



# NEW PRAGUE POPS POST

**VOL. 2 -- NUMBER 3** *Special Edition*

## **Public Meeting on POPS Project Set for Aug. 7 at The Broz**

By Den Gardner, Chair, POPS Committee

Eager to see where the Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (POPS) will be built at City Center? Wondering when construction will begin? Have you made your pledge yet to the project to the Forward New Prague Foundation?

You'll find the answers to this and more **at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 7, at The Broz** in New Prague. Representatives from the POPS Committee, the city of New Prague, and likely the firm chosen to create the design for POPS will present an update for area residents.

### **The meeting should last about one hour and include:**

- An update on the POPS building project from a location at the site standpoint.
- A City of New Prague update on the City Center land area and some updates on continuing plans for the area.
- Latest fundraising totals.
- Timeline for selection of a design/architectural firm to design the POPS building.
- Construction and completion of the project.
- Oct. 4 POPS Gala II with Mollie B & SqueezeBox with Ted Lange.
- Aug. 26 POPS fundraiser: Get Back to Beatlemania with Little Chicago.

### **Meanwhile, here is the latest information, as of mid-July:**

- Three-year pledges are at approximately \$850,000. Of those pledges, more than \$300,000 is already deposited.
- The POPS Committee has received offers for pro bono work for certain aspects of construction valued at more than \$100,000.
- More than 100 individuals/families/businesses/non-profit organizations and others have contributed from \$15

- for a raffle ticket for the SUV giveaway last fall to \$100,000 to the POPS project.
- The POPS Committee (through the Forward New Prague Foundation, the 501c3 non-profit tax-exempt organization where POPS donations are deposited) is working with the City on a possible “partnership” for the actual building of the facility.
  - Now that a county location has been selected (Scott County), The POPS Committee is diligently pursuing public grant opportunities. This is being handled by one of the POPS Subcommittees and is in its early stages.
  - Stakeholders are aware of POPS activities through our six-time/year newsletter. This comes out mostly between September and June, with a special issue during the summer if it’s necessary (as this one would show).

“It’s Time!” has been the POPS motto from the start of this project almost two years ago (fundraising just 18 months ago). Thanks to all for your passion and dedication to this project.

Please consider donating to POPS. We would be glad to share our fundraising proposal with you.

Contact Den Gardner at: [dengardner@gandgcomm.com](mailto:dengardner@gandgcomm.com). Call his cell: 612/325-3981.



**Three years of Music at the Broz under a tent. By 2025, will POPS building be a reality?**



**The City Center site on the northwest end of New Prague. One plan calls for POPS to be placed on the southeast corner, with the stage facing toward the southeast.**



**PRAHA OUTDOOR  
PERFORMANCE STAGE**

## Site Features: City Block



- Multi-family residential
- Playground
- Community room
- Multi-use plaza (farmers mkt, food trucks, parking, etc.)
- Outdoor performance stage
- Stormwater treatment (area TBD)
- "Skinny" street w/planted median & parking
- Entry plaza
- Overflow parking (if needed)
- Commercial infill building (per market demand)

This is one option the city is considering for the City Center location. POPS is in the southeast corner.

## Mollie B SqueezeBox Tickets Selling Briskly for POPS Gala II October 4



Mollie B & SqueezeBox with Ted Lange to do a three-hour concert to raise money for the POPS building project.

Tickets have been brisk for the Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (POPS) Gala II event on Oct. 4 with "Mollie B & SqueezeBox with Ted Lange." Tickets are priced at \$30/ticket (outer perimeter) for this fundraiser for the POPS building project in New Prague. There will only be 600 tickets sold for the fundraising event.

There is special seating on the floor with eight tickets sold per table. You must buy at least four tickets at a table. Those prices are \$150 for four tickets or \$300 for eight tickets. There is just one partial table left as of this printing.

“Mollie B & SqueezeBox with Ted Lange” will perform from 6-9 p.m. The Tim Chlan Band will play from 5-6 p.m. The POPS Committee hopes to fill the Park Ballroom for the event.

For ticket information, go to [www.nppops.org](http://www.nppops.org) and follow the prompts. Or tickets may be purchased at the New Prague Chamber office or the New Prague Community Education office.

POPS Gala II will be the year two celebration of the campaign to build the outdoor performance facility in New Prague, beginning in 2025. Thus far (as of July 1), \$850,000 has been pledged to the building effort. The goal is to raise \$1 million by the end of 2024.

The New Prague City Council has recently selected City Center (old mill pond/creamery site) on the west end of the city as the location for the POPS building.

POPS Gala I was held in October of 2023, with the SUV raffle and silent auction, along with band performances by the Eddie Shimota Band and Little Chicago. That event raised nearly \$20,000 for the POPS effort.

POPS Gala II will take a slightly different twist. Mollie B and her band are an internationally known group that has performed in more than 30 states and eleven countries. They have a huge following in the Upper Midwest. Mollie is also in the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame.

“We are thrilled to book this very popular group for our second gala,” said Den Gardner, POPS chairman. “We hope to be celebrating our 2024 efforts to get close to \$1 million in pledged funds. It’s going to take continued work by the POPS Committee to hold a first-class event for all those in the area who support our effort. We are hoping for a crowd of 600 in attendance.”

The POPS Silent Auction will return for its second year, headed by Shannon Allen and Mark Braaten. Details on the auction, which will be a live, online auction like last year, will be provided soon. Approximately \$6,500 was raised for POPS last year at the auction.

The POPS Committee thanks the Park Ballroom and American Legion Post for providing the venue rent-free again for the gala. Food and refreshments will be available again.

### **Background on Mollie B & SqueezeBox with Ted Lange**

Mollie B, the multi-instrumentalist, award-winning vocalist, and host of the Mollie B Polka Party TV show, has been performing music all her life. Mollie started her career performing with the Jim Busta Band when she was only a child. Through hard work and dedication, Mollie now performs nationwide to live audiences, as well as TV productions and the movie screen. She has performed for several years with the award-winning Ted Lange and also serves as a guest artist with other bands. Mollie not only has performed on over 40 recordings, but she has also shared her many God-given talents with fans in over 30 states and eleven countries and continues to inspire young musicians with her love for music.

In 2005, Mollie joined Ted Lange’s Bratwurst Boys, based out of Ridgeville Corners, Ohio. In 2007, 2-time Grammy-nominee Ted and Mollie changed the name to SqueezeBox. SqueezeBox showcases Mollie’s versatility on several instruments, as well as her talented vocals.



In July of 2011, the first Mollie B Polka Party aired on RFD-TV. Mollie was a creative director and co-producer of these shows. The Mollie B Polka Party currently airs in over 55 million homes on RFD-TV on Wednesday at 6:30 pm and Saturday at 10:00 pm ET.

In 2018, Mollie B & SqueezeBox appeared as “Mollie B & her band” in a scene of the Warner Brothers movie, “The Mule,” directed and starring Clint Eastwood. Also in 2018, Mollie was the youngest person to be inducted into the International Polka Hall of Fame and she had a US Flag flown in her honor by the US Air Force in a mission in the Middle East.

In 2020, like many, Mollie and Ted had to pivot due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mollie and Ted began their YouTube channel, with weekly Tuesday night performances, and gained over 20,000 subscribers and over six million views.

In the fall of 2021, Mollie received the Sperati Award from Luther College. This award is presented to one alumni musician each year for their excellence in instrumental music. And, in 2022, Mollie was inducted into the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame.

Mollie has won the title of the “Favorite Female Vocalist” award numerous times, both from the United States Polka Association and the International Polka Association. She has also won multiple awards from the Polka America Corporation for her polka recordings with Ted Lange.

Ted Lange, a two-time GRAMMY nominee, International Polka Association “Hall of Fame” member, and the 2019, 2020, and 2021 IPA Best International Male Vocalist, co-leads and co-manages SqueezeBox with Mollie B. While on stage, he is featured on accordion, midi bass, button box and vocals. In addition to performing with SqueezeBox, he has become a name synonymous with quality polka music as an award-winning musician, DJ, promoter, engineer, songwriter, arranger, and producer. He co-produced the “Mollie B Polka Party” on RFD-TV with his wife Mollie B, which broadcasts to over 60 million households.

Ted received his second Grammy nomination with John Gora for his work on “Bulletproof Polkas” in 2007. In addition to performing with John Gora, Ted also performed with a Toledo-based “Polish-style band named “Change Of Pace from 2004 through 2006 and recorded 2 CDs with them.

In addition to his vast polka music knowledge and ability, Ted’s reputation for being able to step in as a side musician due to his keen musical ear has made him one of the “first calls” for any band seeking a quality fill-in on accordion, concertina, or drums.

In the late 1990s, Ted formed the band “The Bratwurst Boys” with other members of Toledo Polkamotion, which later became the band now known as “Squeezebox”. Since 2005, the dynamic duo of Ted Lange and Mollie B have taken Squeezebox to over 100 performances a year all over the United States.

