

## Grosse Pointe Park arts center renews fundraising push to complete \$45M project

By Sherri Welch

The Schaap Center for the Performing Arts is putting a renewed push behind fundraising to complete the \$45 million center in Grosse Pointe Park after seeing giving slow over the past year.

Fundraising slowed as the Schaap Center worked to resolve issues with the neighboring city of Detroit over unsecured approvals for the demolition of a building straddling the Detroit-Grosse Pointe Park border and the plan



Jaime Rae Turnbull

for a parking lot on the Detroit property, Executive Director Jaime Rae Turnbull said.

Resolution of the issues with Detroit and visible progress on



Credit: A. Paul and Carol C. Schaap Center for Performing Arts

A drone photo taken in February shows progress on the performing theater inside of developing A. Paul and Carol C. Schaap Center for the Performing Arts in Grosse Pointe Park.

the site with construction “has opened many discussions for major gifts to complete our campaign,” she said.

The center had raised just less than \$44 million toward the combined capital and permanent endowment goal of \$55 million by May 2022. It raised another \$2 million by early 2023 before fundraising slowed, Turnbull said.

“Right now that is my main focus: to finish the capital campaign, and endowment is right behind that,” she said.

The center must raise another \$5 million to close out the capi-

tal piece of the campaign, and \$4 million more toward a \$10 million permanent endowment that will help fund maintenance and annual operations, she said. Among other gifts Turnbull is seeking is a naming sponsor for the community gallery that will host rotating exhibitions of works from partner arts organizations and local and regional artists.

### Resolving issues with Detroit

Demolition of the building on the border of the two cities was halted last year on the same day it began, when the city of Detroit

issued a stop work order and filed suit, saying the project had not secured needed approvals.

The city and Urban Renewal Initiative Foundation, the non-profit developing the center and now doing business as the Schaap Center, came to an agreement in November with the Detroit Historic District Commission approving demolition of the remaining half of the building and the plan to put parking in its spot, with conditions.

In addition to securing all required planning and zoning approvals, the center must include a community gathering area double the size of the original proposal as part of the parking lot at the corner of Jefferson Avenue and Alter Road, ensure it has seating and appropriate lighting and is connected to the Schaap Center. In addition, it must include recognition of some sort of the significance of the buildings that once stood in the area, including the historic Deck Bar, a building that Grosse Pointe Park owned and demolished previously.

The Schaap Center demolished the half of the building left standing in January and is working with the Detroit Department of Planning and Development on



Credit: Urban Renewal Initiative Foundation

**A rendering of the planned \$45 million A. Paul and Carol C. Schaap Center for the Performing Arts.**

the plan for the parking area with brick from the demolished building, a large plaza, seating, indigenous plants and other features, Turnbull said.

**Center takes shape**

Construction of the Schaap Center theater building on property that sits entirely in Grosse Pointe Park began in May and continued as the center worked to resolve the issues with the city of Detroit. The shell of the performing arts theater inside the center is in place, and the lines for the project are firmly visible.

The outer walls of the building are expected to take shape by mid-summer, putting the project on track for completion by fall 2025, Turnbull said.

CBRE is the project manage-

ment company and Oak Park-based PCI-Dailey Co. is general contractor on the project.

While construction proceeds, Turnbull said she is meeting with the groups that will make their permanent home at the new center to work through the programming scheduled for the 2025-26 season. Those groups include the Grosse Pointe Theatre, Grosse Pointe Symphony Orchestra and Detroit Concert Choir.

Discussions are also underway with the center's board about the job functions the center will need to fill in areas including artistic direction, program support for groups using the theater, guest experience and curatorial staff for the Richard and Jane Manoogian Gallery and the yet-to-be named community gallery.