



Efforts to turn Sharon Springs' 1884 Klinkhart Hall into an arts center are moving ahead with the effort's official not-for-profit status.

# Klinkhart now not-for-profit

## Aids effort for Spa arts center

By Patsy Nicosia

Work to reopen Sharon Springs' one-time opera house as the Klinkhart Hall Arts Center has gotten a boost with word that the effort is now a 501(c)(3).

The designation as a not-for-profit agency means that three years into work by its Board of Directors, the Klinkhart Hall Arts Center, Inc., can accept tax-deductible donations, gifts, and bequests.

That's essential if the 1884 building, which opened in 1884 as a general store and opera house and later housed: an auto dealership, movie theater, and a Masonic temple—is going to be reborn as a center for local and regional arts, said President Drew Taylor.

"This is what's been going on behind the scenes for the last year," Mr. Taylor said. "We've been soldiering on

through the paperwork. Now things are going to start to get interesting."

Directors have been putting together both short- and long-range plans for the Main Street building, but want to create a flexible, multi-purpose space with a 250-seat theater and room for a fine arts gallery, café/bar, retail space, and event space for things like workshops and community events.

"Everyone thinks theater, and it will be that," Mr. Taylor, who himself has spent the last 35 years in the professional theater, "but we want it to be so much more than that. We want it to be inclusive—not exclusive—and truly reflect the needs and interests of the community."

First things first, though.

The initial structural assessment of the building needs to be revisited, this time in more depth, "though it seems to be in relatively good shape," Mr. Taylor said.

"That's encouraging."

Hand-in-hand with that, he said, the Board of Directors is already investigating grants and is planning a series of both large and small fundraisers.

And though there will likely be a day, soon, Mr. Taylor said, when they put out a call for volunteers with shovels and rakes, or ask for help to start clearing

the building out, things probably won't really get rolling for a year or two.

"We're looking at this as a one-brick-at-a-time sort of thing," he said.

"We've been looking at other places, copying ideas like we like... Now's the time to dream. Once the work begins, it's too expensive to start changing your mind."

Still, he said, he wants to see the Klinkhart reopen during his lifetime—and he's optimistic that it will.

We've all been building like this with oil paintings on the wall and when you ask who they are, it's the founders," Mr. Taylor said. "We don't want to be the oil paintings on the wall. We want to move this along."

With its 501(c)(3) status, the Klinkhart Hall Arts Center can now start taking donations.

Cash donations can be sent to: Klinkhart Hall Arts Center Inc., PO Box 101, Sharon Springs, NY.

For more information, contact Mr. Taylor at (914) 941-0334 or by mail at scotsladdy118@gmail.com.

Klinkhart Hall is included on the National Registry of Historic Places.

A fire in 1911 destroyed the original store, killing Mrs. Klinkhart, who was hit by an exploding paint can after she went back to get the money out of the register.