

ELEVATOR PROBLEMS – September 2023

Summary written by Property Team member, Gary Tackes:

On Tuesday, September 26, 2023, Otis sent two technicians who conducted a further investigation of the elevator hydraulic leak. After raising the elevator car and securing it, they removed 1/2 to 1 inch of hydraulic fluid from the elevator pit. After cleaning the hydraulic lines, the piston case and piston seal area, they repressurized the hydraulic system and looked for the leak. Unfortunately, there was no leakage from the lines or piston seal area [a much less expensive repair]. Instead, fluid started to pool around the piston casing at ground level. Basically, the verdict is that there is a hole in the piston casing below ground and fluid was being forced into the sand and soil around the casing. The pressurized fluid was taking the path of least resistance, pushing some of the sand up and out alongside the piston casing.

This is the worst case of the possible leaks. The general ballpark guess by Otis from two weeks ago was that the piston replacement will cost from \$60,000 to \$100,000 with a slight possibility of problems that could cause the price to be even higher. At this point, we should ask Otis for an actual quote and ask if there are any alternatives such as installing an older cable system. My guess is that this would not be a viable alternative partly due to space requirements above the car and the extensive modifications needed. The older systems also have brakes and mechanical parts that require more maintenance and adjusting - probably the reason the hydraulic system was chosen in the first place. Because the new piston cylinders will not be in direct contact with the ground, but are enclosed in PVC, they should last much longer.

We should look into getting quotes from a couple of other elevator repair companies. Even if Otis's bid is higher, we might be able to use the other bids as bargaining chips. The only problem might be if the other companies need to do their own inspections of the elevator. These would probably not be free. In this case, we might be better off sticking with Otis.

My thanks to Pastor Scott and Claude Zimmerman for their input into the above discussion and being there with me during the investigation.

Gary Tackes
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