tractor and machinery instruction manuals which was collected by a man in Montana, who has since passed away. We would target the acquisition of these materials for the reference library. Because of the international reputation of the Tractor Testing activity at Nebraska, the Lab is one of the first sources of information people consider as they pursue various areas
of interest related to tractor development.

The proposed utilization of spaces in the former Tractor Test Laboratory is outlined in Appendix IV. The reference library would be adjacent to the office area for convenience and security. An area would be identified for exhibiting the pioneer hand powered tools, followed in sequence by an exhibit of animal powered implements. This would be followed by early, pre-tractor test tractors, followed by an exhibit of the first test, then by a sequence of key developments since that time. The visitor would then visit a display area showing recent developments in tractor technology as well as new ideas being developed such as the use of Global Positioning technology to navigate machines.

Immediate Plan of Action

First the Friends must receive approval by the University of Nebraska administration to undertake the renovation of the building and the establishment and operation of a museum. The request is to rent the facility and work with contractors and volunteers to return the building to a habitable structure. The Friends have an acceptable bid for replacing the roof deck. With that replacement, the cleanup of the interior would be initiated, followed by renovation of specific areas as exhibits are developed. Upon completion of the exhibits a formal opening of the Museum would take place. It is too early to be specific but Roger Welsch is also a tractor renovation buff and we would make a very serious attempt to involve him in a dedication program. This could be a major public interest draw.