

*Arts and Cultural Alliance of Freeport*

Good evening,

I am David Webster, a founding board member of Arts and Cultural Alliance of Freeport (ACAF) and the chair of the venue search committee for ACAF. I am here this evening to alert you of our intention to make a formal TIF request.

ACAF, with important support from the Town Council and many town members, has conducted a multi-year process that led to a cultural plan that involved feedback and direction from many citizens in Freeport.

Among the directions the cultural plan provided, was, that in addition to supporting existing opportunities in Freeport, ACAF should fill a niche which would become a multi-use cultural arts activities center that could allow for visual and performing arts, workshops, presentations and events. An arts center located in the downtown would serve as a catalyst for the development of the creative economy by increasing the draw of the downtown as a destination for residents and visitors alike. This location would further support students and families as well as artists and cultural efforts in our community.

We have looked at what is successful in other communities as well as considered what will work for Freeport. We have established contacts with the schools and adult education and gotten their input and enthusiasm, as well as their needs for space for after school and other program opportunities. We have received a number of requests for space for workshops, space for music lessons, visual arts exhibits and other activities. ACAF continues to consider the input of a number of community organizations. We consider what is already working at places like the library, community center, Grange and other businesses and envision a concept that will complement and not compete.

Our committee and various local organizations have considered over 20 locations to see if those locations could fulfill the space needs of a multi-use cultural arts activities center.

For some time now, we have worked to narrow down our efforts and have been meeting with, and examining the possibility of making use of space within the First Parish Church, at 40 Main Street.

We have involved a number of theater professionals, asked advice of the state fire marshal's office, the town code enforcement and planning, as well as involved people representing other art activities and several members of the church. From this we drafted a concept of ideas we felt would be workable for the community as well as ACAF and the church. This has led to our proposal to lease and convert the Main Street level of the Church into a multi-use, performance and arts activity center for the Town.

At present, after many constructive meetings we are very close to reaching a mutually agreeable lease agreement that each group can bring back to their respective controlling bodies. The negotiations have been cooperative and positive with an extraordinary sense of respect for each other's needs.

ACAF has allocated funds for due diligence and our committee is working with a structural engineering firm, an architect, and with a contractor firm. They are all working with us to finalize concrete details and costs for the work that will be needed to transform the church space. I want to publically thank them for their rapid efforts to secure the information we need, now, to be certain we are proceeding with attention to detail and in order to accommodate the Town Councils challenging time lines for your budget.

Based upon their input as well as theater designers and others regarding art workshop and exhibition space, we have worked with a contractor to prepare a working budget for the renovation and conversion for the space to be used as a multi-use arts and cultural center.

The working budget costs are as followed:

1)	Conversion of sanctuary into stage and performance space.	\$50,000
2)	Purchase and installation of stage lighting.	\$30,000
3)	Purchase and installation of Sound system.	\$20,000
4)	Purchase and Installation of stage curtains and window treatment	\$15,000
5)	Enlargement of electrical service + CMP	\$10,000
6)	External Signage.	\$5,000
7)	Art gallery display and lighting.	\$10,000
8)	Removal of dividing walls and remodeling meeting and workshop space.	\$15,000
9)	Addition of bathrooms	\$30,000
10)	Ventilation	\$25,000
11)	Life Safety upgrades	<u>\$7,500</u>
	Total of renovations	\$217,500
	Contingency of renovations	\$43,500
12)	Salary for Program director and event scheduler	\$20,000
13)	Office equipment and supplies	\$2,000
14)	Furniture for conference and workshop space.	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
	The TOTAL	<b>\$288,000</b>

Over the next several weeks, as the work of the contractor, architect and structural engineer continues we will receive additional input regarding costs. Again, I want to publically thank these folks, all Freeport businesses, for understanding the urgency of this timeline and stepping up for a rapid response.

Know that, if inspections reveal significant structural deficiencies or if regulatory review results in requirements that add significant capital costs ACAF will reconsider its interest in using, and renovating this space, but at this time ACAF is confident it can operate the renovated space, contingent upon the funds necessary to convert it from church to arts uses.

To insure the success of the project ACAF is requesting the Town Council approve a TIF contribution of \$144,000. If that contribution is received, ACAF is confident it can raise the remaining funds of \$144,000 that will be needed to complete the project.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be pleased to answer any questions you have at this time.