



Department Source: Cultural Affairs
To: City Council
From: City Manager & Staff
Council Meeting Date: June 17, 2024
Re: Donation of Piano Report

Executive Summary

A Columbia resident approached the City about donating a piano.

Discussion

Columbia resident Susan Clark approached the City about donating a piano. City Staff has had the instrument assessed and is bringing the donation to City Council for discussion before taking next steps. While it is premature to establish a permanent location for the piano, the McKinney Building could be a possible location once all of the uses of the building have been identified and programmed.

Overview

The 5'2" grand piano is a D.H. Baldwin line that was manufactured around 1995. It has an ebony polish. The current owner has had the piano for approximately 15 years where it has been in climate-controlled environments, in a home setting. The instrument includes a padded piano bench with music storage. The estimated value of the piano is \$4,700, which is what the current owner paid for it when she purchased it.





An assessment of the instrument was made by Steve Fair (Registered Piano Technician) on May 6, 2024. He determined the piano is in fairly good condition. The tuning pins are tight, soundboard has no issues, case is very nice, action and hammers are in good shape (lightly played).

Restoration work needed

Based on Steve Fair's assessment, the following are problems to correct:

- The pedal lyre needs to be removed for regluing. The pedals are rather tarnished and could use some polishing.
- All three wheels (casters) are discolored from excess humidity. However, they must be removed when a dolly is installed.
- There are about a dozen keys that need to be "eased." They are sluggish and can be corrected.
- Four rubber buttons need replacing on the piano's lid.
- The overall pitch is ½ step flat, so several tunings will be necessary to put it at the standard pitch of A440.

In addition, since the piano could eventually be used in a flexible community and music space, we anticipate the piano will be put in different configurations in the permanent location. It is advised that the current wheels be removed for the installation of a spider dolly that would allow for easy reorienting the instrument in the space. The dolly would also have the appropriate wheel-locking mechanism.

Estimated cost to the City

The following are estimates for the initial cost to the City for accepting the instrument. It is proposed that the piano would move to the lobby of City Hall ahead of its future move to a permanent location.

- Repairs and tuning (initial): \$600
- Moving piano to City Hall: \$1,500
- Eventual move to permanent location: \$1,500
- Stanchions and Velvet Rope for piano display: \$550
- Lock for piano keyboard: \$105
- Grand Piano Dolly with Breaks (spider dolly): \$800
- Tuning (annual): \$100/year

Initial cost total: \$5,055

Some funds could be allocated in future fiscal year, i.e. piano moving to permanent location



Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: Funds would need to be appropriated for repairs and tuning, moving, as well as other supplies for display of the instrument.

Long-Term Impact: Funds would need to be budgeted for annual maintenance and future repairs.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Resilient Economy, Secondary Impact: Inclusive Community, Tertiary Impact: Organizational Excellence

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Economic Development, Secondary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Tertiary Impact: Inter-Governmental Cooperation

Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

Suggested Council Action

If Council wishes to proceed with acceptance of the piano, a motion directing staff to bring back the appropriate legislation should be made.