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Dallas County weighs plans for JFK assassination exhibit

By SCOTT PARKS

A special committee of the Dallas Historical Commission presented Dallas County commissioners its final recommendations Monday on the restoration of the former Texas School Book Depository's sixth floor, where Lee Harvey Oswald was sitting when he allegedly shot President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

Conover Hunt-Jones, curator of the DeGolyer estate in Dallas and the committee's chairman, told the commissioners that it is now up to them to apply for a federal grant to underwrite at least part of the exhibit cost.

Ms. Hunt-Jones estimated 150,000 persons a year would pay to see the exhibit.

Under questioning from Commissioner Jim Jackson, Ms. Hunt-Jones said it is not certain if admission fees would pay for the annual maintenance and operation of the exhibit, which tentatively has been named "Tragedy at Dealey Plaza."

The Dallas County government owns the former depository and will

be responsible for any tourist attraction at the site.

C. Judson Shook Jr., Dallas County's director of public works and committee member, said the commissioners also would have to come up with an estimated \$500,000 for architectural modifications to the building — primarily the installation of an elevator that would run directly from the first to the sixth floor.

The separate elevator would be necessary, Shook said, to keep tourists apart from county government offices.

The commissioners and several county departments will move into the newly renovated first and second

floors of the now-famous building sometime next year.

The architectural modifications can be paid for either with tax money or with funds solicited from the public, Shook told the commissioners.

"I would favor public subscription (voluntary contributions) because we need to make this a community effort," Shook said.

The actual cost of putting together and exhibiting the assassination memorabilia can be underwritten by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the same agency that provided \$8,500 for the historical committee's planning activities.

The committee was careful to point out that any exhibit items would represent only the findings of official investigations into the assassination.

If the historical commission's committee has its way, the entire building — including the Hertz Rent-a-Car sign that was removed from the roof earlier this year — and surrounding landscape will be restored to the way it looked in 1963.

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