



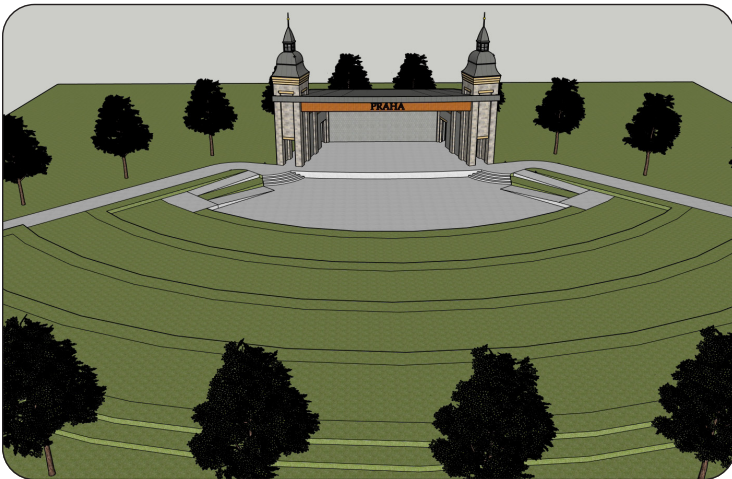
# NEW PRAGUE POPS POST

**VOL. 3 -- NUMBER 1 - November 2024**

## **“It’s Time!” -- Bourbon, Mollie B, Dancing Extravaganza and More.**

*By Den Gardner, Chair, POPS Committee*

*Editor’s Note: “It’s Time!” is a column 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.) If you want any information about POPS, go to [www.nppops.org](http://www.nppops.org) for more information. Or call me at: 612/325-3981 or email me at [dengardner@gandgcomm.com](mailto:dengardner@gandgcomm.com)*



**This sketch presents an aerial view of the POPS facility as a preliminary design. This is NOT the final version, but an example of what is being reviewed by the POPS Committee and the Forward New Prague Foundation. The stage would be facing southeast toward downtown in the southeast corner of the City Center property (Old Mill Pond/Creamery site).**

Wow! What a fall. Mark Twain once said: “If I cannot drink bourbon and smoke cigars in heaven, then I shall not go!” Well, I’m not sure I’m at that stage, but just one of the POPS promotions this fall has to do with that popular drink.

It’s been an incredible autumn for all those involved in the Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (POPS) building project. We finished with one dance (POPS Gala II) and here comes another, we’re selling tickets for a \$1,000 bottle of bourbon (can you believe it?), a series of Christmas shows at the Park Ballroom is going to give some net proceeds to POPS, we’ve got initial designs for the outdoor building (have you made your donation yet so we can start construction in the spring?), and more.

(See flyer above to use the QR code to get a ticket.)

• Niemann’s ACE Hardware in New Prague is running a promotion until Dec. 16 to buy a ticket to win a \$1,000 bottle of Bourbon. The handmade bottle of Old Rip Van Winkle Bourbon can be yours by just buying a ticket for \$10 – or 3 for \$25! Thanks to Ed Kotek, manager of the New Prague ACE Hardware, and Louis Hite, regional director of operations, ACE Hardware Division, Minnesota and Iowa. Stop in the New Prague store and get your ticket(s) today!



About 325 people attended the POPS Gala II and enjoyed three hours of dancing to Mollie B & Squeeze-Box with Ted Lange.

Here’s just a few highlights:

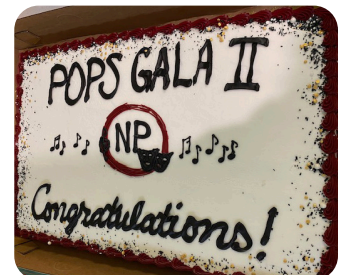
- About 325 people showed up for the Mollie B & SqueezeBox with Ted Lange concert/dance at the Park Ballroom. We netted about \$12,000 on the event – with half of the net results because of the silent auction. Thanks to EVERYONE who played a role in our success at that event. I jokingly told some folks I hoped it would be our LAST Gala because by next October the POPS building might be completed. We’ll see...
- And speaking of dancing, thanks to local New Prague resident Sarah Kallal, all the net proceeds from her “2nd Annual – GIRLS ONLY – Dance Party Extravaganza” will go to POPS! The event will be Nov. 23, 6 to 10 p.m., Park Ballroom. There will be games, a DJ, dancing and more. Tickets are just \$10. You can get pre-sale tickets (as well as tickets at the door) by checking out @NPGIRLSDANCEPARTIES.



The Czech the Halls partial cast includes, from left, top row, Randy Fierst, Jacqueline Elizabeth, Nikki Roberts and Bill Halverson. Bottom row, from left, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Dan Gardner and Den Gardner. Randy and Den are from New Prague, Jacqueline and Nikki own Starlight Productions in New Prague. Dan is from Belle Plaine and Bill from Jordan. Also in the cast are Tim Price of Faith, Recovery & Music in New Prague and Chris Moore of Belle Plaine.



Mollie B & SqueezeBox With Ted Lange appeared at the POPS Gala II at the Park Ballroom on Oct. 4.



Free cake was provided for attendees at POPS Gala II, thanks to Coborn’s.

- A new Christmas show is coming to New Prague and the Park Ballroom – Czech the Halls! And some of the net proceeds from the show will be allocated to POPS. The show is being produced by local New Prague music studio owners Jacqueline Elizabeth and Nikki Roberts, along with other local talent like Randy Fierst and Bill Halverson of the band Little Chicago and other famous exploits. Go to [www.czechthehalls.com](http://www.czechthehalls.com) for ticket information.

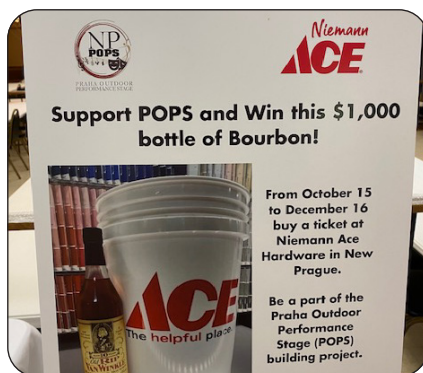
But let's get back to the building project itself. Through the POPS Committee and its subcommittees, there has been activity on several fronts:

- Bruce Caulfield of Caulfield Architectural Design and Tom Mach of Herzog Manufacturing have been working with POPS Committee members on a design for POPS. See some initial sketches elsewhere in the e-newsletter. We are hopeful to have a final design before the holidays.
- Fundraising continues at a furious pace. The goal is still \$1 million. Thus far, between cash pledges and pro bono services being offered, the total is about \$900,000. Thanks to all who have given. And we know there are many others who are still deciding what their contribution is going to be. Please let me know how you want to get involved.
- The Forward New Prague Foundation (which as you know handles the financial aspects of the building project for the POPS Committee) is working with the city on the final details for a donation agreement regarding the City Center site for POPS. This should be completed in November. Simply put, the city will donate the portion of City Center where POPS will be built to the Forward New Prague Foundation. The foundation will return the land to the city when the project is finished sometime in late 2025 or 2026.
- Thanks to Kyra Chapman, city planner for New Prague, who worked with the POPS Committee to apply and then secure a grant of nearly \$10,000 from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF). The grant will be used for landscaping around the stage area of the POPS building. Additional thanks to Ryan Sticha of D&J Landscaping, who is donating his time to assist POPS in some of our landscaping efforts.

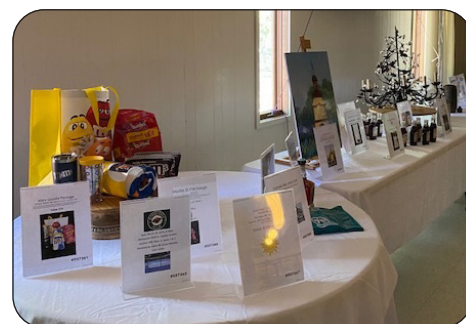
The volunteers of this 2.5-year project thus far have been incredible. So much yet to do, but the foundation has been laid for what will be a tremendous asset for the community. The support for POPS from the families, businesses, service organizations and others shows what happens when people can work together for a common goal. Indeed, "It's Time!"



Mollie B, third from left, top row, pauses to take a photo with her many adoring fans at the Park Ballroom at the POPS Gala II on Oct. 4. POPS Chair Den Gardner is second from the left, top row. The event raised a net of more than \$12,000 for the POPS building project.



Thanks to Niemann's ACE Hardware in New Prague, you can buy a ticket and win this \$1,000 bottle of Bourbon. Buy your ticket today!



The POPS Gala II featured a silent auction, which garnered more than \$6,500 in revenue for POPS. Thanks to Shannon Allen and Mark Braaten for their assistance in handling all the logistics for the auction again this year.



This is an example of a preliminary sketch of the POPS facility to be built in City Center, hopefully beginning in the spring. Please note that this is NOT the final version, but a sketch of what is being reviewed at this time.

## POPS Fundraising Passes \$900,000

The Fundraising Committee, made up of Shannon Brusseau, Tom Vanasek and Den Gardner, are diligently working to meet the goal of \$1 million in pledged cash and pro bono services offered by the end of the year.

Here are some financial details, as of Oct. 25 (all numbers approximate):

- **\$808,686** – amount pledged/earned
- **\$100,000** - amount of pro bono services offered by various companies (e.g., landscaping, excavation, proposed contractor services, building materials, etc.)

TOTAL cash pledges and pro bono services offered equals **\$908,686**.

Thus far nearly \$500,000 has been received and deposited thus far. Virtually all donors have indicated their donations will be paid by the middle of 2025.

Expenses incurred since the project began in 2022 have been approximately \$28,000. About 75% of those expenses were for the outside study by a consulting firm regarding locations for the POPS facility. As you recall, the city recommended three sites to the POPS Committee to review for the facility. Those were City Center (which the city ultimately selected), Sliding Hill Skate Park and Memorial Park.

Other expenses have been mostly for the two POPS Gala events (held in the fall of 2023 and 2024). Those major expenses were for the bands that performed and were offset, of course, from SUV raffle ticket revenue and the silent auction in 2023 and the ticket sales for Mollie B and the silent auction in 2024.

There have been nearly 40 groups (businesses, families, service organizations, non-profits, etc.) who have pledged at least \$5,000 for the POPS building project. More than 80 additional donations have come in from others. And one can add a couple dozen more who bought silent auction items, a t-shirt or other POPS merchandise.

But there's more to be done. If your family or business hasn't donated yet, there's still plenty of time to financially support the POPS facility.

For more information, contact Den Gardner at 612/325-3981 or Shannon Brusseau at 952/212-2105.

## **Preliminary Sketches of the POPS Facility Mark Progress on Project**

The Location Feasibility/Design Subcommittee of the POPS Committee has spent the recent months working with the architect and structural engineer on the design for the Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (POPS) facility.

In addition, the leadership of the Forward New Prague Foundation (where the financial assets of the POPS project are managed) has been working with the city of New Prague on a donation agreement regarding the southeast corner of the City Center area where POPS will be built. The stage will face southeast toward downtown.

The POPS Committee selected Bruce Caulfield of Caulfield Architectural Design, Woodbury, to design the building. Bruce has been involved in a number of New Prague projects over the years, including an office addition at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church a few years ago. It also selected Herzog Engineering, Spring Lake Park, as the firm that will provide the engineering expertise to the POPS building. Local resident Structural Engineer Tom Mach, a vice-president, will be involved in the project.

The subcommittee and leadership of the POPS Committee have been meeting regularly with Bruce. The goal is to have a design ready by the end of the year. It's possible construction could begin on the POPS building as soon as the spring of 2025, depending on a number of factors. Those include completing the agreement with the city regarding the space itself at City Center, reaching agreement with the city on the design (please note that once the building is completed, it will be owned and maintained by the city of New Prague) and, of course, raising the final dollars to reach the \$1 million financial goal.

Regarding the donation agreement, the city and the Forward New Prague Foundation are working on a plan for the city to donate a portion of the land where POPS will be built to the foundation during the construction phase of the project. Once the building project is completed, the foundation will return the building back to the city.

## **Forward New Prague Foundation Secures Grant for Landscaping POPS**

The Grants/Public-Private Funding Subcommittee of the POPS Committee has secured one grant thus far for the POPS facility and is working on another.

Thanks to the efforts of Kyra Chapman, city planner for New Prague, the Forward New Prague Foundation secured a grant totaling nearly \$10,000 from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF). The grant is to be used for landscaping in the area around the POPS facility.

The grant was developed with the efforts of Ryan Sticha of D&J Landscaping, which has offered some pro bono landscaping services to the POPS Committee. Ryan assisted Kyra and other POPS Committee members in writing the grant and creating a design for the area surrounding the building. The Forward New Prague Foundation learned in mid-October that its grant application had been accepted.

Kyra is currently working with POPS leadership on another grant for audio/visual equipment for POPS. This grant is being offered by T-Mobile. The plan for family entertainment at the facility



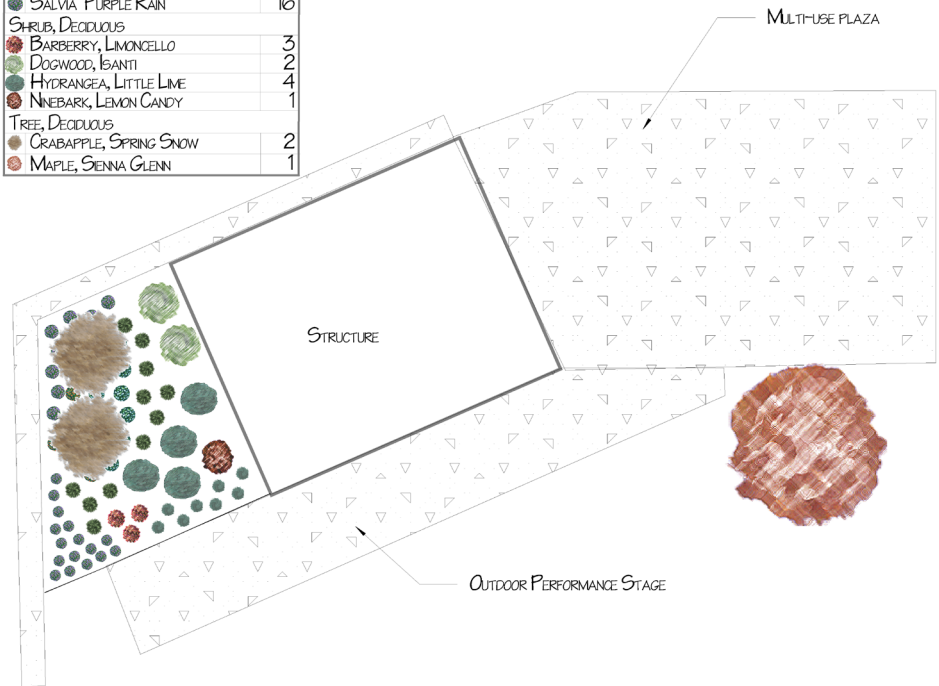
**Thanks to a grant proposal written by Kyra Chapman, city planner for New Prague, and detailed specifics provided by Ryan Sticha of D & J Landscaping, the Forward New Prague Foundation received a grant for landscaping around the POPS facility. This is NOT the final design, nor landscaping plan. Just a sketch of what some of the landscaping could partially look like.**


includes audio and video capabilities. T-Mobile works with communities to provide funding for communications needs. The communications need for POPS fit the criteria for T-Mobile in this grant program.

It's likely this grant will be applied for in December and The Forward New Prague Foundation will be alerted at the end of the first quarter of 2025 if it was successful in its grant application.

The POPS Committee would like to extend its gratitude to the city staff for working volunteer hours to assist POPS in this effort.

LEGEND	
COMMON NAME	QTY
FLOWER, GRASS	
GRASS, PRAIRIE DROPSEED	8
GRASS, FOERSTER'S FEATHER REED	11
FLOWER, PERENNIAL	
ASTILBE, RED	10
ASTILBE, WHITE	9
CORALBELLS PALACE PURPLE	8
SALVIA 'PURPLE RAIN'	16
SHRUB, DECIDUOUS	
BARBERRY, LIMONCELLO	3
DOGWOOD, ISANTI	2
HYDRANGEA, LITTLE LIME	4
NINEBARK, LEMON CANDY	1
TREE, DECIDUOUS	
CRABAPPLE, SPRING SNOW	2
MAPLE, SIENNA GLENN	1

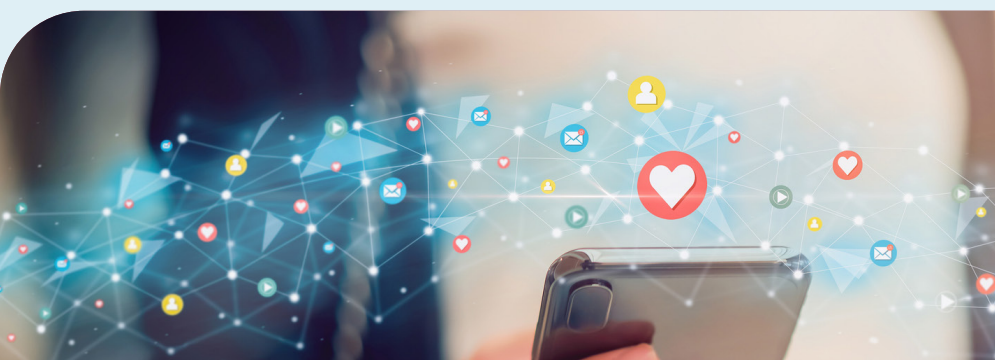


Revision #: 1	Landscape Plan: 1	 NORTH
Date: 8/2/2024	POPS	
Scale: 1" = 20'	Landscape Design by: Ryan Sticha D&J Landscaping	



The POPS Leadership Team is working tirelessly for the New Prague community to raise money needed to build the Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (POPS) facility. Thanks to its members:

- Den Gardner, Chair
- Bruce Wolf, Treasurer
- Sandi Loxton, Secretary
- Shannon Allen
- Joe Barten
- Andy Beckius
- Lisa Brusseau
- Shannon Brusseau
- Tony Buthe
- Dr. Jon Colling
- Gina Fadden
- Steve Frost
- Pastor Ben Hilding
- Larry Pint
- Eddie Shimota
- Brooke Sticha



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