

ENVISION

Re-Envision-a 2016 update from Board Member Michael Davis

In July of last year, the Palace Theatre announced plans to build a new education center to accommodate the children's program. As it was, we were leasing about 3300 square feet of space immediately adjacent to the theater and were using both the rehearsal and main stage to support the kids program. This cause a number of conflicts during the summer months (our largest number of kids participate then). At the beginning of the summer last year to address the crowding issue, we leased an additional 1800 square feet of space across the street from the main theater and we still could not accommodate the full demand.

At the time, we had designed a building which was specific to a lot which had been donated at 2nd and Rock Street. The property was located within the 100 year flood plain, so the building plan had to be elevated to address this issue. We also had a donor who pledged to match up to \$1 Million dollars to the effort. We estimated the building to cost \$2.5 million.

Where are we now? Well lots has happened. First, we are sitting at just a little over \$2M in donations and pledges, or just over 80% of the way to our goal. **Thanks to all who have pledged or donated.** Most significantly, we found out on Sept 14th of last year that the property had been reevaluated by FEMA and most of the lot is no longer considered in the flood plain. This changed the entire project. The reassessment of the flood plain means the building no longer has to be elevated. This results in a lower cost and more usable space.

As a result, we have been reimagining the building to take advantage of this change. We have keep the general look of the building design seen during the campaign, but it is now a three story structure with the performance space and lobby on the ground floor. Classrooms, dance studio and arts and crafts rooms occupy the second and third floor. We have replaced the rooftop garden with a covered terrace (which is both cheaper and adds less weight to the structure and therefore less cost). We are still perfecting the design of the new structure (we've been through 16 iterations so far as we try to get the most bang for the buck) and plan to have a final design in the August or September time frame.

Thanks to the generosity of the community and hard work by a group of volunteers, we are closing in on a very effective, usable space for the kids. We still have 20% to go in our fund raising efforts and we will have to go through the required planning and approval processes, but we are on our way to getting a structure that will serve the kids of our community and we think make our donors proud.

Thanks for your continued support. We'll have future updates as our plans solidify.