

Memo

To: Honorable Mayor and Fellow Aldermen
From: Alderman Steve Podrygula
Subject: City Hall Retaining Wall Update
Date: 08/16/2019

I wanted to apologize for providing you some misinformation in my previous memo, of August 13, and provide a further update.

Since my last memo, several individuals have raised questions and concerns about the information I provided. To try to clarify the situation, I again spoke with Cassie McNames, PE (during a 12-minute telephone call, earlier today), and wanted to share what I found out.

Here are the key points of what I learned today:

1. I misunderstood what Ms. McNames told me earlier: to remove the current rock face would only cost approximately \$40-\$45,000 (for the actual construction work alone). My earlier understanding – that this would be \$3 million – was incorrect (with that figure reflecting removal and total replacement).

2. To remove the current wall and “just to replace what’s there, in kind” would be a little bit less than \$3 million: i.e., probably around \$2.85 million.

This cost would include the following sorts of things: “repairing the soil that’s behind” the current wall structure; putting in a stable slope; engineering costs; safety improvements (such as pedestrian stairs and a vehicle guardrail); drainage improvements; and a 20% contingency.

3. She reiterated that the expected lifespan of a replacement rock-face wall would indeed be only 5 to 10 years. When I asked her why the current wall had lasted something like 65 years, she responded that “it’s an anomaly”, and that it was “barely” holding on. She speculated that significant maintenance had been required during this period. Basically, “you can get to 65 years”, but you have to keep maintaining it: “after 5-10 years, regular maintenance will be required to maintain the stability of the slope”.

4. Cassie verified that the proposed new retaining wall – which the Council approved at its last regular meeting – would pay for itself in 25 to 30 years.

5. The potential costs for reviewing another slope option (outside of those already presented) would likely run “between \$10,000 and \$15,000 for the engineering fees”.

I hope this clarifies things and provides a sound factual basis for our upcoming discussion. Again, my apologies for misunderstanding some of the earlier information.

SP/d