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Move to former church not expected until June; parking plan sparks debate

The Port Washington Senior Center probably won't move to its new location in the former St. John's Church until after Memorial Day, City Administrator Mark Grams said Tuesday.

"We were hoping they (contractors) would be finished the middle of next week," he told the Common Council. "They're a little behind, so it looks like they won't be able to move until June."

Even as the city prepares for the move, debate continues around the issue of parking at the new senior center.

The city is considering changing some of the on-street parking to angle parking, something sought by the seniors, Grams said, and asked neighbors for their opinion on whether this should be done on Webster Street or Foster Street.

To accommodate this, some of the streets around the senior center would have to be made one-way, Grams said. Foster Street is likely to be the preferred option, he said, because Webster Street is narrower and less able to accommodate angle parking.

Several area residents told the council they are concerned about the possible changes.

"We've never had an accident, and I don't know why there's a safety concern at this point," said Donald Knuth, 234 S. Webster St. "The parking has been adequate. We're quite concerned about this."

Chad Austin, who lives on Foster Street, told aldermen that they need to take not just the concerns of the seniors into account but also residents when deciding the issue.

The city's Traffic Safety Committee is expected to make a recommendation on the matter when it meets at 4 p.m. Thursday, May 19.

It will be a little while before the senior center settles into its new home, officials were told.

The biggest thing yet to be done is installation of the elevator, Grams said, noting that the work is expected to take a week.

Ald. Mike Ehrlich said the elevator was supposed to be delivered on May 11, but was not.

"It got tied up," he said. Crews are expected to work over the weekend on the senior center, and a final inspection has been tentatively scheduled for May 31.

Aldermen on Tuesday did an about-face and agreed to hire Lakeside Movers to relocate the senior center from its current site at 102 E. Pier St.

Two weeks ago, they approved a contract with Mr. Mover for the work, but City Administrator

Mark Grams said he later discovered that this contract did not include reassembly of the center's pool tables.

If the city wanted Mr. Mover to do this work, it would have cost an extra $525, bringing the firm's cost for the move to $3,515, he said.

Lakeside Movers had bid $3,045 for the work, including assembly of the pool tables, Grams said.

The city is looking at the options for the sale of the current senior center once the facility is relocated, Grams said.

Randy Tetzlaff, the city's director of planning and development, has been talking to people who have indicated an interest in buying the building, Grams said.

If enough people are interested, the city may set a minimum price and seek bids on the property, he said.

Most of those interested plan to use the building for commercial endeavors, primarily as office space, Grams said.

Tetzlaff said he's knows of seven people who have expressed interest in the building, and three have shown concrete interest.