

The Charlestown Community Building Council is sad to announce after 70 years the Charlestown Community Building has closed it's doors for the final time. Several years ago, after a severe rain storm the building was flooded with storm drainage water overflow. Repairs were made and the building was reopened. Storm water from last week's rain event once again flooded the building leaving behind an inch of mud covering the entire floor. Once volunteers removed the mud they discovered severe floor damage and damage to the foundation. Most people have always thought the Community Building was owned by the City of Charlestown, not true.

Here is a condensed history of the building:

The original owners of the property dating back to 1863 was the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Indianapolis who planned on constructing a church on the site. Due to drainage problems at that time the Diocese did not build on the site. In the early 1940's the Diocese allowed the US Army to construct a USO structure on the site (what was the Community Building). The building was used for dances, meetings, etc. At the end of World War II the Diocese deeded the building to the Charlestown Community Council. The Council was organized and incorporated in 1944 for just this purpose. The Council, all volunteers, ran the building as a Community Center for general public use. In 1968, the Community Council deeded a small portion of the property to Charlestown Township for use as a public library. In 1974 the Township returned the property back to the Council, as a new public library was constructed next to Jonathan Jennings Elementary School. Later that year, the same piece of property was sold to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1427 for use as additional parking. The intended use of the Community Building was to provide the youth of the community with an affordable location for after school events and also to provide the community with an affordable location for rental activities.

Over the years the building has hosted dinners, weddings, tap dance lessons, Boy and Girl Scout meetings, funeral dinners, political events, square dances, etc. It would be a safe assumption that most of Charlestown's residents have rented or attended a function at some time in their life at the building.

As it stands today, the council has been presented with a devastating event. The only income source for the building is rent. Like every other business, for years they have struggled to make repairs and cover their regular monthly bills. For those of you that are thinking about grants, they have already explored this option and are not eligible. This last event and the damage the building suffered has forced the council to make this final decision. The council met on Thursday, April 10, and after much debate voted to close the building. The council apologizes to the groups and individuals that have reserved the building for use in the upcoming months, but the building is not safe for use. Calls are being placed to everyone that is on the schedule to inform them of the closing. At this time no decision has been made as to the disposition of the building. The council is discussing the possibility of selling or transferring the property to another non-profit organization in the future.

If anyone has any questions you may contact Suzy Walker, council member, and she will try and address your questions or concerns.