

Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission  
Zeidler Municipal Building  
841 N. Broadway, Room B-1  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

January, 8<sup>th</sup> 2019

Re: Modjeska Theater

Commission Members:

We, the Board of Directors of the Mitchell Street Development Opportunities Corporation, would like to take a moment to update the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission on the status of the of the items that we have been working on to get the Modjeska Theater open and to complete the work required by the City.

To summarize, the work that has been completed to date is as follows:

- The sidewalk vault has the temporary support structure installed and has been signed off by our Structural Engineer.
- We have completed the temporary repair to the exterior Terracotta panels. Based on our budget we have to work with, we have made the repairs to keep the buildings exterior from further deterioration.
- The asbestos caulk has been removed on the exterior windows.

The remainder of the items have been on hold because our previous Lessee breached their Lease with MSDOC, thereby requiring us to terminate their Lease of the Theater. At the time of termination, that Lessee had started work to remodel the interior and exterior of the building to update the property in anticipation of having the Theater open for business again, providing everything from community events to live concert performances. MSDOC invested significant effort in helping the Lessee get open, including having pulled building permits for the work at our own cost. When they could not meet their financial duties, it put us in position that has made it very difficult to move forward with any work at the Theater.

We would like to City to know that our MSDOC board has spent many hours of time volunteering over the past few years to work on the Theater's interior and exterior. We have removed 20 years of accumulated items and garbage that had been in the building from all of the previous users that have operated there. This has added up to hundreds of yards of dumpster's worth of items that have been removed. We also spent our time and money to paint the exterior of the building's first floor that faces Historic Mitchell Street. It has been our passion to find the right user for the Theater not only to bring life back to it, but also to provide a tasteful and mutually beneficial neighbor to the Historic Mitchell Street neighborhood. We even have a "Friends of the Theater" group that was going to be an operating partner with the future ownership to run an Arts group for the community.

After the termination of the Lease with the previous Lessee, we had a very hard decision to make as to the future of the Theater. With much consideration, we decided to prepare a Request For Proposals to be released for persons and or groups to either purchase the Theater to operate the property as a theater, or to lease or partner with MSDOC to accomplish that goal. MSDOC anticipates that the ultimate operator/manager will assemble an event calendar that incorporates a mixture of some or all of the following: live music concerts, live performances, movies, socio-cultural events, weddings, faith-based events, and other attractions that will serve not only the City of Milwaukee area at large, but also the diverse population that immediately occupies and surrounds Historic Mitchell Street.

Please understand that MSDOC is a board comprised entirely of volunteers dedicated to the improvement and development of Historic Mitchell Street that had the Theater ownership thrust upon us so it would not end up being auctioned off for re-development. We have spent the better part of the year working with the HPC and our outside support to develop the RFP which will be released this month. Our hope and intention is to try to find a group that has the financial ability to bring life back to the Theater, either as a purchaser or as a tenant operator. We realize the time it has taken to get the property back in shape and once again open for business may appear on the surface to be prolonged, however, there has been significant behind-the-scenes work undertaken to move forward. Further, please understand that our Board's mission was not to be the main owners of the Theater, but to assist in the operation of the Theater.

We ask for the Commission's understanding in this situation to allow for us to have the RFP released and find a new operator or owner. It is our intention to find a group, entity or individual who will have the best interests of Historic Mitchell Street and the larger City of Milwaukee in mind, rather than simply sell to a developer or investor that may not have that goal in mind or who may turn the theater into a business that adversely impacts the image, growth and development of Historic Mitchell Street. Our request for the City to grant us the moth ball certificate is to keep us from having more fines to pay which puts us in the position of having to find a buyer or operator that can release us from that responsibility.

Thank you for your consideration in this request.

Mitchell Street Development Opportunities Corporation