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City of Madison, Wisconsin

A RESOLUTION \_\_\_\_\_

Establishing a process for the  
sale of the two landmark quality  
buildings in Marshall Park

Presented \_\_\_\_\_  
Referred \_\_\_\_\_

Rereferred \_\_\_\_\_

Reported Back \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_ POF \_\_\_\_\_  
Rules Susp. \_\_\_\_\_ Tabled \_\_\_\_\_  
Public Hrg. \_\_\_\_\_

Drafted by: Ald. Henry Lufler

Date: September 13, 1979

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Fiscal Note:

Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_  
File Number \_\_\_\_\_

SPONSOR(S): The Common Council  
(Request of the Landmarks Commission)

PREAMBLE

In 1978 the City of Madison purchased 15.29 acres of land for the expansion of Marshall Park. In addition to 823 feet of Lake Mendota shoreline, the property included two large mansions, the Magnus Swenson House and the Mary North House. Magnus Swenson was, variously, an inventor, the chief engineer overseeing the construction of the State Capitol, a bank vice-president, a World War I relief administrator in the Woodrow Wilson administration, a Regent of the University of Wisconsin and an important national figure involved in Norwegian-American activities.

Both the Swenson and North buildings are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Because of this fact and because federal monies were used in the purchase of the adjacent land (though not in the purchase of the homes themselves), a study of the potential uses of the houses was required. This was accomplished by consultants, Stockham and Vanderwalle, who examined the condition of the houses and considered several alternate uses for them. The consultants concluded, "...there are economically feasible means of preserving one or both buildings which are consistent with long-range development plans for Marshall Park." Demolition of these buildings would not only be a loss of two well designed and well crafted structures, but would also be a loss of part of Madison's historic heritage."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the preservation of these landmark houses is in the City's best interest, so long as City funds are not expended in their continued maintenance or use and so long as City funds already invested in their purchase are recovered; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that City staff from departments involved in real estate, parks, and planning and the City Attorney shall develop procedures for receiving bids on the purchase of one or both of the houses under terms including but not restricted to the following:

1. The Swenson House (and 1.00 acre) and the North House (and 1.24 acre) shall be sold for no less than \$63,183 and \$77,347 respectively (based on their 1978 purchase appraisals).
2. Any use of the property, whether as private residence or a small conference facility, shall enhance the historical features of the building; the buildings must be brought up to code within a reasonable period.
3. Appropriate restrictive covenants including the elements of the Madison Landmarks Ordinance governing renovation of landmark buildings shall be attached to the deeds transferring ownership of the properties. The park setting around the homes also must be guaranteed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a committee of five, consisting of the President of the Park Commission, President of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation and the chair of the Landmarks Commission, or their designees, and two Council members, shall serve to direct the bid process, and shall recommend for Council acceptance the bid or bids which meets most closely the sale criteria contained above as further detailed by the committee; bids to be received no later than April 1, 1980; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that these two properties are hereby declared surplus to the City's needs under the conditions set forth in this resolution.