

December 15, 2008

## City approves purchase of crime-infested downtown dive

By SHAWN LOGAN, Sun Media

The city will shell out \$10.9-million to purchase a notorious watering hole in the heart of Calgary's blighted East Village.

Following a closed door meeting Monday, aldermen voted to acquire the Cecil Hotel, an infamous tavern that had become a haven for drug deals and prostitution, with plans to build a parkade and potentially some residential and commercial development.

The decision sparked a contentious debate among aldermen over spending public dollars to acquire the 96-year-old building at 401 4 Ave. S.E. at a time of growing fiscal uncertainty.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart said she would prefer to see the private sector step up and that the city would never be in this position if it didn't "turn a blind eye" to bylaw infractions that occurred on a daily basis on the property.

Council voted 11-4 to buy the property.

[shawn.logan@sunmedia.ca](mailto:shawn.logan@sunmedia.ca)

