

Aquatorium Newsletter Spring 2009

RDA Grant

In December of 2008, The Society presented an application for a grant to the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority. This body is a creation of recent legislation utilizing funds from the sale of the toll road for local community capital projects. The new Portage lakefront park, as an example, was paid for by the RDA. The Society asked for one million dollars: \$100,000 to finish our kitchen, \$300,000 to finish the Chanute Memorial Garden, and \$600,000 to finish off the museum space which would be in the northern portion of the building in the center of the first floor.

At a meeting on January 8, 2009, The Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority voted six to zero to accept our application. This did not mean that we were going to receive the money, it only meant that it was the beginning of a process.

At the end of January, the City of Gary submitted its own beach front development proposal for over 28 million dollars. This proposal included the application made by the Society.

The Society was then asked in early February to withdraw its application in favor of the city's application.

We immediately had several meetings with officials of the city and worked out what we believe is an agreement whereby our application would be funded as part of the City of Gary application, and we would be allowed to develop the building with our own architect and project manager as we had originally planned.

As of this writing, the city has not signed an agreement with The Society on the subject matters discussed. We have given them a proposed agreement and we were told on March 9, 2009 that they wanted to make some changes. To date, we don't know what those changes are so we can't comment on them.

We hope to push the process forward and begin construction as early as May 2009. We will keep you advised as developments occur.

August 8, 2009

On August 8, 2009, for the 19th consecutive year, the membership of The Society is asked to gather at our annual event. There will be food, drinks, fun, and even a short business meeting. It is at this annual event over the last 18 years that we have raised the money necessary to enable us to leverage the total of 2.3 million dollars that we've raised. It's been with the support of you, the members of The Society, that all this was possible. So mark your calendars now for the annual event.

Nineteen years ago, the Aquatorium was a boarded up building. Take a careful look at the building now. All of the stone that is a lighter color than the other stone wasn't even there, it was missing. The building was in complete ruin and its only name was "no trespassing". Now we have a beautiful facility that all of the citizens of Gary, and indeed Northwest Indiana, can be proud of. We will continue to rehabilitate the building and care for the building for the balance of our lease with the city and hopefully beyond (the balance of our lease is 33 years).

You Can Rent It

Since taking over as our manager in early 2008, Jan McLaughlin has done a splendid job of managing the building for us and make it more popular than ever. Currently rents are \$300 downstairs and \$300 upstairs for weekends, and \$200 per level on weekdays. Weekends are Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The summer calendar is filling up fast, so if you want to make a reservation do it now, either by going online at aquatorium.org and e-mailing Jan or by calling her at (219) 938-1986.