

Proposal for The Brookfield Theater Building

3723 Grand Boulevard, Brookfield, IL

By the Brookfield Theater Corporation

September 2024

Background

- **Organization Structure**

The organization presenting this proposal is the Brookfield Theater Corporation. A non-profit corporation that has been registered with the State of Illinois and has received a 501(c)3 charitable exemption from the I.R.S. The decisions regarding management of the program are made by an all-volunteer Board of Directors.

The mission of the corporation includes language that confirms a commitment to providing quality entertainment to the community at affordable prices.

The Brookfield Theater Building

- **Interior Layout**

The front of the space would be configured as a lobby including a box office, concessions, access to washroom facilities and seats for patrons waiting to be admitted into the auditorium.

The second floor above the lobby would serve as an office area from which the business of managing the facility would be conducted.

The auditorium would be configured as follows from front to back; audience seating, stage and backstage.

The existing balcony space would serve as a technical booth to include a lighting board, sound board and spotlights and any other necessary technical equipment.

The audience seating area would include cushioned chairs that would not be bolted to the floor so that the space can be easily reconfigured. The seats would be connected with velcro straps to create rows and aisles and to make sure that spacing is sufficient to assure audience comfort and compliance with fire codes. These straps could be easily removed to reconfigure the chairs in any way desirable.

The stage would be made of a series of 4' x 4' x 4' wooden cubes that could be bolted together in an unlimited number of configurations or be removed all together. All masking, including the proscenium and back of the stage, would consist of curtain material so that they could easily be added, moved or removed to form different spaces.

The backstage area would be an open area for actors and performers to wait for their time on stage, to store settings and properties while they are not on stage and to serve as a workshop. Above the backstage area on the second floor would be two dressing rooms. A spiral staircase positioned in the center and at the back wall of the building would give performers access to the dressing rooms from the backstage area.

- **Decor**

The decor of the interior of the building would be focussed on honoring the history of the building and the Village and also emphasize the talents of local artists.

- **Usage**

Our intention would be to create programming and a venue that would be considered not only an asset to the community, but a source of pride for the residents that support the program.

Our intention would be for this property to be used to the fullest extent possible. The time and funds invested in rehabilitating and updating the building in a manner consistent with the expectations of a modern arts facility, would warrant consistent and constant usage. We would not undertake a project of this scope without a firm belief in its viability.

The building will be made available to any and all arts organizations, with a preference granted to those based in Brookfield and also to those operated by Brookfield residents. We would also operate the venue with a commitment to serving all members of the community regardless of race, color, sexual preference, religious beliefs, etc.

With proper planning and scheduling, the facility can be used for multiple purposes at the same time. For example, while a play could be rehearsed on the stage or in the back section of the facility, an art exhibition could be held in the lobby or even in the front section of the auditorium. Or, one type of event could be rehearsed in the facility on Monday through Thursdays, while another event is being held or performed on weekends.

- **Programming**

The following would be example of the types of performances and events that would take place in the venue:

- Free classic movies for seniors on weekdays
- Midnight movies for adults on weekends
- Movie festivals featuring particular types of movies or the work of particular actors or directors
- Movie marathons (showing all movies from a particular series in succession)
- Children's movie programs
- Art exhibitions
- Plays and musicals
- Intergenerational theater programs
- Free theater classes for all ages
- Music concerts
- Bringing the "Concert in the Park" program inside during the winter months
- Dance recitals
- Improv comedy classes & shows
- Standup comedy shows
- A club-style, dance party specifically without alcohol for those who enjoy dancing but do not drink and/or with an early start time for older crowds
- A Battle of the Bands
- An open-mike show for local bands
- Karaoke party
- Musical "raves" featuring an evening with the music of a particular artist or genre
- Old-Time radio plays performed live by actors
- And more...

The types of and quantity of programs presented in a space like this would be almost limitless.

● **Ownership of Facility**

This group is willing to move forward with any ownership structure desired. We are willing to purchase and maintain solo ownership of the building, partner in the ownership or lease/rent the space. We believe that the key is to create a structure that assures the future of the building and its continued operation as an arts facility.

If our group purchases the building, and at some point in the future finds it can no longer maintain operations for any reason, the corporation will provide the Village of Brookfield the legal right of first refusal to purchase the property.

- **Environmental Responsibility**

As an organization committed to serving the community, we believe that this should include an ecological component. Included in this will be a concerted and consistent effort to minimize the facility's carbon footprint.

Included in this will be the installation of solar panels on the buildings roof, consideration of sustainability and ecology in the selection of materials in the rehabilitation of the space, consideration in packaging of concessions and other products sold and an overall attention to detail regarding the environmental impact of the operation.

Operations

- **Marketing & Promotion**

The Corporation will use the historic attributes of the building to promote both its usage and patronage. We believe that the residents of Brookfield will enthusiastically embrace the concept of returning the building to its original usage. As such, we believe that this enthusiasm will make marketing efforts created to promote the recruitment of volunteers and the solicitation of donations more successful.

We also believe that this enthusiasm, combined with a creative and diverse approach toward programming, will expand audiences attending performances or other events held at the venue.

For advertising and other promotional purposes, we would use local newspapers, a website, the many social media channels available, email lists, subscriptions and other available channels to promote events and performances at the venue.

However, through our many years of experience in producing the performing arts, we know that positive word of mouth is the best promotion and the best way to assure continued success. This comes from producing quality programming.

- **Revenue Sources**

Any rent or other fees charged for use of the facility will be determined with an eye toward covering the operating costs of the facility and any upgrades determined necessary by the Board of Directors.

The ticket price for each show and event would be determined by the organization producing it. However, producers using the facility would be urged to keep admission prices lower as a benefit for the community. It will be made clear to producers, in no uncertain terms, that our commitment to serving the community would include our preference for a larger crowd paying a smaller ticket price, rather than a smaller crowd paying a larger ticket price. In our experience, the end result of this policy is a comparable amount of total revenue generated, while a larger crowd will serve to provide entertainment to a larger portion of the community.

Ticket prices could be a factor in determining a producer's continued use of the facility, as the commitment to keeping event and performance admission prices affordable for families, senior citizens and all members of the community, combined with a desire for maximum usage of the venue, are key aspects of our mission.

Concessions to be sold would be dependent on the event or show, but would typically include the standard theater fare such as popcorn, candy and soft drinks. Concessions would also provide another opportunity to further connect the program to the community by creating opportunities for local businesses, such as Fill My Jar, Daisy's, Locha Mocha, etc, to sell their products at the concession stand.

The corporation will be operated completely by volunteers. As a result, all net revenues or "profits" realized in the operation of the venue will be put back into the building in the form of maintenance, building improvements, equipment upgrades or the retirement of debt with the priorities for each determined by the Board of Directors.

● **Operating Expenses**

The operating expenses of the facility would be much as expected.

If the Corporation owns the facility, there will be financing costs related to the purchase. The Corporation has been working with Semble Inc to create a program to finance the purchase should that be the route chosen. Semble describes their vision as "...to profoundly impact every community in America by significantly lowering the cost of loans to local nonprofits, freeing up millions for mission while facilitating stronger partnerships with their supporting communities."

Other standard operating expenses would include utilities (natural gas, water, sewer, garbage but excluding electricity which would be covered with solar panels), insurance, repairs and maintenance, supplies, legal and other professional services, technology, and marketing and promotion.

Conclusion

We believe that recent activities, and the enthusiasm and excitement surrounding them, have demonstrated that Brookfield has developed into an exciting and dynamic community. The Brookfield Theater Corporation is not only enthusiastic about being a part of that, but we believe we can play a significant role in expanding and sustaining this growing vitality. We believe that a vibrant and energetic arts program is a natural next step in this process. And we further believe that with our long-term experience and success in creating such a program, that we would form a powerful partner for the village going forward.

With all of this being said, a robust arts program cannot experience success without a venue designed and managed for the purpose of exhibiting and promoting the arts. We feel that the history and availability of this building provide the perfect opportunity for Brookfield to create this type of venue and take that next step.