

TO:	Mayor and Borough Assembly
FROM:	Emily Deach, Deputy Borough Manager
DATE:	May 12, 2023
SUBJECT:	Direction re: Elks Lodge Land Disposition

Staff have been working with the Benevolent Order of Elks (BPOE) to determine how the land and building at 6th Avenue and State was conveyed to them back in the 1940s. BPOE recently conducted a title search that showed that the Municipality still owns the property, which we do not think is the case. Museum Director Judy Munns has done extensive research into this (see below), and Karl Gurcke and Jeff Brady have provided a lot of helpful historical information as well. Here is what we have learned so far:

- During the years of WWII, the US Government requisitioned property in Skagway for wartime use, including city property at 6th Avenue and State, and the former Elks Lodge at its original location.
- In 1942, the original Elks Lodge was destroyed by fire, and in 1944-45 the US Government compensated the Elks for this loss.
- In 1943, the US Government leased the property at 6th and State from the City of Skagway and utilized a bakery building on the site.
- The tax rolls for 1942, 1943, and 1944 show the property as owned by the City.
- The US Government lease of the property was canceled in 1945.
- Documentation shows that the US Government sold the bakery building to the City in 1945, which in turn sold the building to BPOE for \$2,001. This documentation says that the building was “converted to Elks Home.”
- The tax roll for 1945 shows the property, including the land and building, as owned by BPOE.

From the documentation found by Director Munns, it is clear how the building was conveyed to BPOE, but we have not yet found specific documentation about the conveyance of the land. If the documentation is found, the Municipality could simply quitclaim deed the property to BPOE in order to legally record the conveyance. However, because documentation about the land conveyance is currently lacking, the borough attorney advised that without it, the best course of action is for the Assembly to adopt an ordinance authorizing the conveyance.

Staff will continue to search for documentation, but if directed, staff can draft an ordinance that will authorize the quitclaim deed without the missing documentation.