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STURGEON BAY
Historical Society Foundation, INC

The latest project updates for the Potawatomi Tower and the Door County Granary

Pot Tower Inspected for Repairability



Commissioned by Governor Evers and the Wisconsin DNR, Oregon-based Wood Research & Development (WRD) was on site to inspect the decay and repairability of the historic Potawatomi State Park Observation Tower.

The tower was closed in 2017 after the Forestry Department reported significant wood decay, creating unsafe conditions. SBHSF, not satisfied with the WDNR's limited reporting for restoration alternatives, worked to list the tower on the National and State Registries of Historic Places and commissioned the renowned WRD team led by

Dr. Dan Tingley to provide an in-depth inspection for preservation viability. At the time, WRD deemed the tower's restoration feasible and estimated \$250,000 in repair costs. According to the Peninsula Pulse, Dr. Tingley stated, "It was nowhere near in bad enough condition to warrant taking it down — ever." Those repair costs were never included in the state budget leaving the tower to continue to deteriorate.

This year, supporters from Door County appealed to Governor Evers through surveys, letters, and resolutions to stabilize and repair the original structure at an economical and widely accepted \$500,000 cost. In addition to SBHSF, supporters included the Potawatomi Park Alliance, the Town of Nasawaupée (where the tower is located), the County of Door, the City of Sturgeon Bay, the Door County Historical Museum, Destination Door County, State Representative Joel Kitchens, and State Senator Andre Jacque. Thanks to the will of the people, \$500,000 passed the State Finance Committee on June 7. SBHSF looks forward to WRD's updated assessment to be reported by the end of this month.



Wood Research and Development's Kim King, senior engineer, left, and James McAdam, level 2 technician, perform an inspection of the Potawatomi Observation Tower on May 30, 2023. Photo by Christie Weber

The Potawatomi State Park Observation Tower, built in 1931 is the first purpose-built recreational tower in a Wisconsin State Park. The distinctive design and form of this tower, including an easy-to-climb switchback staircase and wide viewing platforms, was then copied in subsequent recreational observation towers built in state parks, forests, and recreational areas throughout of the State of Wisconsin.

Granary Project Plans Continue



View of the Teweles and Brandeis Grain Elevator from the top of the Maritime Lighthouse Tower, June 25, 2023. The above photo contains a sneak peek of the Granary's future siding as shown in the bottom right corner of the building. The future red/brown corrugated metal siding was salvaged from the Globe Grain Elevator in Superior, Wisconsin, a similarly aged grain elevator, before it was completely demolished. Photo by: Phil Biebl

The Sturgeon Bay Historical Society Foundation has been busy preparing for active construction, finalizing construction plans, and completing the application process to access the \$3.3 million in earmarked funding through the USDA for the Door County Granary project.

As we like to say, construction isn't just pounding nails. There's plenty of meeting, designing, planning, cost estimating, bidding, and permitting to be done by the granary project's construction team before you will start to see active progress on site of the historic grain elevator.

This is what we've been working on:

Finalizing design details with our architects (LA DALLMAN).

The Granary project's construction committee is devoted to creating a public pavilion for the West Waterfront park and promenade with public restrooms and water filling stations while retaining the authenticity of the of the historic Teweles and Brandeis Grain Elevator.



Door County Granary proposed interior event space.

Rendering by: LA DALLMAN Architects.

Working with the USDA Rural Development to access the CDS funds

The project manager for the Granary project has been working diligently with USDA Rural Development agents to complete the application requirements to obligate the \$3.3 million in congressionally directed spending funds to SBHSF for the Door County Granary project. SBHSF anticipates an additional four weeks until funding may be secured; allowing the project's construction plans to move full steam ahead.

Reconciliation of the Granary's construction budget

Working diligently with the Granary's construction manager, Greenfire Management Services, the construction committee is prioritizing a scope of work that is feasible to meet project goals and deadlines. An informative step in the construction plans that will help guide decision making and ensure a successful bidding process.

Work crews on site to maintain the structure

Recently crews were on site to remove the remains of the original siding from the headhouse; they had begun to peel away following wind storms last fall. The wind also affected the roof requiring an inspection and repair to the damaged sections.

Historic interpretation plans are boosted by summer project

SBHSF hired incoming college freshman, Nathan Hawkins, with deep ties to Door County, to work with the historic interpretation team to reach it's goals to create an immersive museum experience. Nathan has a passion for historic preservation and will work this summer to archive and inventory original building materials, historic equipment, photos, and documents which will be used to tell the story of the Teweles and Brandeis Grain Elevator's significance to agricultural commerce in Sturgeon Bay at the turn-of-the-20th century.

An excerpt from Nathan's letter of intent:

"...I find the [Granary] project especially inspiring given that the subject is a relatively utilitarian, industrial structure. From what I have seen, buildings like this are unfortunately often overlooked, perhaps because they are sometimes perceived as white elephants with little outward architectural charm. There is no question, though, that the Granary is a community landmark with great potential. I would be honored to play a role in helping to renovate this part of Sturgeon Bay's heritage."



Grain elevator belt salvaged from the Teweles & Brandeis Grain Elevator in 2018. Currently stored offsite.

SBHSF participates in Granary visioning workshop

In preparation of the Door County Granary being open for business, SBHSF's board of directors and Granary stakeholders participated in a day-long visioning workshop. Facilitated by Kim Larson from Larson-Marvine, a Chicago and Door County based design, communications, and marketing firm with 30 years experience in building brands, SBHSF worked together to create mission and vision statements to guide the future of the Door County Granary.



Door County Granary workshop with Larson-Marvine, June 15, 2023. Photo by: Nicole Matson

SBHSF looks forward to sharing a date for active on site construction to commence as soon as possible. Stand by while we cross our t's and work with the federal regulators to unlock the congressionally directed spending funds.

Granary awarded WEDC Vibrant Spaces Grant

Door County Granary brings new life to Sturgeon Bay waterfront

\$50,000 WEDC grant supports vibrant addition to the City of Sturgeon Bay

STURGEON BAY, WI. JUNE 26, 2023 – The City of Sturgeon Bay is receiving a \$50,000 Vibrant Spaces grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development

Corporation (WEDC) to fund the revitalization of the Door County Granary in Sturgeon Bay's West Waterfront area.

The Vibrant Spaces grant program is designed to help cities and towns revitalize underused spaces to build community and attract future residents. Through this grant program, communities across the state of Wisconsin will be investing in their workforce attraction and small business development by creating inviting, walkable spaces in their downtowns, gateway districts, and economic centers.

“Investing in vibrant communities where people want to live, work, and raise families is critical to attracting and retaining workers in our state,” said Missy Hughes, secretary and CEO of WEDC, the state's leading economic development organization.

“These grants will help communities create new gathering places in thriving downtowns to draw in residents, visitors, new businesses and investments.”

Funded in part by WEDC's Vibrant Spaces grant, the Door County Granary project aims to transform the original Teweles and Brandeis Grain Elevator, a registered historic landmark, into a living museum and social hub that will be free and open to the public. The Door County Granary, a project of the Sturgeon Bay Historical Society, will be a significant presence in Sturgeon Bay, drawing visitors to the adjacent promenade, providing an insight into the city's agricultural history, and linking the nearby trail systems. Additions to the site will include accessible public restrooms, two public water filling stations, and a catering kitchen for public events. Attractive, vibrant spaces such as the Door County Granary serve an important role in community growth and development. By creating spaces for community members to live, work, and play, Sturgeon Bay is encouraging visitors to put down roots in the community.

City of Sturgeon Bay Mayor David Ward shared “the Vibrant Spaces Grant will aid in improving the public restrooms and other amenities along the City's West Waterfront.”

The Vibrant Spaces Grant program is an initiative within WEDC's Community Development and Investment (CDI) grant program. Projects were evaluated based on their ability to create visible and pedestrian-oriented public spaces that attract and accommodate multiple users and activities. Successful projects demonstrated that they would benefit the local district, nearby businesses and the community as a whole.

Communities were required to match grant funds and begin construction this summer. More information can be found online [HERE](#).



The Sturgeon Bay Historical Society Foundation, Inc., founded in 2016, is a 501(c)3 organization of volunteers dedicated to preserving Sturgeon Bay's living history, which defines our community character and cultural evolution, for future generations through advocacy, preservation and education. We do this by saving, restoring, repurposing, and sharing the story of Sturgeon Bay's authentic historic structures.

CONNECT WITH US

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