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Sixth & Jefferson Facts, rumors and political innuendo

BY PHILLIP M. BAILEY

The band of citizens trying to save the "teepee" shelter in Cherokee Park are gaining momentum in a grassroots fundraising effort to repair the pavilion.

Last week, the group **Save the Hogan's Fountain Pavilion** announced it won an \$11,000 grant from an online Reader's Digest contest, which boosts their total to more than \$21,000 raised thus far.

"We're ecstatic about the progress, and we plan to take our movement to neighborhood associations and business leaders next," says **Lark Phillips, the group's co-chair**. "It has been a teamwork effort and we couldn't be more pleased."

After learning about a longstanding master plan developed by Metro Parks and the Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy to demolish the wigwam-shaped shelter, concerned residents have been petitioning elected officials in an effort to save what they believe is a historic landmark.

For several years, however, the pavilion has been in serious disrepair, with crumbling stonework, decaying roof shingles and graffiti. In December, park officials indicated it would be too costly to repair the structure, saying the city would have to spend \$150,000 to replace the roof alone. In response, pavilion supporters obtained an estimate suggesting it would cost \$82,000 to repair the shelter.

The city has said if the community is able to raise the money to renovate the structure, they will not replace it.

Besides the Reader's Digest contest, other major donations include a \$5,000 challenge grant procured by **Councilwoman Tina Ward-Pugh, D-9**, and more than \$1,500 from the Adam Matthews Foundation.

Emboldened by these recent successes, supporters plan to attend **Mayor Greg Fischer's** five citizen budget hearings to discuss funding strategies that would ensure the structure's repair and ongoing maintenance.

At those meetings, group members plan to ask the Fischer administration to restore full public funding for the teepee in the upcoming 2011-12 budget proposal. Failing that, Phillips says the city should partner with citizen groups to match any private dollars raised and hopes the mayor will take more notice.

"Thus far, I don't think Mayor Fischer has been responsive," she says. "I haven't gotten anything definitive on where they stand. After the election, I got the message they might look into it, but preservation doesn't seem to be at the top of their priorities. I hope that because it's not a business venture they'll be more willing to work with us."

If their campaign is successful and the pavilion is repaired, the group will recommend the city commit to using more than \$10,000 generated by public rentals of the structure each year to protect the investment. The shelter serves as a popular venue where groups gather for family reunions, receptions, luncheons and school events.

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Several weeks ago, **Councilman Rick Blackwell, D-12**, said **The Courier-Journal's Metro government reporter Dan Klepal** was biased, however, the city lawmaker has since asked for forgiveness.

At a caucus meeting last month, Blackwell called Klepal "the Republican writer" while slamming an article he wrote about Insight Communications offering several council members free tickets and access to a luxury suite during the UK vs. U of L men's basketball game.

The story revealed two council Democrats — **Dan Johnson and Bob Henderson** — were considering taking the tickets, despite the ethics commission chairman's opinion that accepting them could violate the ethics ordinance.

Blackwell said he felt the C-J emphasized that Democratic members were mulling over the offer while downplaying that **Councilman James Peden, R-23**, had also contemplated accepting the tickets.

After LEO reported an account of the meeting, Blackwell called Klepal to apologize.

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Among bookworms and boosters, there was a collective sigh when **Borders Group Inc.** announced it was closing two Louisville locations as part of the company's bankruptcy filing.

Last week, the nation's second-largest bookseller released a statement saying it had filed for Chapter 11 protection that will result in two local stores — located at 2520 S. Hurstbourne Gem Lane and 400 S. Fourth St. — closing.

The immediate ramifications will be the loss of a popular store along Fourth Street Live. The downtown Borders store is considered an "anchor" tenant in the city's entertainment district and is one of the few retail establishments in the area, which concerns city officials.

"It's unfortunate that we're going to lose two Borders in Louisville," says **Chris Poynter, a mayoral spokesman**. "It leaves a vacancy in a key location downtown, but there will be something that comes along to fill its space. We expect it will not be vacant for too long."

Later this month, Fischer is scheduled to have his first meeting with the Cordish Cos. — the developer of Fourth Street Live — and filling that space will be on the agenda.

Despite the discouraging news, the other local Borders locations on Shelbyville Road and Bardstown Road in Gardiner Lane Shopping Center aren't slated for closure.

Across the country, the bookseller will close about 30 percent of its stores in the coming weeks, and in the Milwaukee area, for instance, all three Borders are listed to close.

"You never want to see an anchor tenant leave, but (Fourth and Liberty) remains one of our most active pedestrian corners, and I suspect this is only a reflection of the Borders business model — not downtown Louisville," says **Deb DeLor, executive director of the Louisville Downtown Management District**. "There are many different options available for that space depending on the price point that works for the lease. But we'd like to see another retail establishment. We are advocating that with whomever we speak with, including Mayor Fischer, folks at Fourth Street Live and managers with Cordish. Retail: that's what we need downtown."



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