

COASTAL EMPIRE

COMING THURSDAY

Garden City officials discuss how the city will proceed with efforts to annex the Southbridge subdivision.

St. Pius X being vacate

Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority calls move 'prudent'

BY JAN SKUTCH

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An aging former school turned community hub is facing extensive renovations or replacement, forcing tenants to vacate by April 1.

The action at St. Pius X Family Resource Center comes on the heels of a consultant's report finding significant physical issues that need addressing in the former home of a 60-year-old, once-segregated, Catholic high school.

"We feel it is in the best interest of our partners, clients, and the com-

munity to relocate services out of St. Pius while we proceed with the type of renovations needed to bring this building to where it needs to be," said Edward Chisolm, executive director of the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, which owns the property.

He said the authority is helping tenants find new sites to accommodate those needs.

Weighing next steps

Authority officials are weighing the next step for the East Anderson Street site.

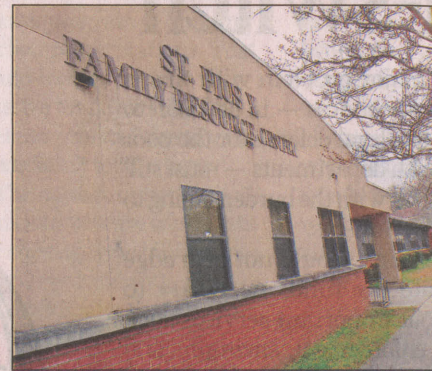
Options include a major renovation costing an estimated "little over \$5 million," or a new building at an estimated cost of \$5.3 million, Chisolm said.

Both figures were included in the November assessment of the structure by Kern-Coleman & Co., ordered by the city of Savannah.

Needed work includes a new roof, plumbing, electrical, lighting, landscaping and parking.

Either option would maintain the St. Pius footprint on the eastside, but either would require a "major,

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Carl Elmore/Savannah Mo

St. Pius X Family Resource Center.

IF YOU GO

Public comments on the future of St. Pius Resource Center will be heard at 6 p.m. Ja the center, 705 E. Anderson St.

Friends remember Clinton Powell's love of poetry

Tribute to be held Friday for co-founder of Spitfire Poetry Group

BY LINDA SICKLER

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One of the strongest voices of the Savannah Slam poetry scene has been stilled. Clinton D.



that he met those

Hogan said he was eligible to because he was more than 10 years led guilty to the federal charges. Although the indictment says Hogan's civil rights had not been restored, Hogan claims they had. He said he became eligible to vote again in the early 2000s.

ed in the Novem-lection, accord- am County's voter

he does not dispute prior convictions, st week that he will "tilty" to the grand . He did not return for comment made Tuesday.

worth City Council Hogan told them er that he would rom his position o tem. They cited

in 2000. Since it's roup has conducted id open mic events ne city. Powell also for the community's ported the artistic er poets and spoken

rvices will be held turday at Mustard

d prize — since the introduction. That l receive an option nual payment of million for 26 years, e cash payment of million. All of the l be subject to both ate taxes. ishment that sells g ticket can earn etailer incentive

"We're waiting to see whether or not he's going to live up to his word. If not, then we're going to take action."

James Curry, Port Wentworth councilman

fallout from a July 5 incident in which he told a woman at a Savannah Tea Party event that she "should have been aborted" as the reason for his planned resignation.

Council members said they are confident Hogan will step down from the pro tem post, which puts him second-in-line to become Port Wentworth's mayor.

If not, some council members said they plan to remove him from the pro tem post.

"We're waiting to see whether or not he's going to live up to his word," Councilman James Curry said. "If not, then we're going to take action."

Consequences

If Hogan is convicted of false swearing, a felony, Georgia law

Seed Faith Church, 1950 Chatham Parkway. Interment will be at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church Cemetery in Claxton. Sidney A. Jones and Campbell Funeral Services is handling arrangements.

Flynn-Knight learned of Powell's passing from a phone call she received while driving

bonus, according to the Georgia Lottery.

Premyla Patel, owner of the Timesaver convenience store at the intersection of Bay Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, said that's part of the reason she's been encouraging her customers to play.

"You never know who might be lucky," she said. "I hope one of my customers win. It would

requires that he immediately be removed from office.

False swearing is punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or one to five years in prison, or both. As a repeat felon, Hogan would be subject to the maximum sentence.

But Hogan could be removed from office before the case even goes to trial. If a charge is related to a public official's duties, Georgia law requires the district attorney to forward the indictment to the governor, who appoints a commission to review whether the indictment "relates to and adversely affects" the official's public duties.

Gov. Sonny Perdue's spokesman, Bert Brantley, said Tuesday the governor's office had not received Hogan's indictment "and therefore cannot move forward."

If the governor's office does not take action, state law also allows voters to petition to recall Hogan's election.

Georgia Municipal Association spokeswoman Amy Henderson said that a recall, a conviction or removal by the governor's commission are the only ways state law allows city officials to be taken out of office.

to church on Sunday. He will be remembered for his humble spirit, she said.

"I wish we could have a poetry day in honor of Clinton Powell, where poets come from all over and recite poetry in his honor," she said. "I can't express enough how much he loved poetry."

be great for them — and for us, too."

Grimes said she wasn't entirely sure what she would do if she did win the grand prize, but she had an idea where she might start.

"I'd travel the world," she said. "Oh, and I'd quit my job, too."

Pius

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major capital campaign," Chisolm said.

Chisolm said community comment will be sought Jan. 13 at the center.

"The community needs an opportunity to express themselves," Chisolm said. "I think we should hear directly from them."

Old building, old issues

The problems are not new, many of them inherited by Chisolm when he took over two years ago.

"It's been an open secret for awhile," Chisolm said. "It is what it is. It's an old building with old issues."

Complicating the choices is the fact that St. Pius carries a lot of emotional weight in the community and among its 125-member alumni association.

It opened in 1952 when segregation prevented black students from joining their white counterparts in class. The Diocese of Savannah operated the school until it turned the property over to Youth Futures in January 1993.

The Family Resource Center opened in April 1964 as part of the collaborative's effort to improve outcomes for area children and youth. It provided a place-based, one-stop strategy to serve youth and families, Chisolm said.

"We're not abandoning the concept and strategy of St. Pius," Chisolm said.

He said the concept is an essential part of the authority's efforts to build a Promise Neighborhood in Savannah's inner-city.

The resource center's programs were models used at the Moses Jackson Community Center on Richards Street adjacent to Sustainable Fellwood on the westside. That site was joined by the West Broad Street YMCA on May Street, also on the westside.

Chisolm said eastside residents deserve the St. Pius X site, and that the closest thing to the

ST. PIUS X FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER TENANTS:

- Economic Opportunity Authority (Early Head Start and Head Start)
- Abeni Cultural Arts
- All Walks of Life Inc.
- Second Arnold Baptist Church (recreation)
- Savannah-Chatham public schools (Little Red School House No. 2)
- Telamon Corporation
- Youth Build Savannah
- Harambee House
- America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia (Kid's Cafe)

resource center on the east side is the W.W. Law Community Center on East Bolton Street.

Conditions downhill

"The conditions at St. Pius have been going downhill for quite awhile," said DaVena Jordan, executive director of All Walks of Life Inc.

The organization had its theater and performing arts group of as many as 80 people from age 7 to 18 in the center.

"We've been a longtime supporter of the building," Jordan said. "It's frustrating and disappointing. We put in our own sweat."

In the meantime, Jordan said the group, which began in 1997, is "trying to poke irons in the fire" for a new location.

The center was an integral part of her organization's growth, Jordan said.

Money limits options

Savannah Mayor Otis Johnson, who was Youth Futures executive director when the St. Pius center started, said the finances associated with either renovations or replacement simply are not immediately available.

Relocating services to other sites is the best available option, he said.

Youth Futures officials "don't have a choice but to do what they're proposing to do," Johnson said.

"I hope that can be replaced," Johnson said.