

Pitch for the Parcel

Final Call for Development Proposals:

The Hart Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA) is extending a final invitation to all interested parties to submit an application outlining their development vision for the property located at 408 S. State Street in Hart, Michigan. This site includes a church, residential home, and former nursery building, offering a unique opportunity for revitalization.

Following a review of all submissions, three applicants will be selected to present their proposals before the TIFA Board. One proposal will be chosen, and the selected applicant will be granted the opportunity to acquire the full property for \$1, contingent upon a commitment to meaningful redevelopment.

This is a rare opportunity to contribute to the next chapter of a historic property in the heart of Hart. Interested individuals or organizations are encouraged to **apply by April 10, 2025**.

BASIC INFO

Full Name

Cindy Beth Davis-Dykema

Phone

231-206-2108

Email *

shawneechild@gmail.com

Business or Organization Name (if applicable)

I'm applying as an individual, but combining offerings of Kalon Arts and Yoga and A Garden in the Woods Farm

Website or Social Media Links

<https://www.instagram.com/agardeninthewoods/>

<https://www.facebook.com/kalonartsandyoga/> <https://www.facebook.com/agardeninthewoods/>

VISION & PROPOSAL

Describe your idea or project in 1–2 paragraphs. (What would you do with the property if you win?) *

If honored to win, we'd implement our multi-phase approach to the creation of a multicultural, multigenerational, three-venue center, with the vision "to embody a celebration of the arts, wellness and community in the heart of Oceana County."

The Hart Center, a historic venue in downtown Hart, would blend 140 years of historic, Oceana County charm with unique, Northern Michigan performance arts, food, cultural and wellness experiences. Year-round, it will serve as the home to yoga and wellness in The Studio, with live performances and farm-to-table dinners in The Church, featuring locally produced and nationally touring theatre, dance and music concerts (of all genres and even our own neighbors!) this space will also serve as a wedding and special event rental opportunity for celebrations, and rent in partnership with The Honeymoon Suite at The House next-door, which will eventually serve two purposes- as a green-grocer and flower bar on the main floor, with administrative offices downstairs for the multi-venue site and separated from the upper level, where a VRBO would be created from the rehabilitated top story of the house, becoming The Honeymoon Suite and offered in connection to wedding and special event rentals in the church. In the winters, this same space can be used as an Oceana County artist-in-residency program lodging for the winter, when we can share our quiet, beautiful community with artists from all over the world, who can find inspiration from our distinctive and breathtaking shoreline community, encapsulate and share the special culture that we celebrate in Oceana County.

Which of the three buildings do you plan to use, and how? (Home, Church, Third Structure) *

In multiple phases and as funding allows, all three buildings would serve various purposes, with connection and overlap to one another as listed below.

The Chapel at Hart vision entails-

Continued collaborations with churches and for community groups and gatherings; serving as a continued historic landmark for cultural and community events; nurturing the revival of Oceana Summer Youth Theatre; theatre, music and dance performance events produced internally and presented in partnership with outside venues, artists and organizations; venue rental for weddings with connection to The House- Honeymoon Suite (lodging) and The Studio (hosting wedding party) for a full venue rental or a la carte, depending on the needs and budget of each renter.

Offering LIVE entertainment year-round, and available for rental for special events

Hosting our community for 140 years and into the future with-

Weddings

Receptions

Baby showers

Engagement parties

Memorials, or Celebrations of Life

Retirement celebrations

Graduation and Open Houses

Birthday parties

Holiday gatherings (family or business)

Annual meetings for business or charities

Productions (music, theatre, dance, arts and culture)

Corporate Presentations

The Sanctuary (upstairs)- unique, onstage Farm-to-Table Dinner hosting space in The Sanctuary for farm fresh organic dinner experiences from A Garden in the Woods (our organic farm) and musician recording space for the incredible acoustics; photography site for weddings, engagements, senior and family photos.

The Fellowship Hall (downstairs)- a sensory play space for all ages year-round, with multigenerational opportunities for connection and community, while children are able to move their bodies alongside adults of senior generations, and where parents and caregivers can gather together while their kids are allowed to be kids, to move their bodies, make noise, develop social skills and explore play safely in a warm, welcoming and supportive environment; serving as venue for West Michigan Homeschool Community and Artist gatherings such as Oceana Singers and Writers; a Sodbury School space for self-directed study, childbirth and prenatal education, prenatal yoga, children's yoga, chair yoga, for larger groups than can fit in The Studio, or for use in Yoga Retreats or special events rentals.

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The Studio at Hart would be the heart of the three-venue site, where we'd begin our efforts to shape the space towards community wellness, opening Hart's first-ever intentional Yoga Studio and Retreat Space, offering prenatal yoga, children's and family yoga, chair yoga and everything in between; in partnership with West Michigan Yoga Guides- teaching intensive, weekend long, professional development opportunities for yoga teachers; and as a special events venue rental for small gatherings and special occasions such as birthdays, reunions, holidays, retirements, memorials, graduation, engagement and baby showers, tea party gatherings and meeting space for smaller gatherings than warrant The Church. This building is the smallest and easiest to get off-the-ground with currently planned repairs and accessibility, ease of revenue earning potential for my yoga offerings and expeditious redevelopment, due to the fact that I currently have an Oceana County yoga clientele that I've been working with consistently for the past ten years, and we've been seeking a new space that could embody a classic yoga studio's intimate character that many of our dedicated yogis who have spent years together in this community practice have been longing for as they've seen our community grow in numbers. Personally, I've taught for so many different wonderful organizations over the years, but I've finally hit a point where I'm ready to set some long-term roots for our ever-growing yoga family. Before The House (listed below) is fully ready to open to the public, The Studio would also serve as a smaller-scale micro-green grocer and flower bar, in the entrance space of the yoga studio. This way, the

farm can begin to gauge the demand for farm flowers and food and grow in natural response as the space is renovated for the purposes listed below.

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The House

This will be the final and most complex of the multi-phase project to redevelop the parcel, because of the necessary repairs, accessibility and separation of levels within the house that will be needed for the long-term plans we dream for The House. Our goal is to extend the wellness spaces of The Studio with fresh food from our family's organic farm, A Garden in the Woods, where we grow beautiful flowers and vegetables nine months of the year in our five hoophouse farm, so we can expand our current (40 family) Farm Club memberships and audiences through the availability of pickup for those outside our delivery range. This main floor would also eventually be converted to serve as a Flower Bar where friends can gather for coffee and tea and create a bouquet, grab some fresh produce for dinner or pick up any number of local items, as this shop will be a purveyor of local goods and a place to gather before and after yoga with friends or sneak for a quiet work space.

The second floor of The House would be separated from the main floor at the entranceway and converted into a VRBO space that would allow for simultaneous rental with The Church for weddings as The Honeymoon Suite, for either the couple and/or friends and family of those involved. In the colder and less busy months, it could also serve as lodging for a winter artist-in-residency program which would fuel goodwill and tourism for our beautiful area through artworks inspired by each diverse residency artist and medium.

Three unique venues, One mission.

Arts, Wellness and Community in Oceana County

What is the potential community impact of your idea? (Who benefits? Does it provide a service, meet a need, or build a connection?) *

The impact of my idea is potentially really wide-spanning and community-inspiring. My greatest gift is being fortunate enough to know so many amazing people with incredible skills, talents and an equally strong desire to create more connected and inclusive senses of community. I believe this multicultural, multigenerational arts and wellness space could provide exactly that service, meeting many needs, one of which is the need to bring a renewed interest into the downtown outskirts, along with additional reasons to seek out Hart as a premier tourism destination for arts and culture, and wellness as well. I could go on for a while about this, so I hope I'll have the chance to share more.

ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

How would your project create jobs or support local employment? *

Through multi-prong approaches across three venues aiming to stimulate arts and wellness in our community, I expect to employ myself as manager of the parcel, along with contracting multiple local businesses for inspections and insurance, repair and maintenance on the three facilities, and approximately 15-25 independent artists are expected for hire within the first year of parcel acquisition, for projects in their special fields of expertise such as marketing, administration and social media branding, sound design, set design, photography and videography, childbirth education, yoga, theatre, music and dance instruction and retail work. A wonderful benefit in a multifaceted venue space is that it can offer so many community members the chance to be engaged in their passion projects for pay on small projects that also help to build investment in community through their work.

Would your project generate local tax revenue? If so, how? (E.g., as a business, rental property, venue, etc.) *

Yes, in various ways as listed above, for each of the three venues. Exactly which ways will depend on what feels most sustainable and best for the vision and our partners long-term if we're awarded this incredible opportunity. Meeting with community partners to see which collaborations meet the most community needs, have the best ROI and are ready to go quickly and at low-cost will be most helpful to determine exactly which directions to go and on what timeline. I'd be thrilled to have the chance to explain more about my goals for each location at a presentation if I am honored with that opportunity, as there are multiple potential revenue streams at each of the three venues, with various partners in the wings ready to move forward if we're granted the parcel to begin inspections and strategic planning and big picture thinking with all of the community players in the room.

How much will you need to invest to get the building(s) ready for your intended use? *

Church (amount & explanation), House (amount & explanation), 3rd Building (amount & explanation)

Before inspections and a deeper look, it's hard to do much more than guesstimate. But likely between \$1,500-\$10,000 would get one to two of the buildings ready for business use: i.e.

The Church: is currently solid for several potential purposes because it's functioning already as a public space without any additional financial needs immediately visible. No extensive investment necessary for my proposal at this site. Presentations would split revenue in a partnership contract, rather than extending guaranteed contracts for most projects.

The Studio: \$1,500 in cleaning, maintenance and upgrades to the facility/ flooring, with \$500 in yoga mats, props, blocks and blankets, \$500 iPad and Square for point of sales with \$500 in fabric and decor to elevate The Studio to a welcoming space.

The House: although not entirely certain until I can have it more thoroughly evaluated and bring in a contractor friend to assess the costs for the two-phase, two-level main floor plan-

With \$1,000 in upgrades, a two-story VRBO could ready much more quickly than the two-phase plan to open the green grocer on the main floor with VRBO upstairs. This project is the last in the multi-phase project as it's expected to be expensive.

Insurance: awaiting quote, can update if given the opportunity

Website: \$3,000- \$5,000

Do you have a financial plan or source of funding to support this idea? (If yes, briefly explain) *

I have \$4,500 in savings which could cover the low end of listed costs, but I would begin applying for multiple entrepreneur contests and grants for individuals right away if awarded the parcel, and likely would create a membership for yoga and/or performance series that would allow for a consistent revenue stream to support ongoing operating expenses (with a current working number figured to be about \$18,700 to operate all three annually, accounting for just taxes (\$8500) and utilities (\$850) as described during the tour, the monthly breakdown is \$1,559 if broken out over twelve months.)

(Optional) would you like to offer the TIFA an additional amount to acquire the property? If so, how much?

FEASIBILITY & READINESS

What is your timeline for starting and completing the project? *

I'll create my LLC to support this arts, wellness and community operation, then follow this three-phase process for making creative redevelopment in each of the three venues:

By Memorial Day or at latest, the Asparagus Festival, open The Studio for yoga classes and overflow farm produce, starting small with the grocer aspect and growing yoga clientele. This can be a pretty quick, low-cost and seamless opening if everything within the building is functioning properly, since we already practice in Hart, at the Oceana County Council on Aging and my students are eager to find a more yoga-focused practice space.

At The Church, I'd work right away with local partners to determine which productions may be best suited to support current programming already happening in town and how to complement those offerings without competing for similar dates or busy times of year, develop partnerships and establish Ludus Ticketing for The Church as a performance venue map, where ticketing can begin almost immediately once bank accounts have been created. This schedule can grow slowly and sustainably as we see what the community resonates with and how much capacity and resources I have outside The Studio opening.

Within 18 months, I'd work to get The House open as a VRBO, or as office rental space for therapists, reiki workers, massage therapists or other healing modality professionals who may be seeking public office space, with the goal to get a family therapist to work at least once from a space within the site, since none of them are available nearby.

What experience, skills, or team members do you have to bring this idea to life?

I am extremely fortunate to know the best people and so many of them are on board if this dream comes to life! I have been involved in leadership at The Playhouse at White Lake in two iterations- first in 2008 as Managing Director and then again in 2020, as Marketing and Arts Education Director for White Lake Youth Theatre. I have contracted dozens of artists over the years for projects like those I'm suggesting here, and would love the chance to work with them more regularly, benefit from their rare talents in our rural area and support them financially through offering other part-time opportunities in the West Michigan arts scene.

The decade in my background between stints at The Playhouse was spent almost entirely in historic lighthouse preservation and executive leadership where I managed the nonprofit that operates Big Sable Point Lighthouse, Ludington North Breakwater Light, Little Sable Point and then, wrote the concession agreement and negotiated the three-way partnership that brought the White River Light Station under SPLKA's umbrella- at Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association. After which time, I managed the Muskegon Lighthouses as their first ever Executive Director for the Michigan Lighthouse Conservancy. My unusual and diverse background in nonprofit arts management with historic preservation make me uniquely qualified to take on a dynamic and exciting opportunity like this, without over-promising or burning myself out with unrealistic expectations or timelines. I want to see us grow slowly, sustainably and responsibly, with an ear for what our community would like to see and experience in such a special place, and a celebration of just what makes this place so special. I love hosting special events and began officiating weddings 15 years ago, so my theatre production and special event coordination background match well with officiating and helping to create a seamless wedding experience (as it's theatrical in some ways).

This non-exhaustive list of colleagues and team members who are currently on board and ready to brainstorm the project further includes, but is not limited to:

My husband, Caleb Davis-Dykema, Farmer/Owner at A Garden in the Woods

Tom Kirk, Hart Performing Arts Series & Founder, Oceana Summer Youth Theatre

Don Hoogeboom, retired head electrician from Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp/Radio

Theatre artists in set, sound, costuming and light design, recording and performance

West Michigan Yoga Guides- Hannah Avdek (also childbirth educator/prenatal yoga teacher)

Amber Hellewell of My Hearth Magic- Homeschool and Family Supports

Lauren Sawson- Yoga, dance, children's movement

Shelby Mason- musical arts, singing and songwriting

Chris Farrar- Stage Combat

Sam Farrar- Tap Dance and Musical Theatre Dance

Michigan Maven Creative Associates : Arts Administration Consulting

Creative Elegance- wedding and special event planning with Kristin Price

The Starting Bock- Lauren and Tony Dematteo (potential partners for green grocer concept)

Jessica Cirner, Head Chef for Macatawa Bay Yacht Club- longtime chef for my yoga retreats, for our farm to table dinners, weddings and special events.

Michigan Presenters Network- I've been a member for years and get information on routing touring acts through various areas and receive tons of industry support from this group

Michigan Historic Preservation Network and State Historic Preservation Office- free resources, trainings, potential funding opportunities for specific projects, if deemed eligible.

PITCH READINESS

Are you available to present a live, 5-minute pitch on April 15, 2025 at 1:00 PM? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

Do you have any presentation needs (AV, props, accessibility accommodations)? *

If given the chance to present for the TIFA board, may I please send through a powerpoint in email prior to that day, for use on your computer and screen?

FINAL QUESTION