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WEST ROXBURY

After 65 years, Irish Social Club of Boston closes abruptly

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 20, 2011 03:51 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

After a 65-year run, the Irish Social Club of Boston no longer has a space of its own to call home.

The club's West Roxbury headquarters did not have enough members attending its Sunday-night, \$10-admission gatherings to generate the revenue needed to save from having to sell the building, the club's president and lawyer said Wednesday. The club's last event was held Sunday before it closed abruptly.

As word of the closing spread this week -- news to many of the club's members -- a [Facebook group](#) was started to rally support for saving the building.

"It's the end of an era," said club president Andrew Sheehan. "But what can you do when you don't have money."

The club's lawyer Paul Kilgarriff, who is also a member, said the Fire Department had recently ordered the Park Street facility to upgrade its alarm system. He said that would have been a "very expensive" process and that it expedited the club's decision to close.

But, he added that with the club running on dwindling savings it "would have closed anyway within a matter of months."

"Most members are senior citizens now and a lot of members have passed away over the years," Kilgarriff said. "There wasn't anyway to increase membership. There were no new members coming in ... There just wasn't enough money."

Sheehan estimated the current membership to be around 300. According to Globe archives, the club's membership was 15,000 in the mid-1970s. The closure was first reported by [West Roxbury Patch](#).

State records show the club formed in 1945 and purchased its current property, formerly a bowling alley, in 1978 for \$75,000. Prior to establishing its base in West Roxbury, the club was headquartered in Dorchester, according to Globe archives.

"It's the end of a 65-year tradition," said Kilgarriff. "It was not an easy decision [to close], but the facts required it."

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He said the club has made contact with real estate agents to sell the property.

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.



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