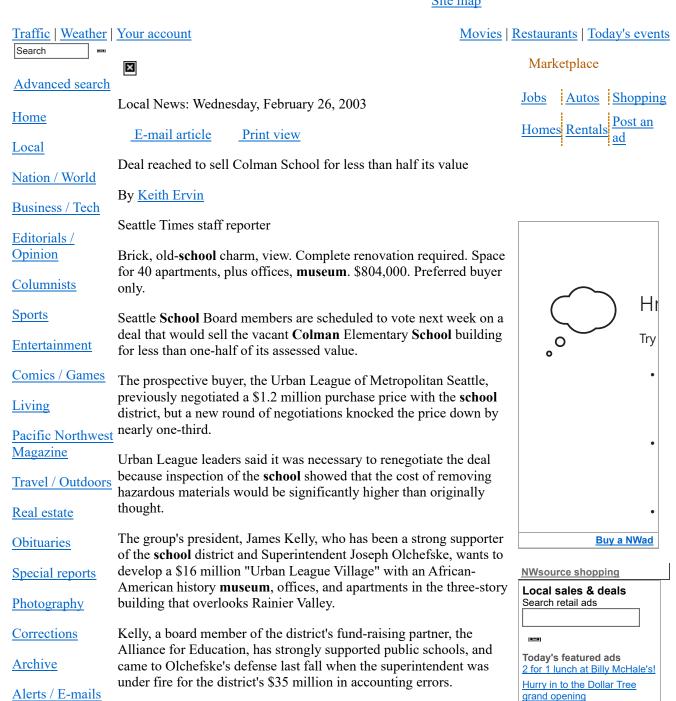


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Funky Janes one day sale: 25% off everything



Marketplace The 103-year-old Colman building has been boarded up since 1985,

when students were moved to the new Thurgood Marshall Elementary

Jobs two blocks away.

Autos Community activists occupied the building for eight years to

dramatize their demands that the building be turned into an African-

Homes American Heritage Museum.

Rentals The **school** district agreed in 1997 year to sell the building to those

> activists for \$471,000, but the deal fell apart as activists feuded over leadership of the **museum** organization. The Urban League came

forward as a prospective buyer in 2000.

The **School** Board decided to negotiate a deal with the Urban League

rather than sell the 1.8-acre property on the open market.

School district and Urban League executives defended the latest

version of the agreement, which was made public yesterday.

"Nobody wants any preferential treatment, we only want fair

treatment," Kelly said. Given the need to clean up asbestos, lead-based paint, pigeon droppings and other hazardous materials, he joked, "You

should pay us to take care of those things."

Asked if the purchase agreement could be viewed as a sweetheart deal,

Olchefske said, "I don't think it is in any major sense of the term." Submit listings

Send us news tips Negotiating exclusively with a nonprofit group for purchase of a

surplus school is "absolutely consistent" with deals the district previously reached with El Centro de la Raza and the Delridge

Neighborhood Association, he said.

Advertise with us When the district negotiated its first deal with the Urban League, an

appraisal by Bellevue-based Bruce C. Allen & Associates pegged the property's value at \$1.7 million but reduced that amount by the

estimated \$500,000 cost of removing asbestos and other hazardous

materials.

The district and the Urban League reopened negotiations after the league's private development partner, the firm Barrientos, reported

high costs for removing hazardous materials.

The Urban League also found it would have to negotiate access with

adjacent landowners.

Mark Green, the district's general counsel, said the district lowered the \$1.2 million price to \$804,000 in three ways: increasing the allowance for hazardous-material cleanup, giving the Urban League a \$60,000 credit for defending lawsuits challenging the property sale, and dropping the price below the adjusted appraisal.

The deal would allow the Urban League to pay only 90 percent of the appraised price, the lowest amount the district can legally accept under

state law.

Paul Chiles, president of commercial real-estate firm Chiles& Co. and president of the Urban League board, said district negotiators drove a hard bargain.

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"I can tell you that every inch in that negotiation with the **school** district, to recede from the original amount was a struggle and it had to be validated," Chiles said. "They were very, very tough negotiators, and I wouldn't want anyone to believe they weren't being judicious with the public dollars."

The purchase price is also below the King County assessor's \$2 million assessed valuation of the **Colman** property. That valuation for the 2003 tax year is based on a land value of \$788,220 and building value of \$1.3 million.

Lynn Gering, the county's chief appraiser, said the land value was based on market value but that the building value was based on a commercially available cost-estimating system.

Michael Christ, president of Bellevue-based Seco Development, said it is difficult to determine the value of older, neglected buildings which are costly to restore.

He welcomed the Urban League deal, saying, "Something had to happen with that building. It's a liability now. It's a handsome building. It would be nice to see it put to good use."

School Board President Nancy Waldman could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Lawsuits challenging the Urban League's pending purchase of the building have been filed by members of the original African-American Heritage **Museum** board.

Keith Ervin: 206-464-2105 or kervin@seattletimes.com

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