**Illinois State**

**University**

**Board of**

**Trustees**

**Resolution No. 2016.02/04**

**Rambo House Demolition and Site Improvement Revised Scope and Budget**

**Resolution**

Whereas, the Board of Trustees approved in February 2014 a capital project to demolish Rambo House and to make site improvements, and

Whereas, student leadership has proposed that an exterior gathering space be created to acknowledge events, whether local or world-wide, and to serve as a unifying symbol of pride and spirit for Illinois State University, and

Whereas, the vacant site of Rambo House provides an opportunity for development of such a space:

Therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Trustees authorizes modifying the existing approved Rambo House Demolition capital project to establish budgets, appoint architects and engineers, develop required designs and construction documents, advertise, receive and then award public bids and undertake construction for the development of a plaza.

Therefore, be it further resolved that the Board of Trustees authorizes an increase in the budget for the Rambo House Demolition and Site Improvement project to $900,000.

Board Action on: Postpone:

Motion by: Amend:

Second by: Disapprove:

Vote: Yeas: Nays: Approve:

ATTEST: Board Action, February 19, 2016

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**Board of Trustees**

**Illinois State University**

**Supplemental Information for Revised Scope and Budget for Rambo House Demolition Project**

This item requests Board of Trustees approval to modify the scope and increase the budget for the Rambo House demolition and site improvement project. The modified scope allows for the development of a plaza, an exterior space reflecting Redbird pride for celebratory gatherings and for gathering to memorialize University community, local, state and federal events. The work to create this plaza increases the total cost of the Rambo House Demolition and site improvement project from $750,000 to $900,000.

**Background** – The Board of Trustees in February of 2014 (2014.02.04) approved a $750,000 project involving the demolition of Rambo House and related site improvements. Rambo House was recommended for demolition in *Master Plan 2010-2030: Looking to the Future* because it was in extremely poor condition and no longer met the needs of University programs or current code requirements. The University notified the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) as required by state statutes concerning the preservation of state resources. As part of IHPA’s review of the project, they asked the University to have historical documentation of the facility prepared in accordance with the Illinois Historic American Building Survey Standards, including an archive of the original facility plans, photographs of the building and a written historical narrative. The University engaged Wiss Janney Elstner to prepare the documentation that was submitted to IHPA in November 2014. IHPA notified the University in January 2015 the historical documentation of the facility was accepted and demolition could proceed. The University then engaged consultants to prepare asbestos abatement and demolition designs, contractors to abate asbestos containing materials and demolish the facility, and consultants to prepare site plans. Demolition of the facility was completed in November 2015.

Concurrently, student leadership reactivated a plan to provide a student gathering space that was first conceptualized in 2006. The plan involves developing an area reflecting student pride and spirit as well as a place to gather for celebrations or to memorialize other local, state or world events. A Reggie Redbird is intended to be a significant part of this project. Absence of funding to create the space was an obstacle in moving the plan forward in the past. Student Affairs has since identified a funding source and contacted Facilities Planning about developing such a space in 2015. The program requirements for the plaza have an affinity and alignment with the blank slate created by the vacant Rambo House site.

Developing the plaza on the site of the former Rambo House offers a number of advantages. The space has the features required of a public plaza: an identifiable area with easily recognized/defined boundaries - often created by surrounding buildings - that can accommodate small as well as large groups. The site is framed into a natural plaza bordered by Fell Hall, DeGarmo Hall, McCormick Hall/Student Fitness and the Rachel Cooper Building. This site can accommodate progressively larger gatherings naturally, depending on the intended or planned function. The DeGarmo concourse to the north provides a natural raised viewing platform for events within the plaza and is planned to be incorporated into site planning. The parking lot to the north could be used for staging, temporary bleachers or both. For even larger events the windows in Fell Hall, DeGarmo Hall, McCormick Hall/Student Fitness and the Rachel Cooper Building offer generally unobstructed views of the central plaza. The site and the parking lot are easily serviced off of University Avenue. One time expansive events can easily spill into the parking area to the south as well as temporarily onto University and Dry Grove Street to the west. An amphitheater effect can be attained within the ‘horseshoe’ of DeGarmo, Fell and McCormick. The site is easily accessible and visible by vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The Plaza would become a natural introduction and entrance point for prospective students and their families and campus visitors. It very likely would become a favored space for prospective students and their families, current students, alumni and others to take their pictures and partake in “*the custom of touching the Reggie head as a sign of becoming a part of the redbird community.”*

**Project Scope –** The project will create a space that includes a series of paved pathways, green spaces, seating areas, and presentation areas to support student life and student gatherings and enhance the approach to Fell Hall. The project will feature a Reggie Redbird icon at the focal center point. The center is envisioned to be landscaped to a shallow bowl lower elevation creating a natural amphitheater. This will reinforce the primary focal center as the intimate setting delineated by paving, low brick walls and framed by site landscaping and the formal vegetative ring. The plan will include opportunities to expand the gathering area by including the small parking lot to the south of the site as well as University Street as part of the overall composition. Amplified sound will be a part of the final product. Conceptual plans have been prepared and it is estimated the total cost of Rambo’s demolition project and the new site development project, including design, construction and contingency, is estimated at $900,000.

**Resource Requirements:**

Demolition, Abatement & Construction $750,000

A/E Fees 75,000

Contingency     75,000

Total Project Cost $900,000

Source of Funding: $750,000 – General Revenue Operating

$100,000 – Donor funds

$ 50,000 – Student Government

$900,000 - Total