



Ann Arbor Council for Traditional Music and Dance

* The New Facility Newsletter *

March 13, 2009

AACTMAD is a participatory membership nonprofit foundation that *“enriches people’s lives and sense of community through traditional music, dance, song, and related arts.”* In pursuit of this mission, AACTMAD has long had a Vision to own its own Facility that has a large space for dancing and music activities and would be its base of operations.

With the concerted effort and hard work of many, AACTMAD has significantly advanced toward achieving that Vision. The New Facility Newsletters will bring you up to date and keep you informed as the Facility Project moves forward and AACTMAD’s Vision becomes reality.

Let’s look at where AACTMAD’s Facility Project has been and where we are now.

In 2001, AACTMAD’s Long Range Planning session articulated the vision and long range goal of owning a Facility. In the next several years, AACTMAD refined its vision, explored many possible Facility scenarios, and explored available properties in the area.

In August 2004, AACTMAD rolled out the Facility Project to its Members at a “Community Building Cookout” that was held in conjunction with a First Saturday Dance. Next, an “Ice Cream Social” was held at the Dawn Dance Weekend in 2005 to further promote the Project.

After a considerable search, a potential site for the Facility was identified. In June 2005, the Wagner-Waters property was purchased by a partnership of

AACTMAD and about 20 individuals, mostly dancers. A plan was developed to construct a Community Building for a shared use by AACTMAD’s Facility, Gretchen’s House Administrative Offices, and a church. In the fall of 2007, however, the Wagner-Waters Project was denied by Lodi Township, to everyone’s great disappointment.

The search for a suitable property continued with the hope that the shared-use concept of the Wagner-Waters Project could still be implemented. In July 2008, an existing building at 4531 Concourse Drive, Pittsfield Twp., was purchased by Gretchen’s House for its Administrative Offices. The building contains a large 4000 sq. ft. unimproved warehouse-type space that is suitable for AACTMAD’s Facility.

AACTMAD held an Open House at the Concourse building on November 30, 2008, to give everyone an opportunity to look at the new space, ask questions, and give feedback. The renovation for Gretchen’s House Offices was completed in December 2008, and AACTMAD is now working with an architect on a design for its Facility in the available space.

The assets of AACTMAD and many of the dancers that had been invested in the Wagner-Waters property have now been transferred to the new Facility Project at Concourse Drive. As a result, AACTMAD has over \$70,000 already raised for the Facility. A considerable amount more will have to be raised to complete the Project. As an essential part of the Vision,

AACTMAD is working on a path to ownership in the Concourse building.

AACTMAD is in the process of finalizing the construction plans for its new Facility. Blueprints are out to prospective contractors for bids so we’ll have a good estimate of the fundraising needed to complete construction as well as operate the new Facility. The plans have been submitted to Pittsfield Township for zoning compliance approval.

We all share tremendous excitement for the new Facility Project, especially now that we are so close to achieving it. Excitement, however, is tempered somewhat by the immense amount of work still to be done. The Facility Project plans for the Concourse building were displayed at the Dawn Dance Weekend last month, and many dancers signed up to help with various aspects of the Project.

The next steps include 1) setting the final scope and cost of the Project 2) implementing a path to ownership in the Concourse property, 3) hiring a builder for the construction phase of the Project, and 4) launching an aggressive fundraising campaign.

Your help is critically important to the success of the Facility Project, so stay tuned for more information in future New Facility Newsletters about how you can help bring AACTMAD’s Facility vision into reality.

Questions? Please contact Mark Hillegonds, AACTMAD President, at mhillegonds@comcast.net.