
CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge not interested in Sullivan Courthouse, rather see it imploded

Posted by Brock Parker

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By Brock Parker, Globe Correspondent

Cambridge officials are notifying the state that the city has no use for the problem-plagued Edward J. Sullivan Courthouse.

“I think it truly is best imploded,” said City Manager Robert Healy to the City Council Monday.

In April, the state Division of Capital Asset Management began asking other government agencies, including the City of Cambridge, if they have any public use for the 22-story building on Thorndike Street in East Cambridge.

Kevin Flanigan, a deputy director for DCAM, said Tuesday that no agencies have come forward expressing interest in the building.

The state is preparing a request for proposals in an effort to sell the building, Flanigan said.

The high rise used to be the home of the Middlesex Superior Court and the Cambridge District Court. But the superior court has temporarily relocated to Woburn because of asbestos problems in the building, and the district court relocated to Medford. The only tenants in the building now are prisoners in the county jail, and the state is working with Middlesex County Sheriff James DiPaola to relocate the prisoners to Middlesex County House of Correction in Billerica.

City Councilor Tim Toomey had asked that the city consider if it has any re-use for the building, but he said he would also like to see the building destroyed.

In his comments to the state, Healy said the old courthouse is a “throwback to another era” that has a lack of parking and great height in a neighborhood of low-scaled residential uses.

He told the council that the cost of rehabbing the building and the asbestos removal would also be high.

In 2006, DCAM estimated the cost of the needed renovations at the building at \$130 million. The building was valued at \$40 million to \$50 million in 2007, but DCAM said last month that the real estate market has changed since then and the value is no longer reliable.

Healy told the council that he believes the state is seeking about \$40 million for the building. Flanigan said no price has been set.

“I don’t think that given everything that has been described that this building fetches anything near what the state believes that it can because of the tremendous costs of rehabbing the building,”

Healy said.
