

Presentation to County Commissioners
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Thank you for the opportunity to share our accomplishments and the challenges we face moving forward.

We are proud of the fact that we've been able to connect partners and communities in an extraordinary way. Having the support of Indiana Landmarks and the Mapleton Fall Creek CDC has helped us establish an independent organization under the name of Temple Heritage Center with an eminent Board of prominent and experienced individuals in the non-profit sector. Our purpose will be to restore this historical building to its former glory and create a sustainable interfaith type of Center that will engage communities, peoples, and faiths, for the benefit of all the residents of Indianapolis.

Our Board members who hold this project close to their hearts are committed to make it happen. We have recently gained the support of the Indiana Jewish Historical Society and congregation Beth El Zedeck which originally built this important structure in 1924, making it the oldest surviving synagogue structure in the city of Indianapolis. Application for National Landmark status has been started. We have also had discussions so far with the Indiana Historical Society; the Indianapolis Museum of Art and the Anthropology Dept. of IUPUI to help us in any advisory capacity as we formulate our programs and activities.

Once we gain site control we will immediately proceed to the raising of necessary funds to preserve and stabilize the structure, which is sadly already beginning to disintegrate. The falling plaster and water damage due to a deteriorated roof has caused much interior damage. We already have a commitment from the City in the amount of \$190,000, graciously allocated through the Mapleton Fall Creek CDC whose Board has recognized the importance of this neighborhood asset and we will need to raise an additional \$200,000 to ensure the building's complete exterior and interior stabilization as the first phase of our fundraising efforts. Stabilization, which is first and foremost, will afford us the time to fully develop our project.

We are also planning to conduct a community wide charette or workshop that will involve all the stakeholders living in the neighborhood and the Jewish community. Our focus will be to establish criteria by which we can build a sustainable organic center for the engagement of communities, the sharing of experiences and heritage, and the celebration of a unique neighborhood in our city. This neighborhood has continued to transform itself through the people who choose to live here now and those who once lived here. Those who live and work here represent the fabric of our city, coming from different faiths, ethnic backgrounds, income levels, occupations, and geographic areas. And in each generation, all they ever wanted to do was to create a better quality of life for their children.

In a real sense, the Temple, the building, will embody the lives of people who are here now and who will live here in the future, as it once did for a full generation of peoples in the past. The Temple will continue to remind us of the vibrancy this neighborhood offers.

And, as a long term effort, the Temple Heritage Center will guide the full complete preservation of the building and ensure its sustainable physical and programmatic success financially. The raising of funds, any funds, is always a challenge, no matter what the cause is, and no matter the year it occurs. But that is what we will set our minds and hearts to accomplish in the long run.

Beyond the funding issues, the most important element will ultimately be the coming together of everyday folks, from this and other neighborhoods, who will jointly unite and sign on to a very powerful idea, an empowering idea worthy of a better future –

And the idea is this: We want to preserve our heritage and share it in acts of inter-communal and community-wide celebrations around memories, exhibits, ideas, arts, foods, music, dance, theater and worship. In my mind, this is a way of bringing meaning to our past achievements, our common heritage, and transmit higher values for generations to come.