When a Waterfall Comes to Town (Not a Brick Chicken): Repurposing an Old Building for Art and Community

Buy this building or not? (If you already have a building, skip this section or review and pat yourself on the back.)

- Assess your board and staff leadership – do you have long-term commitment? Are these people unafraid to ask for money? Do people know power brokers?
- Is building sound (enough?) Get lots of experts to come look – buy them lunch
- How’s the location? What works about and what doesn’t?
- Dream – what amazing wonderful things could happen with this building with minimal reno?
- Then dream even bigger – 20 years down the road, get specific about what could happen here with even more renovation
- Talk to as many people as possible about the building
- Make a decision. Do not stay in limboland too long – it will affect momentum and get in the way of current efforts

Once you have a building

Do a spatial asset inventory to broaden the use opportunities:

- How’s the access to the building? Inviting? Obvious? Coolly mysterious?
- What space is ADA compliant?
- What spaces could be rented/utilized/traded for services/goods/cold hard cash:

  **Inside:** Hallways or foyer
  Meeting rooms
  Small offices
  Classrooms

  **Outside:** Lawn? Porch or deck? Safe and accessible rooftop? Parking lot?

  DO you have a dance or party space?

- What space could be improved for public use with minimal reno (less than $5000)?
Your People: Facilities Committee/Staff

Do you have a facilities manager? If this person is competent, knowledgeable, proactive, communicative – do ALL you can to keep her/him. Keep them learning, happy, responsible – otherwise find someone else.

Do you have a Facilities Committee? Is it functioning? Do they have a long-range plan? Who’s on it?

What are the skills/building trades represented? What is missing?

- Building structure/envelope
- Architecture
- Energy Efficiency
- Interior Design
- Plumbing
- Electrical
- Masonry
- Carpentry
- Grounds work

Partnering and Saying YES

1. To whom and what can you say YES to? Make a list.

List groups you already partner with and what sectors (health, arts, schools, etc.)

2. Where are the gaps? What sectors are not represented?

Make friends – civic groups, tourists, sports teams or fitness clubs, religious or political groups

Join a board of an organization very different from yours (and one you believe in of course.)

Attend public events and schmooze away --

3. Who can you say YES to? Who do you want to say YES to? What’s in the way of asking them out to play?

Diversify your funding as much as possible
Say yes whenever possible
Try to enjoy it – that’s the whole point isn’t it?

I am happy to answer any questions that pop up. And please visit! Contact info:

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