

The Allentown Neighbor

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Students' plans win growing support for improvements on Allen Street

By Elizabeth Licata

Thanks to a University at Buffalo instructor who wants his architecture students to build real-life projects, it looks like Allentown will be getting a public-art facelift this spring.

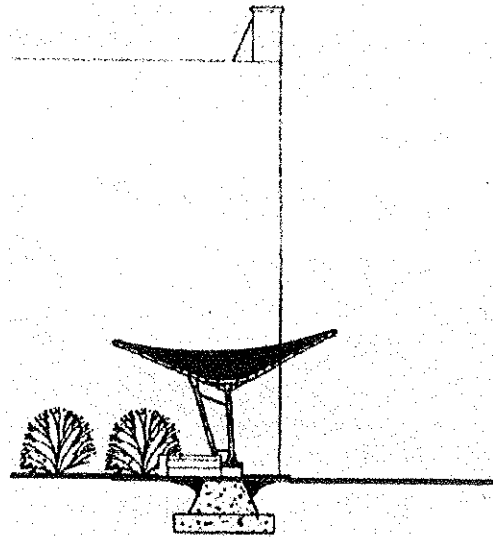
Architect and instructor Brad Wales and his class of UB seniors have passed many of the hurdles they need to clear before making the 1901-2001 "community transformation project" a reality. Six of the seven projects envisioned by the students were approved March 15 by the city Historic Preservation Board. And thanks to the support of the Allentown Association and city officials such as Council Member Dominic Bonifacio, Niagara District, most of the other permits needed have been obtained.

Now it is up to the students, their instructor and the generosity of donors to make sure that most of the construction will be done or well underway by May. The fundraising has already begun. A private fund-raiser March 16 raised \$1,111 for the project and another was scheduled as we went to press. Also, Allentown businessman Rick Smith has promised a sizeable donation from his company, Rigidized Metals, and other companies, such as Ciminelli Construction have followed suit with donations of supplies or services.

The seven projects have already aroused much excitement in Allentown. Even the Preservation Board, not usually known to express enthusiasm during hearings, was clearly intrigued by the projects, the first permanent public art planned in Buffalo in at least 15 years.

The projects are:

— Garden Structure, planned for the Main-Allen community garden, owned by the Towne Restaurant and maintained by the Allentown Association. It will consist of an overhead shelter in the form of a hyperbolic paraboloid, a construction first designed in the 1960s. It will replace a white picket fence facing Main St. and be accompanied by a



GARDEN STRUCTURE for Main-Allen corner is one of seven public-art projects planned for Allen St.

fieldstone path across the garden to Allen St. and improved planting beds, giving the corner a more appealing and accessible façade on Main St.

— Manholes. Three deteriorated manholes along Allen St, in front of the Red Jacket, El Museo and the former Junior League Shop, will be replaced by bronze manhole covers of different designs. Surrounding paving will be repaired as needed.

— Days Park Casting. A bronze plaque will be installed so that it is also a vertical scenic view of the park. There will be an opening in the middle of the engraved plaque offering a unique view of the park and it will stand in a seven-foot high concrete base, possibly with a granite bed below. The engraving will be historic and contemporary maps of Buffalo.

Inside this issue:

Annual dinner
May 15 Page 5

History of the hot dog
stand Page 4

An Allentown
Almanac Page 3

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Please turn to Page 2



Agency transforms College St. house for resale

A three-story, wood-frame house at 60 College St. at Maryland St. is being renovated and offered for sale for \$115,000 by Heart of the City, a three-year-old housing agency serving the near West Side.

The house was acquired with a \$15,000 grant from the Wendt Foundation and is being renovated with conventional financing through Local Initiatives Support Corp., said Richard Morrisroe, Heart of the City managing director.

The renovation, which is converting the house from a two-family to a single-family dwelling, is to be completed by June. The 2,100-square-foot house will have four bedrooms and two-and-half baths. Connie Gerbush of Re/Max is agent for the property.

Subsidies are available for an income-qualified buyer, one in need of financial help, Mr. Morrisroe said.

The project is the first acquisition-renovation by Heart of the City, which is planning others, he added. The agency is also involved in rental subsidies, and in neighborhood-advocacy efforts including the Kleinhans Music Hall neighborhood, he said.

May 5 is clean-up day in Allentown

It's been a long winter but spring is finally here, and that rite of spring, Allentown's neighborhood clean-up, will take place Saturday, May 5, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Volunteers will gather at the Allentown Association office, 234 Allen St., where coffee, donuts and garbage bags will be provided. Please bring gloves and enthusiasm to help spruce up the streets and sidewalks, clearing away the litter left by retreating piles of snow. The residue is more severe this year because the early Nov. 20 snow storm struck before city crews had removed all of last fall's leaves.

If you'd rather, just go to work on your own block.

Allentown is participating in the citywide clean-up effort.

In a related matter, repairs of the sidewalk along the north side of Virginia St. between Elmwood Ave. and Franklin St., and along the east side of Elmwood Ave. adjacent to St. Mary's Square, are expected as soon as weather permits during April. The sidewalks were damaged in the installation of a fiberoptic cable last fall. Kathy Toepfer, Allentown Association executive director, has been in touch with city public works officials who pledged to make sure the repairs are made by the contractor who installed the cable.

IMPROVEMENTS, continued from Page 1

— A windmill of contemporary design is planned to symbolize environmentally friendly power sources from the past and the future. Preservation Board approval is expected as soon as the location is decided.

— Building slot conditions .A narrow slot between buildings at 19 and 21 Allen St. used for surreptitious dumping will be cleaned out and a sculpture will be installed, perhaps not to be permanent.

— Bike racks of two designs, one A-shaped (for Allentown), one using bike parts, will be installed in front of Squeak Wheel and Buffalo Media Resources, 175 Elmwood, and in front of Rust Belt Books, 202 Allen.

— Parking meter posts all along Allen St. will be stenciled with one of several words beginning with "re" - "reawaken", "recreate", etc., - so these prosaic objects can suggest something to think about.

These class projects must be completed by the semester's end, or be near enough to completion so that they can be displayed in an exhibition planned for the College Street Gallery in May. Community support and funds are needed quickly. Contact Kathy Toepfer, Allentown Association executive director, if you can offer money, time, supplies or services for one or several of the projects.



Coit House renovation on schedule, board is told

Grants totaling \$100,000 are being sought this year to essentially complete exterior renovation and begin interior work at the Coit House, Jonathan White, chairman of the renovation project, told the Allentown Association Board of Directors March 20.

The renovation project is on schedule, but will take four or five years before the Coit House is in full operation as a historic site operated by a non-profit organization separate from the Allentown Association, he added.

The Coit House at 414 Virginia St., the oldest dwelling in Buffalo, was acquired by the Allentown Association a year ago, with the goal of establishing it as a museum to be operated by a separate organization.

Repairs are nearly complete to damage from a wind storm last December, he said. Most of the eight pieces of clapboard damaged have been repaired and the remaining repairs will be made soon, while damaged tree branches have been removed, he added. "The roof seems to be holding," and no damage occurred when utilities were cut off during construction in January, he said.

Application is being made for \$50,000 from New York State and an equal amount from the Western New York Foundation for repairs this year, he added. He placed the cost of needed exterior work, including a new roof, at \$50,000. Additional funds received will be used for interior work.

The Landmark Society has renewed its lease for one year for its office space in the Coit House.

Efforts are being made to expand fund-raising, with a goal of obtaining large as well as small donations to demonstrate broad community support, he told the board.

An Allentown Almanac

— The Allentown Association will, as usual, operate a refreshment stand during the Allentown Art Festival June 9 and 10. Cyndy Allen will be chairperson, for the second year, for the food stand, a major fund-raising effort for the association's community-service programs. Call Kathy Toepfer, our executive director, at 881-1024 to volunteer to help... See Page 4 for Alison Kimberly's recollection of the food stand in the early days. .. A reminder: the art show is sponsored by the Allentown Village Society, not the Allentown Association....

— Trinity Center offers activities for adults ranging from courses to movies at the Trinity Episcopal Church Parish House, 371 Delaware Ave. Call Missy Crowell, a former Allentowner, or Carolyn Clark, at 852-8317 for the spring brochure... Joyce Siegal of Mayfair Lane is teaching a yoga course...

— "This Old House" is a new national magazine devoted to restoring, renovating and improving old houses. Browse through or borrow a copy at the Allentown Association office, 234 Allen St...

— N. Pearl St. is now one way northbound between Virginia and Allen. The change in direction prevents speed-prone

d rivers heading downtown from using N. Pearl to avoid Main St. traffic lights...

— A sincere welcome to the Rev. Geri Lion, new senior minister of First Presbyterian Church at Symphony Circle, the first woman to hold the position in the 189-year history of the Buffalo's oldest religious congregation...

— Allentown residents are organizing a Buffalo-Niagara Citizens Against High Gas Prices to combat increasing heating costs. For more information, call Mary Tomaselli at 884-8316 or Maryann Cassidy at 883-0321...

— Congratulations to Elizabeth Licata and Russell Link who co-hosted a fundraiser at Elizabeth's N. Pearl St. home for the Allen St. public arts projects. ...a big financial and social success....

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Why we sell hot dogs: a true story from Allentown's past

By Alison Kimberly

In case you've ever wondered, there is a reason for selling hot dogs at the Allentown Association booth at the Art Show. It wasn't always that way.

For many years, the Association didn't even participate in the Art Show. It was always referred to as the Art Festival until the riots in 1970 and the gassing that ensued. After that episode, the show area was considerably reduced and other restrictions were imposed.

In the early 1970s the Association decided to apply for a food concession which was granted by the Village Society. The location was similar to the one we have now – at Delaware and Edward, but on the southeast corner. In those days it was referred to as "in front of the Montefiore lot". The Montefiore Club had been on that site and had burned down. The site is now the parking lot for the newly refurbished Victor Hugo's Mansion.

There were endless discussions about what to serve and how to go about it. It was finally decided to sell "Mama's Spicy Meatballs" to be served on rolls. More endless discussions about the ingredients (eggs vs. no eggs, bread crumbs vs. no bread crumbs) – on and on it went. Finally, a recipe was agreed upon and the ingredients were purchased.

The state Health Department mandates that all food be prepared in a kitchen approved by the department. We had one of those in the neighborhood: the kitchen at First Presbyterian Church. Many Allentowners as well as an inspector from the Health Department gathered there on a Thursday night and again on Friday night to cook up the "Spicy Meatballs" which were dutifully stored in the (Health Department-approved) church refrigerators for use on the weekend. Rolls were stored there as well. The Pepsi machines were ordered; Mike's Ice was on the ball and we were ready for the onslaught.

The Association was the only food stand that was selling anything but hot dogs that year. We were a great hit and "Mama" was asked for the recipe many times!

Saturday night, we were in a real quandary; all "Mama's Spicy Meatballs" had been sold. After we broke down the stand for the evening, we rallied at Dwight Hopkins' house on Irving Place to strategize. Bear in mind that at that time (early 1970s), there were no ATM machines or 24-hour grocery stores; credit cards were rare and definitely not accepted in grocery stores. We had a certain amount of cash from Saturday's sales but the majority was already in the night deposit at the bank. Laura Hopkins (Dwight and Betsy's daughter) was leaving for Europe on Sunday night so Dwight had a lot of cash on hand for her trip. He called Burt Flickinger (whose family owned the Super Duper grocery stores at that time) to find out if there was an open grocery store. Burt told him there was a Super Duper on Sheridan Drive that was open until midnight. A group took off for "God's country" immediately and filled three shopping carts to the brim - all paid for with Laura's Europe money.

Back to 54 Irving and their newly redone kitchen. We cooked and cooked most of the night. A little wine and beer was consumed as well. As the meat balls were done, they were put on cookie sheets gathered from one and all. At some point the cookie sheets were loaded into wheelbarrows and wheeled down to 29 Irving where there was a new freezer with lots of shelf space. There they spent what was left of the night until they were transported (by car) to the stand the next day.

So much for the Health Department. No one got sick!

Allison Kimberly has been an Allentown resident for more than 30 years and has long been active in the Allentown Association.

For news of the Allentown Association's hot dog stand at the Art Show this year, see An Allentown Almanac, Page 3.



Annual dinner is May 15 at Hamlin House

May 15 is the date for the 38th annual meeting of the Allentown Association, at the traditional site, Hamlin House (Troop I American Legion Post Hall) at 432 Franklin St., and it will follow the traditional program which has made it a successful event over the years, combining neighborhood business and socializing.

Kevin Gaughan, a Hamburg lawyer who has become a leading advocate of regionalism in local government, will be the main speaker. His approach to regional government has had a considerable impact on politicians of both parties in the city and its suburbs.

The meeting will begin at 7:15 p.m., preceded by a cash bar at 5:30 p.m. and a buffet dinner at 6:30 p.m. served by the Hamlin House Restaurant.

The Nominating Committee will present candidates for the Board of Directors. The committee is composed of Dotti Costisick and Anthony Drajem, both present directors, and Bill Mahr, Mary Simpson, Kym Mosgeller, Don Gilbert and Nan Haynes. Names of prospective nominees should be submitted to members of the Nominating Committee, or the Allentown Association office, by April 15.

Tickets for the dinner will be \$15 in advance, a lower rate than last year, and \$20 at the door. They may be purchased from any member of the Board of Directors or from Kathy Toepfer, our executive director, at the Allentown Association office. Use the form below to order tickets.

John Cromwell, our president, and Cynthia Allen, treasurer, will give reports and the Association's annual Beautification Awards and other awards will be presented.

Allentown Association 38th Annual Meeting

Yes, I will attend the Annual Membership Meeting and dinner May 15, 2001

-and-

I have enclosed \$15.00, please mail my ticket(s)

I have enclosed \$15.00, please hold my ticket(s) at the door

I will purchase my \$20.00 ticket at the door

No, I am unable to attend this year's dinner, but please accept the contribution enclosed.

(Please Print)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

No. of Tickets Requested _____ **Amount Enclosed (@ \$15.00 each)** _____

Make checks payable to the Allentown Association, 234 Allen Street, Buffalo, NY 14201.

Please return Response Form by May 8.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



COME JOIN US.

Name _____ Date _____

Street Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

If business, name proprietor or manager _____

Telephone (____) _____ Best Time To Call _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL (please check):

- Sustaining \$50.00 Individual \$15.00 Contributing \$100.00
 Household - Family \$20.00 Patron \$250.00 Business \$25.00

All membership contributions are tax deductible. • Make checks payable to: The Allentown Association, Inc. • Amount Remitted: \$ _____
Your Continued Support Is Greatly Appreciated

Would you have any interest in volunteering to assist with any of the following activities?

- Beautification and Litter Control Fund Raising Business Development Membership Solicitation
 Crime Prevention Special Events Housing and Preservation Board of Directors

Please return completed form to: The Allentown Association, Inc. • 234 Allen Street • Buffalo, NY 14201-1418



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