

KARE Email News, Vol. 1, No. 12, 04 November 2007:

KARE Supporters,

This E-Newsletter covers a variety of topics related to KARE's recent activities.

1. School Building Reuse Development Options: During the past 6 to 8 months, KARE staff members have been discussing the prospects for reusing the historic school with developers who have expertise in reusing school buildings. The discussions remained very, very general in nature while the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination was being worked on throughout the summer. This was due to the fact that a key component to attracting investors is the placement of the historic school on the NRHP. The NRHP opens the door for many tax incentives which benefit interested investors/developers. Now that the State of Minnesota has forwarded the NRHP nomination to the federal level, KARE will soon renew discussions with interested developers. As we go forward, the area's citizens will have many opportunities to comment on the school's ultimate reuse. Some of the developers and architects KARE has spoken to include: MetroPlains (<http://www.metroplains.com/>), ArtSpace (<http://www.artspaceusa.org/>), Allman Associates (<http://www.allmanassoc.com/>), Construction Collaborative (<http://www.ccdesignbuild.com/>) and Kim Portz (<http://www.minnesota.com/grand-meadow/architects/kim-clark-portz-architect-llc>). Metroplains and ArtSpace have regional and national experience in finding reuses for school buildings. It is interesting that their national headquarters are in the Twin Cities yet neither one of them was contacted by the City of Kasson when they conducted their alleged reuse study.

2. The Cities' Request for Evidence: The city is using the law firm of Hoff, Barry and Kozar (<http://www.hbklaw.com/>). A lawyer/employee of the Hoff firm named Shelley Ryan (<http://www.hbklaw.com/attorneys/index.php?id=21>) is representing the city.

A couple of months ago KARE received an evidence "Discovery Request" from the Hoff firm. It required KARE to provide the Hoff firm copies of all the documents and other information that KARE has collected related to the historic school. For the most part, all the requested information is on KARE's website. This is an unfortunate example of the city flexing its muscles against a small group of local citizens who are trying to preserve Kasson's heritage. You can see KARE's response to this at:

http://www.kassonalliance.org/kassonschool_courthearing.htm .

3. KARE Merchandise For Sale: Do you have a Save the School Tee-shirt? Have you seen the beautiful note cards that feature architectural sketches of the school by KARE member and artist Pennie Eisenbeis? You can

find info on how to purchase these items through a donation to KARE at:
http://www.kassonalliance.org/kare_merchandise.htm .

4. Other Schools That Have Been Reused: Some of you have asked: Can we see examples of other schools that have been reused? Well, now you can by visiting the KARE website. Go to:
http://www.kassonalliance.org/kassonschool_reuse-study.htm .
You will find schools in our local area that have been reused to include Red Wing, Cannon Falls, Winona as well as Brainerd, Little Falls and Bozeman, MT. Note that the Red Wing School (which is now condos) can be toured which might make a nice fall drive to see a school reuse success story (invite a councilman or the mayor to come with you!). Call 651-385-4854 for tour details.

5. The February 2008 Court Trial: A trial related to the historic school is scheduled for February 11, 2008 and is scheduled to last for 3 days (mark your calendars now). There are a lot of questions regarding the purpose of this trial so let's review the details. For starters, note that KARE does NOT have to have a reuse study in place by Feb. 2008. That is NOT an evidence requirement for the trial. The purpose of the trial is to prove to the court/judge (no jury in this trial) that the building is an historic resource which qualifies the building for protection under Minnesota's historic resource laws. If it is proven to be an historic resource, the judge will issue a "Permanent" injunction further delaying the demolition. Even though the court uses the term "Permanent Injunction" it is really not permanent as in "forever". The court means permanent in the sense that the judge will grant a time period (the length is his discretion but typically on the order of one year or more) for KARE to THEN present a reuse options...or at least show progress toward developing a reuse plan. Of course the pending National Historic Register listing essentially negates the Cities' defense in court (they need to prove that it is not historic). It remains to be seen if the City Council will decide to work with KARE and the citizens the Council serves as opposed going to trial.

However, any reuse information (statements from developers, conceptual drawings etc.) that KARE can present to the judge will strengthen the case. As a result, KARE members will be gathering this type of information prior to the trial.

Do you want to preserve Kasson's vital historic properties? Become a member of the Kasson Alliance and/or donation money to the cause! The Alliance is Kasson's nonprofit preservation organization dedicated to the preservation, protection, and promotion of our cities' historic properties. Information on joining and donating can be found online at www.KassonAlliance.org. Thank you for your support. Without your generous donations, the school would have been demolished on July 9, 2007.

Questions and replies to this email will be cheerfully responded to.

Thank you,

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The Kasson Alliance for Restoration (KARE) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization formed in January 2007 to raise awareness about the contribution the historic Kasson School and other properties have made to our community and to promote their preservation.

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