



NEW PRAGUE POPS POST

Special public meeting about POPS

VOL. 1 -- NUMBER 5

"It's Time" to Hear from You Directly!

Editor's Note: "It's Time!" is a column each issue by Den Gardner, chair of the Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (POPS) Committee of the Forward New Prague Foundation. If you can read, we ask you to read it at your leisure! If you missed reading class in elementary school, an audio version may be available in the next three years. (OK, just kidding.)

By Den Gardner, chair, Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (POPS) Committee

Our rock/pop band Little Chicago often plays covers of two big hits by Chicago: **"Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is"** and **"Feeling' Stronger Every Day."** Those two tunes were top of mind this week as we continue our journey raising \$1 million dollars for the Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (POPS) building project.

Think about a couple lines from these songs:

Feeling' Stronger Every Day

"I do believe in you, and I know you believe in me..."

Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is

"And I was walking down the street one day

Being pushed and shoved by people

Trying to beat the clock."

Yep. *I do believe in you, New Prague, and the efforts by all the POPS Committee members to get us to this stage - not even one year into our effort to raise the money to build POPS. And, whether you like it or not, I'm hoping you believe in me to work with everyone to meet our goal. So, here we sit in July, with three-year pledges exceeding \$500,000 - halfway to our goal we hope to reach by the end of 2025! A simple thanks for those who have stepped up financially in getting us to this stage.*

And as for those always *"trying to beat the clock,"* I was *"walking down the street one day"* when someone asked me when we hoped to begin building the POPS. I said we hope to raise all the money by the end of 2025, but we'll get started on construction earlier in that year if it looks good toward getting to our goal. And we don't have to be *"pushed and shoved by people"* on our journey.

"It's Time" to put **6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 26, at Giesenbrau Bier Co.** on your calendars for our important meeting to learn from Bolton & Menk and the POPS Committee about the priority ranking of the three sites for the POPS venue. This is your time to provide your comments on the project, where it might be built and all other questions surrounding this historic effort in New Prague to build a venue supporting the arts and providing the community with great family entertainment outdoors during the beautiful parts of the year here in Minnesota.

Come early, stay late (maybe imbibe a refreshment or two) and get an update on the project to date.

Items on the agenda will include:

- A priority site selection report from Bolton & Menk, hired by the committee to review the three city-recommended locations for the outdoor performance venue.
- A fundraising update.
- Information on the free admittance to an Oct. 28 "POPS Party at the Park Ballroom" to give away a 2020 Equinox, plus...
- Other POPS projects and promotions.

Our architectural/engineering firm is nearly ready with its report on the three sites and the Location Feasibility/Design Sub-Committee of the POPS Committee will review the report in mid-July. The three sites are City Center (west end of downtown; old mill pond/creamery site); Sliding Hill Skate Park (in an area not to interfere with the sliding hill); and Memorial Park in an area north of the Park Ballroom. Which is the favorite or ranked highest by Bolton & Menk? I guess you'll have to show up July 26 to find out. And my favorite? They all have their positives. I'll reserve judgment until we get all the facts.

Music at the Broz this summer (and last summer for that matter) is an inspiration for me. Our three concerts this summer have seen crowds as high as 400! Does New Prague need and want an outdoor venue to be proud of and become a destination for people in the southern metro? I would reply a resounding "yes!"`

But honestly, we have so much to do. Those who love this community, and all it has to offer, have logically stepped up - many from three-year pledges at \$25,000 up to \$100,000. Imagine if 20 people or businesses called me tomorrow pledging \$25,000 over three years? Wow, we'd be at our goal. I'll be waiting on my cell phone for your call. (OK, I am kidding.)

There are so many thank yous to go around, but as of mid-July, two important efforts are underway from a financial fundraising standpoint that bear repeating and hoping you can respond.

- We've got about 20 people signed up for the "100 for 100K" promotion to raise \$100,000 from 100 individuals over three years - just \$333/year if you want to support us this way. Let's make this happen!
- Our SUV raffle of our 2020 Equinox (valued at \$20,000) has been underway the past two weeks. For just a \$20 raffle ticket, you might win that vehicle. Or how about three chances for \$50? If you're a business, buy \$500 worth of tickets and ask your employees and families to support this fundraiser. Our goal is, naturally, to raise \$20,000! Thanks again to Susan and Palmer Welcome for donating the vehicle. What a contribution to POPS!

Yep, you get asked to provide donations for fundraisers all the time. I get it. I ask you to support us in this one-time, historic effort to directly impact families in New Prague. Yes, it's time.

The work of the entire POPS Committee and many others in the community through their volunteerism (including the New Prague Area Arts Council) continues in the months ahead. It's your "Persistence, Diligence, Dedication and Passion" (The PDDP POPS Formula) that will continue to make us successful.

Folks, there's no reward without effort. Someone recently asked if this effort was "hard." I said (with tongue in cheek): "Heck, if it was easy, everybody would do it." This is a BIG project for New Prague. But with the commitment and passion of its people, the city officials (thanks again for donating the land and then maintaining the facility after it's built), and others, we can indeed be "*Feeling' Stronger Every Day*" because "*Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?*" I'd say "It's Time" to put your best effort forward to help us reach our goal! For more information www.nppops.org.



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