

Event Center Q & A

1. Who is on the event center committee?

A: President – Jim Kullmer, Vice President – Kent Nelson, Treasurer – Sarah Lewis, Secretary – Deb Howard, Board member – Josh Ehn

More members for the Board will be added in the near future as the project progresses.

2. How large is the building being proposed as the new event center?

A: Each floor is 10,500 sq. ft. including the basement, the total building is 31,500 sq. ft.

3. Why does Oelwein need a new event center?

A: Many weddings and events are going out of town each year due to insufficient seating capacity and amenities. The lost economic impact to our community is significant. Having a larger facility with desired amenities will draw events from Oelwein and surrounding areas.

4. Why did the possible location get chosen at 137 South Frederick?

A: The opportunity to renovate a historic building became available as the current tenant is building a new location. Once the building was toured by the committee, the open floorplan and available space were appealing and fit well with the vision of the committee.

5. Did the committee do any research or due diligence?

A: The committee toured four area event facilities including newer pole building structures and renovated historic buildings, as well as researching dozens of other area facilities. The toured facilities provided information on their operations, building successes, financials and other tips and pertinent information pertaining to their projects. Many great ideas were developed from the information that was provided.

6. Why is the event center going from an old building to an older building?

A: The Plaza served its purpose for many decades and was in deteriorating condition. It was determined by the City of Oelwein and Structural Engineers inspecting the parking lot bridge, that the condition of the property would require extreme repairs. Completing the repairs would not increase the seating capacity or provide ample room for desired amenities.

The building located at 137 South Frederick was built in 1919 and was originally constructed using 48" steel bridge girders and concrete floors and ceilings and brick on block walls. The building is structurally sound and provides enough floor space for all desired amenities and seating capacity. The prospects for businesses to occupy a building of this size are very limited and most likely, the building would remain empty in

our downtown business district. Revitalizing this building, that has been a historic mainstay in our community for over 100 years, was important to the committee and completed our vision of offering a unique event experience to our community and surrounding areas.

7. Where will cars park for events held at the new location?

A: The parking lot area to the North of the building and East across the alley will be property owned by the event center. The committee recognizes that this will not provide ample parking for larger events, but within a one block radius there are hundreds of public parking lots and street parking that will be available.

8. What will be the seating capacity at the new facility?

A: The seating capacity in the upper event space will be approximately 450-500, with the exact number to be determined. The lower level, will include a meeting room, that could potentially hold approximately 50-60 people, Bride and Groom rooms, office and main level bar with another seating capacity of approximately 100. All seating capacities will be determined **when** architectural plans are finalized.

9. How will funds be raised?

A: A large fundraising campaign will be initiated after the structural and building assessments are completed, purchase is confirmed, and the projected renovation costs are received. Funding will be requested from Charitable organizations, businesses and individuals. The event center has applied for 501(c)3 status and will be able to accept tax deductible donations.

10. How will the center operate once it is built?

A: The projected number of events and weddings will sustain the yearly expenses. Included in the budget will be a reserve for the first one to two years of operation to establish the operation.

11. Who will manage the facility?

A: The event center will employ a full time event coordinator who will be in charge of day to day operations, coordinating events, and marketing the facility.

12. When will construction start and when will it be finished?

A: Possession of the proposed property is scheduled for the beginning of **2022**. As soon as sufficient funds are in place and plans are ready, renovation will begin shortly after possession. A target date of completion is projected to be the end of **2022 or early 2023**.

13. How will the new center impact existing rental facilities in town?

A: The existing facilities should not be negatively impacted, as they should be able to sustain their normal rentals. Each facility offers a unique experience and the new facility should not change that. It is not the intent of the committee to take events away from

the other facilities, but to capture those who are leaving town for receptions and other events. The City, Schools and area businesses will be able to host larger meetings with a space that offers options for small group roundtables, break-out sessions and more with the multi-level spaces.

14. Why didn't the committee choose to expand or purchase an existing facility?

A: The existing facilities are owned and managed on a local level. Those owners have reached out to the committee to discuss the options that already exist. To provide the amenities and capacity that is in the committee's vision, expansions and many improvements to those facilities would be needed and would be cost prohibitive.

15. Why did a renovation of an old facility be decided vs. building a new facility?

A: The cost of renovation and historic preservation were the leading factors in choosing the potential site. The committee extensively researched both options and decided to take advantage of the incredible building that will provide a very unique and memorable experience. The building has a "wow" factor, even before any renovations, that cannot be found in new buildings.

16. What will the design look like?

A: The vision of the committee is an industrial, yet modern feel. The decorating choices of brides and groups renting the facility will have many possibilities and it will fit into the themes of many styles. The wide-open floorplan of the main ballroom will not have support posts or any structural obstructions and will offer a large, yet comfortable atmosphere to any event.

17. How much will it cost to renovate?

A: A final cost estimate has not yet been determined, **but hoping not to exceed \$2.5M.**

18. How many events will the event center project per year?

A: It is the goal to have the center rented each weekend throughout the year with additional events and rentals during the weekdays. Plaza rentals have historically been approx. 100 rentals per year by individuals, including 5-10 weddings per year and corporate rentals have averaged 60 per year. The committee estimates 15-20 local weddings leaving Oelwein to have receptions in surrounding communities each year.