



The Future of Algonac Elementary School

March 5, 2024

Community Meeting

School Facts

69,000 square feet. 3.2 acres.

Adjacent to the school property is the 1.5 acre City-owned Smith Recreation Park.

Approximate annual taxes to Algonac: \$3,400.

Estimated demolition cost: \$350,000 - \$500,000.

There was some asbestos removed, but not all.



History

1963

Original building constructed. Addition to east side added later, followed by Board of Education building.

2015

Last year used as a school.

2011

Significant interior renovations completed.

December 2017

Donated to National Christian Foundation and listed for sale for \$748,900.

2021

Property still for sale. City Council hires an architect to complete a feasibility study, hoping to encourage private development.



History

October 2023

School unsold for 7 years.
Going to auction on
November 13, 2023.

*Private investors say the
cost to develop is too high.*

November 2023

City Council authorizes city
manager to participate in
the auction.

November 13, 2023

City successfully purchases
property for \$185,000.

December 18, 2023

Closing.

January 2024

City seeks input from
community regarding future of
the school and property. Over
130 comments received.



Community Meeting



PURPOSE

To review the comments and suggestions provided by community members regarding the future of the school and adjacent property.

GENERAL DIRECTION

KEEP THE GYM OR DEMOLISH THE GYM?

YES OR NO TO TURNING CLASSROOM INTO HOUSING?

WHAT ABOUT PARKING?

KEEP AN OPEN MIND

Those who can't change their minds can't change anything. *George Bernard Shaw*

It is only afterward that a new idea seems reasonable. To begin with, it usually seems unreasonable. *Issac Asimov.*

You have to change your thinking if you desire to have a future different from your present. *Germany Kent*



“

We all live in a city that we didn't build.

Those of us sitting here today did not build most of what is here. We didn't pass most of the rules and ordinances that we follow. All we can do now is work to together for change and a better future.

Oklahoma Mayor Mick Cornett

Unlikely Options

Demolish school & build a swimming pool.

Algonac already has a pool at Lions Field that was built in 1957 and closed in 2020 due to water loss and safety concerns.

The city has obtained \$700,000 in grant funds to help pay for the new pool, funds that cannot be transferred to another location.

Preparing to go out for bids.

Move City Hall & Fire Department

- Moving would create empty spaces on the riverfront.
- We have vacant retail and commercial space available now and no one in a hurry to fill them.
- City Hall offices would not be hard to relocate but building a new fire station would be well over \$2 million.

Unlikely Options

**Motel with Indoor Water Park OR
a Casino OR
a Gibraltar Trade Center OR
a Resort Hotel**

- No room.
- We only have 3.2 acres.
- Great Wolf Lodge built on over 70 acres.
- Need 10-20 acres for a small casino.

Demolish Algonquin Place, demolish all private property on the riverfront and start over, create an outdoor mall, shopping and condos

- Buy the property. \$\$
- Buy business located at the property \$\$.
- Demolish all buildings. \$\$
- Relocate all Algonquin Place residents. \$\$
- Sell the vacant property to a developer.
- Wait for it to be developed.
- How do you force developer to build what city wants?

Comparisons

Let's be like...

- a senior center like Chesterfield and Marine City.
- a plaza like downtown like St. Clair.
- Washington Life Center in Marine City.
- Eddy Center in St. Clair.
- Marine City Marketplace.
- Wrigley Center in Port Huron.

Let's be Algonac...

Keep our small town atmosphere.

If you want big town amenities, move to one.

Stop trying to be like other cities and do something unique for Algonac.

“

No matter how popular you think your idea is, somebody is not going to like it.

Oklahoma Mayor Mick Cornett



2021 School Feasibility Study

Ideas to Encourage Development

- 12 Single-Family Residential Homes with Garages*
 - 18 Single-Family Residential Homes with Garages*
 - 20 Duplexes*
 - 36 Townhomes (6 buildings, 6 units each)*
 - 48 apartments*
- Mixed Use Commercial & Multi Family: Street Level Retail, 2nd floor professional office, 3rd floor residential*
 - Renovate part of school for offices, keep gym*
 - Renovate gym. Create wellness clinic health food café, juice bar, dance studio, fitness area*
 - Renovate gym, restrooms, large classrooms to create community center.

*Re-establishment of Washington Street required

Community Use - Outdoor

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- Area for local bands to play.
- Batting cages.
- Community garden.
- Covered pavilion for ice skating.
- Double Ferris Wheel.
- Drive-in Theater.
- Eastern-Market type pavilion for indoor and outdoor uses.
- Farmer's Market.
- Fire Pits – outdoor plaza area
- Go Cart & Motorcycle track.
- Gun Range.
- Outdoor workout space.
- Skate Park replaced with new plaza-style skate park.
- Pump track for bikes/rollerblades.
- Roller skating.
- Volleyball courts.

Community Use - Indoor

- Art Center for classes, events.
- Boarding facility for pets.
- Child care center.
- Community center** (funding may be available).
- Education Center – partner with local colleges.
- Event space.
- Gym for sports teams to use, pickleball leagues.
- Indoor walking track.
- Learning Center – Computers, Math, ESL, outdoor education.
- Offices for county services.
- Retail stores in classrooms.
- Senior Citizens Center.
- Service Dog Training Center.
- Small business incubator.
- Teen Room with study areas, gaming stations.
- Veterinarian office.
- Year-round flea market.

Community Use - Other



- Add 50+ diagonal parking spaces along Smith Street.
- Build homes or condos.
- Demolish the school and leave property vacant.
- Dispensary.
- Parking lot needed.
- Need a restaurant with observation deck to view river.
- Give away a parcel of waterfront land somewhere in Riverfront Park to a developer who will build a restaurant.
- Make the school cafeteria a restaurant.
- Use shipping containers to create retail stores.
- Turn classrooms into apartments** or mini-self storage units.
- ** Funding may be available for affordable housing.

Let's Talk about Retail...



- ❖ Numerous comments about turning the school into a shopping/retail plaza.
- ❖ We have retail and commercial space open now and no big or small businesses in a hurry to fill them.
- ❖ There is a visibility problem for any retail at the school. Too far from M29.
- ❖ The school was for sale for 7 years. If a developer thought there was money to be made with retail, they would have purchased the building and created retail spaces.
- ❖ Amazon has changed retail forever.
- ❖ Small shops cannot survive with just local support. We need to attract people to the area.

Other Comments



We need something that brings people to town all year long.

We need more than just a community center to bring people to town.

Moving municipal offices is a waste of money when we already have vacant spaces on M29.

Do not spend any taxpayer dollars.
Get grants.

We need things for kids to do.

We need to be a destination for visitors.

We need affordable housing. Algonquin Place, Rolling Brook all have long waitlists.



Discussion

