

Published February 09, 2010 07:05 pm - Geneva Elementary School could be the new home of the proposed educational wine and culinary center, according to the feasibility study timeline.

Geneva Elementary could be new location of Geneva's culinary center

Soon-to-be empty school offers 50,000 square feet on 2.2 acres for renovation, development

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Star Beacon GENEVA — Geneva Elementary School could be the new home of the proposed educational wine and culinary center, according to the feasibility study timeline.

“The facility would feature a winery, brewery, restaurant incubator, condominiums, offices, retail and educational spaces, grape-growing history or a museum, and any combination of these, the proposal from Poggemeyer Design Group Inc. shows. “It may also serve as a launching place for tours of the region, a farmers market, an agricultural resource center and an experimental vineyard.”

The proposal for the study notes the school, which will be vacated when Geneva Elementary and Spencer Elementary are combined in the new Geneva-Platt R. Spencer Elementary on Austin Road, offers about 50,000 square feet on three floors and sits on a 2.2 acres.

“A sound decision must be made (on the use of the school) by August so the school district can make use of \$250,000 in demolition funds,” the proposal reveals.

Assistant city manager Jennifer Brown said the project is a “critical component” of the city’s downtown revitalization strategy.

The feasibility study for the proposed culinary center is funded by a \$20,000 Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County grant. Twenty-thousand dollars for the feasibility study were provided by the Growth Partnership’s economic stimulus grant program, which is derived from the Ashtabula County Civic Development Corp., Brown said.

The feasibility study will take a “multipronged approach,” according to the Poggemeyer Design Group and will include a detailed review of key reports and other information prepared by the project’s local steering committee, which should include the city’s vision for the elementary school property; information on local wines and food; a copy of the city’s downtown revitalization plan; information on the Geneva-area Recreational, Educational, Athletic Trust (GaREAT); and design plans and cost estimates for the transformation of the elementary school into the culinary center. The design group also will hold as many as three work sessions with the local steering committee to review the information.

“The goal is to clearly understand all data collected to date and use it as a base, rather than re-creating any of that data,” the study proposal says.

The design group also will scrutinize the New York Wine and Culinary Center in Canadaigua, N.Y.; the Lodi California Wine and Visitor Center; and the Vino Piazza in Lockeford, Calif., which are considered “similar venues.”

The study will include a review of local and regional demographic and socioeconomic data and will include a comparison of local and regional demographics to state and national trends to determine the market feasibility of the project. The study will be complete in three to five months, city officials confirmed.