

# Southport Park Association Strategic Plan



**Updated July 20, 2020**

By the Board of Directors  
Susan Andrea-Schlenker, President

## **Introduction**

In 2013 the City of Kenosha Common Council adopted the Southport Park Master Plan (SPMP) which recommended the creation of a private sector partner to assist the City with development and implementation of the plan's envisioned goals. *The Southport Park Association* (SPA), a non-profit 501© (3) corporation (NFPC), was established by community volunteers in 2014 to fulfill that recommendation.

The BOD adopted Bylaws, Policies and Procedures for NFPC compliance, and a committee structure for accomplishing the goals set forth in the SPMP. In 2017, the BOD entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Kenosha in order to establish an effective partnership for design, planning, and budgeting of public improvements and private contributions to the revitalization of the Southport Park and historic Southport Beach House.

In keeping with the vision and goals set forth in the SPMP, the Association Board of Directors (BOD) formulated an initial strategic plan for implementation of the improvements to the Southport Beach House and the Southport Park. In 2017 the Association identified challenges and opportunities that would be significant factors in realizing the envisioned goals of the SPMP and adopted an initial strategic plan to that end.

## **Southport Beach House Revitalization**

At the request of Mayor Antaramian, SPA developed recommendations for utilization and building design in keeping with the historic character and uses of the beach house and objectives of the SPMP. SPA submitted those recommendations to Mayor Antaramian in December 2017.

SPA recommended three conceptual approaches which emphasized the importance of enhanced public engagement with the park through upgraded onsite amenities, sustainable programs and services, and educational opportunities to promote the enduring value of environmental stewardship.

SPA recommended the following uses for the Southport Beach House:

1. Establish onsite food and beverage services via private sector partnership
2. Contract with a private sector vendor for beachfront amenities, equipment, and activities
3. Seek out educational and/or additional community programs that could be offered to the public through seasonal, interim, or ongoing agreements.

Under Mayor Antaramian's leadership, the City proceeded toward design and structural improvements, guided by Engberg Anderson Architects of Milwaukee, a firm with extensive experience in historic preservation projects; and GRAEF Engineering, a company widely acknowledged for their expertise in complex analysis of materials, structural problems, and reconstruction techniques in historic buildings. The City of Kenosha Departments of Public Works and Community Development, the City of Kenosha Historic Preservation Commission, and the Common Council have provided extensive support in coordinating and budgeting for these improvements.

The exterior reconstruction began in 2019 and has been phased for completion in 4-5 years. Given the significant progress toward exterior structural improvements that are now underway, in 2019 the BOD determined it would be timely to update our governing documents. Recently we updated our Bylaws to reflect operating practices of the SPA and modernized our committee structures accordingly

The BOD has also updated our Strategic plan to reflect our current organizational assets, our long-term objectives, and short-term goals toward those objectives. We have prioritized our operating plan for the next 3 years.

## **Strategic Plan Overview**

### **SPA Organizational Strengths**

- Positive community relationships with citizenry, notably the adjacent Southport neighborhood, other non-profit organizations and across units of government.
- Positive relationships with the City of Kenosha, including the Administration, Common Council, Department Heads, and City Staff.

- Recent community successes with historic preservation projects in downtown Kenosha and Simmon's Island Park have bolstered the credibility and value of continuing expansion of local preservation efforts. Over the past 5 years there has been a significant increase in private sector investment in the rehabilitation of older structures in Kenosha's historic downtown, and growing support from the business community in general.

## **SPA 2020-2023 Objectives**

### **Southport Park Beach House and Park Landscape**

- Work with City of Kenosha to develop requests for proposals for implementation of an operating plan based on public/private partnerships as proposed in the 2017 Utilization and Design Recommendations report.
- Review the current MOU with the Administration to determine if revisions or updates are warranted at this time.
- Begin discussions relative to overall planning for Southport Park, including landscape, activities, and hardscape upgrades with City Administration and members of the Common Council. [Link to the Conceptual Plan](#)
- Discuss fundraising objectives for SPA toward improvements to the Beach House and the Southport Park with City Staff and elected officials.

### **Fund Development**

The SPA comprehensive fundraising plan for 2020-2021 includes the following goals:

- Establish specific fundraising goals and objectives
- Create organizational structures and an internal grant-writing team
- Develop communications tools for outreach to potential partners and cultivate expanding donor participation
- Create a donor prospect plan to identify potential financial partnerships, including individuals, businesses, and foundations
- Expand our base of organizational, institutional, and citizen support to leverage our fundraising efforts

### **Public Relations**

- Continue efforts to raise awareness of SPA's mission by utilizing social media and local media outlets like the Kenosha News
- Create a SPA public relations and marketing calendar for social media posts, newsletters and fundraising campaigns
- Work with Dooley and Associates on SPA brand development.
- Update our marketing tools such as website, Facebook page, newsletter, and event advertising.

- Recruit an individual with strong social media and marketing skills to join the SPA board. This person would help develop our public relations strategy and oversee our media technology requirements.

### **Educational and Community Events**

SPA has held a number of events over the past several years, focused on raising community awareness of the progress that is underway at the park. We have organized public informational meetings with the neighborhood adjacent to the park, as well as environmental stewardship and historic preservation educational programs with children from the Kenosha Unified School District, in partnership with the *WATERshed* program.

We have also held spring and fall flower sales, as well as onsite fundraising events at the Southport Beach House. *Yoga and Friends* partnered with the Southport Park Association to offer weekly sunrise and sunset yoga classes in the historic beach house. Over the past 3 summers, we have teamed up with the Kenosha Harbor Market and the Bradford High School football team in the operation of a free Bike Valet service for visitors to Kenosha's lakefront.

When the historic beach house nears completion, we intend to establish educational programs and community events within the beach house and throughout the park. SPA hopes to develop expansive play areas and activities for all age, a naturalistic prairie garden composed of native species and educational programs for park visitors about this approach to environmental stewardship. We intend to expand outdoor classrooms in the park, such as the *WATERshed Program*, "to educate our next generation about the value of freshwater resources, and to demonstrate how human activities impact local watersheds." [Link to Conceptual Plan](#)

