



October 12, 2011

Members of the History Center of Olmsted County

RE: Notice of Special Membership Meeting

Greetings:

The Board of Directors of the History Center of Olmsted County (HCOC) has called a special meeting of the membership for Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the History Center. There will be one item on the agenda. It involves a strategic partnership between HCOC and Mayo Clinic for the restoration, long-term operation and maintenance of Historic Mayowood Mansion. According to our by-laws, the terms of this agreement, which has been approved by the Board of Directors, must be submitted to the HCOC membership for approval. Please review the information contained in this announcement for the details of the agreement and plan on attending the special meeting of the membership.

The issue of the stewardship, care, and maintenance of Historic Mayowood Mansion has been a topic of discussion by the Board of Directors of HCOC for several decades. The agreement which has been reached between HCOC and Mayo Clinic was achieved only after protracted, thoughtful discussions between representatives of each organization over the past several years, together with invaluable input from local members of the Mayo family. The end result will allow the restoration of the mansion and ensure its long-term care and maintenance.

In 1965, Dr. Charles W. Mayo and Alice P. Mayo transferred the Historic Mayowood Mansion and 10 surrounding acres to HCOC. It was the intent of the Mayos that HCOC hold the house and land as an historic site, open to the public and as a memorial to the entire Mayo family. In the succeeding 46 years, HCOC has operated tours for the general public and has cared for the associated buildings. However, not surprisingly, the restoration needs for the 100- year-old structure continue to mount. Additionally, maintenance needs have had to be prioritized, with many of the less pressing needs deferred because of cost.

Recently, the Historic Mayowood District, which includes the Mansion, was named by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota as one of the ten state sites most in need of public support and advocacy. As the dominant structure of the district, Historic Mayowood Mansion needs substantial work to bring it back to a semblance of the home built 100 years ago. Like many non-profits in today's economy, HCOC does not have the means to cover the expense of doing so. The Board has considered a number of options over the years and consulted with members of the philanthropic community, all of which have led up to entering into a more formal arrangement with Mayo Clinic for the use and care of Historic Mayowood Mansion.

For many years, Mayo Clinic has generously provided staff and financial support for repairs of many kinds. Mayo Clinic, for instance, was the primary source of funds for the extensive roof repairs completed several years ago. HCOC and Mayo Clinic have explored options for restoring Mayowood Mansion to its historical condition and to then maintain it in such a fashion as to be a truly fitting memorial to the family, with access guaranteed to the public. As a non-profit itself, Mayo Clinic is not in a position to simply disburse the significant sums necessary to restore the property or to continuously supply the high level of maintenance and care which the property both requires and deserves.

An architectural survey indicates that up to \$3,000,000 is needed in the very near future to stabilize and provide basic restoration of Historic Mayowood Mansion. The Board has concluded that the best way of resolving the issues of restoration, maintenance, public use and access is to enter into a joint enterprise with Mayo Clinic. The method of doing includes the transfer of title to the real estate to Mayo Clinic, together with the responsibility for all repair, restoration, and future maintenance. The transfer will not take place until Mayo Clinic has completed an initial \$2,000,000 in repairs and restoration.

For its part, HCOC shall retain ownership and stewardship of all the historically-related personal property owned by it which is presently located at Historic Mayowood Mansion, as well as such related items which are presently maintained at HCOC. Additionally, HCOC shall have exclusive and perpetual use of the facility for the public during those portions of the year in which it has traditionally hosted the public. Mayo Clinic shall be entitled to use the time not allocated to HCOC for meetings and events broadly involving Mayo Clinic employees at every level, as well as guests and the public.

HCOC has met with local representatives of the heirs of Dr. Charles W. Mayo and Alice P. Mayo. They have responded enthusiastically to the proposal. Their valuable input significantly improved the final version of the agreement and they have urged the remaining heirs to join in their embrace of the project.

The specific details of the proposal are as follows:

1. Mayowood shall be preserved as an historic site, as well as the final resting place of Dr. Charles W. Mayo and Alice P. Mayo. In keeping with the Mayos' intentions, Mayowood shall be open for public use and shall be held as a memorial to the Mayo family. The overall accessibility of the premises to the public shall be improved, consistent with the historical nature of Mayowood.
2. Mayo Clinic shall pay for and complete initial planned improvements on the Historic Mayowood Mansion, not to exceed \$3,000,000. All repairs and restoration shall be mutually agreed to by Mayo Clinic and HCOC.
3. Title to the Historic Mayowood Mansion and its grounds shall be transferred from HCOC to Mayo Clinic following completion of at least \$2,000,000 in repairs and restoration.

Thereafter, Mayo Clinic will have the exclusive responsibility of maintaining Mayowood in good condition and repair.

4. HCOC shall retain ownership, title and responsibility for all historical personal property associated with Historic Mayowood Mansion which it presently owns.
5. Historic Mayowood Mansion is presently open to the public approximately 140 days per year. HCOC shall be entitled to open Historic Mayowood Mansion to the public at least 160 days per year pursuant to a perpetual calendar which is integral to the agreement. HCOC and Mayo Clinic shall each designate one individual as a coordinator of the use of the property. The coordinators will act in conjunction upon requests for public use. As a result, the Agreement permits HCOC to continue keeping Mayowood open to the public to an extent somewhat greater than in the past.
6. Private use of Historic Mayowood Mansion shall have lower priority than tours and other events which are open to the public. HCOC shall have access for private rentals on a minimum of 10 days per year, if not otherwise in use. Mayo Clinic's use of Historic Mayowood Mansion shall be subject to the public use schedule.
7. Mayo Clinic shall insure Historic Mayowood Mansion and associated structures against loss or structural damage by fire, wind or other events. If the structure sustains damage of less than fifty percent, Mayo Clinic is obliged to rebuild. If the structure sustains damage in excess of fifty percent or is a total loss, Mayo Clinic shall not be obliged to re-build, at which point the future use of Mayowood shall be jointly agreed upon by HCOC and Mayo Clinic. However, in such event, recognizing that Mayowood is the final resting place of Dr. Charles W. Mayo and Alice P. Mayo, Mayo Clinic and HCOC shall jointly ensure that any future use of the property following loss of the Historic Mayowood Mansion shall include maintaining the property as the memorial it was meant to be.

HCOC's Board of Directors believes the proposed Agreement is essential to the continued operation of Historic Mayowood Mansion as intended by Dr. Charles W. Mayo and Alice P. Mayo. The Board voted unanimously to approve this proposal and recommends to the membership that it be accepted. We look forward to seeing Historic Mayowood Mansion receive the attention and care which the Historic Mayowood Mansion and its grounds will receive under the stewardship of the Mayo Clinic while HCOC fulfills its mission of maintaining broad public access to, and use of, the property and preservation of its contents. Please attend the special membership meeting to discuss and vote on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Christopher Colby
President, Board of Directors
History Center of Olmsted County