



Photo by John Halberg



Photo by Eric Neurath

Port Angeles Waterfront Center FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

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1. Who was Donna Morris?

Donna Morris relocated from Southern California to Port Angeles, Washington in the early 1990s. She had a great love for both performing and fine arts. Donna also loved the beauty and simplicity of living in Port Angeles.

2. Why did she make this gift?

Donna Morris had no immediate family of her own. She was very close with her childhood friend and family who moved to Port Angeles to live and care for Donna. Donna often attended concerts of her best friend's son at the Port Angeles middle and high schools. Donna witnessed firsthand how music made a positive impact on his life. She also witnessed her friend's daughter develop into a professional fine artist. Donna provided for her close friend in her will; however, she also wanted to make a lasting contribution that would benefit Port Angeles, a place that she had grown to love. She believed that one of the best uses of her estate would be to support both performing and fine arts in the Port Angeles community by building a performing and fine arts center.

3. Who is in charge of the project?

In Donna Morris' will, she appointed her close friend as personal representative and directed her to assemble a committee (the PAC Committee) to work with the Peninsula College Foundation to implement her goal of building a performing and fine arts center that benefits the Port Angeles community. Each one of the committee members chosen represents an organization named in her will. The seven community members selected to serve on the committee have deep roots in the Port Angeles community and share Donna's commitment to promoting performing and fine arts. They include S. Brooke Taylor, Judith Morris, Karen McCormick, Dorothy Field, Bill Kindler, Dan Wilder, Sr., and Nathan West. The organizations they represent include Peninsula College, the Peninsula College Foundation, the City of Port Angeles, the Port Angeles Symphony Orchestra, the Port Angeles Fine Arts Center, the Port Angeles Community Players, and Juan de Fuca Festival of the Arts.

4. How much was the gift?

Donna Morris left approximately \$9,000,000 to construct a performing and fine arts center and to create an endowment to support the facility.

5. How will the committee make its decision regarding the location and design of the building?

The committee recently received an additional donation from Dorothy Field, a local citizen, to purchase land known as the “Oak Street property.” Dorothy Field is a Port Angeles resident and a member of the PAC Committee. She made her gift because she loves Port Angeles and its arts community, and she wants to do her part in making the project a success.

The committee believes the Oak Street property is an ideal site to locate a performing and fine arts center. This location is a community focal point. It is situated adjacent to the newly established West End Park. The recent work on the Port Angeles waterfront will enhance the efforts of the project. It includes spectacular views, ample parking, and is accessible to both the local community and tourists. The PAC Committee has hired LMN Architects to work with committee members, representatives of organizations identified in Donna Morris’ will and other stakeholders having an interest in the outcome of this project. Through a collaborative process, LMN Architects will submit conceptual drawings to the committee for its review and approval. Based upon the availability of funds and input from the community organizations and other stakeholders, the committee will make a final decision for the design of the building.

6. How and why were those people chosen to serve on the committee?

The personal representative of the Donna Morris estate was given the responsibility for selecting committee members. Each one of the committee members was chosen because of their longstanding and demonstrated commitment to the Port Angeles community, the unique skills they offer to complete the project, and their love of performing and fine arts. The committee members are excited to serve in this endeavor, they thoroughly enjoy working with each other, and they are committed to completing the project.

7. I have or know someone who has great ideas. Can I get on the committee so I can help with the project?

The committee and LMN Architects will solicit input from organizations identified in the will. The committee, through the consultant, will also solicit input from community members at meetings that will be announced to the public. As the project progresses and it becomes more clear how to engage public support and participation in the project, everyone should have a chance to get involved.

8. Are the people in charge being paid?

The committee members are volunteers. The committee is being supported by an administrative and legal team and consultants that are being paid out of the gift from the Donna Morris estate.

9. Do any of the people in charge (i.e. committee members) have a financial interest in this project? What are they getting out of this project?

None of the committee members have a financial interest in the project. Each committee member is involved because he or she believes that locating and constructing a performing and fine arts center

in Port Angeles will help strengthen the community both culturally and economically. They too wish to make a lasting contribution and impact in their community.

10. How much will the project cost?

The committee has not yet determined the cost of the project. Today, the project fund consists of Donna Morris' generous gift of \$9,000,000 and a gift of funds from Dorothy Field, another local citizen, to purchase the Oak Street property. Through the architect consultant, the committee will develop a budget to complete the project. A budget will be adopted that takes into account available funds and the potential for other grants and capital campaign contributions.

11. Is there enough money to complete the project?

The committee intends to design the project keeping in mind the funds that are currently available. The committee will also work on additional sources of funding to complete the project.

12. What influence will organizations identified in the will have on the project?

The organizations identified in the will will have significant influence on the project. Each organization has been consulted and asked to participate in a needs assessment and give their input on what they envision for the project.

13. How will the Committee collaborate with the organizations in Donna Morris' will and how does the committee foresee collecting information from those organizations and other interested parties?

The will of Donna M. Morris requires that the committee work with specified organizations including the Port Angeles Symphony Orchestra, the Juan de Fuca Festival Foundation, the Port Angeles Fine Arts Center, the Port Angeles Community Players, the City of Port Angeles, Peninsula College and the Peninsula College Foundation. Each committee member serves as a liaison to one of these organizations. The committee has already been working with these organizations to determine what each one needs to best serve their mission. In addition, each committee member has reached out to other community groups and plans to include them as part of a needs assessment that will be conducted by the architect consultant. The committee is committed to acting collaboratively in its own work and through its architect consultant. Questions and input from the public can always be made to the committee through the contact information provided above.

14. Do you plan to engage the general public in the planning process, and if so how?

The committee, through its architect consultant, intends to conduct meetings and invite the general public to participate in the planning process. These meetings will be scheduled and advertised in the future. Every community member will have an opportunity to engage in the process.

15. How has the architect consultant been selected?

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was sent to architectural firms with proven excellence and specific experience in the scoping and design of projects very similar to ours, as well as familiarity with the North Olympic Peninsula. LMN Architects, the firm that has been hired will help guide the committee through a feasibility process that will enable the committee to determine the needs of the organizations listed in Donna Morris' will as well as other groups and the public. Based upon the results of the feasibility study, the committee will work with the architectural firm to design the new facility.

16. Who is LMN Architects and why was LMN selected as the consultant for this project?

LMN Architects is a Seattle firm that has designed performing arts centers, conference centers, and combinations of the two throughout the country since 1979, and many of those projects were preceded by predesign studies of the type that will now be conducted in Port Angeles. LMN was the winner of the 2016 National Arts Architectural Firms Award, one of the most prestigious nationally recognized awards made to architectural firms throughout the United States. LMN has vast experience in designing major performing venues such as Benaroya Hall and McCaw Hall in Seattle, the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts in San Antonio, multi-purpose facilities in smaller communities such as Mt. Vernon, Wenatchee and Federal Way, plus local experience in designing the Science and Technology Building at Peninsula College and the new Waterfront Promenade.

17. Why do you have to spend the money to hire a consultant? Can't you do the analysis yourself? There are so many talented people on the Peninsula that could volunteer.

The committee believes the size and scope of the project and the benefits and impact it will have on the Port Angeles community warrants hiring a professional architect consultant to assist the committee. A performing and fine arts facility on the waterfront will provide tremendous opportunities for the Port Angeles community, and the committee is committed to making sure this project is done right. The committee intends to take into account input from community organizations and members and incorporate that input into the plans drafted by the architect consultant.

18. How do you intend to apprise the public of major decision points and progress?

The committee will work closely with the organizations identified in the will and keep them informed and involved in the process. In addition, the committee intends to update the public through information placed on the Peninsula College Foundation's website and through periodic press releases to local news organizations.

19. Where will the building be located?

Currently, the committee intends to locate the building at the Oak Street property in downtown Port Angeles.

20. What will the building look like?

The committee does not yet know what the performing arts center will look like. Conceptual designs will be created by the architect consultant after necessary input has been received from the organizations identified in Donna Morris' will and other community stake holders.

21. Will the facility be designed to attract outside art/performance opportunities?

Yes, the facility is envisioned as a destination for both local and visiting performers, artists and attendees.

22. Who will be entitled to use the building?

The performing arts center will be open for use by local performing and fine arts organizations and others subject to reasonable rules and regulations to be developed by the Port Angeles Waterfront Center, a nonprofit organization that has been formed to own and operate the facility.

23. Who will own and operate the building?

The committee, the estate and the Peninsula College Foundation agreed to the formation of a private nonprofit corporation that will own and operate the facility. The name of the nonprofit corporation is the Port Angeles Waterfront Center (“PAWC”). It is a charitable nonprofit entity that qualifies as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization under the federal tax code. The PAWC board of directors is composed of the same individuals that currently serve on the PAC committee.

24. How will the building and operations be supported and maintained in the future?

The terms of the Donna Morris’ will direct the committee to earmark a portion of her gift as an endowment for future operation of the facility. Organizations using the facility will also pay user fees. Additionally, the PAWC nonprofit organization that owns and operates the facility, will seek grants and charitable contributions that will be added to the endowment established to support operation of the facility.

25. Will operations become a burden to the City of Port Angeles in the future?

PAWC, a nonprofit corporation, will own and operate the facility independent of the City of Port Angeles and Peninsula College. The City of Port Angeles and Peninsula College may choose to enter into contracts with PAWC for specific services to be performed by the nonprofit. This may generate income that supports the operation of the facility. However, any such agreements will need to be supported by the City Council and College with appropriate contractual agreements in place.

26. How do you plan to work with the Lincoln Theater owner and other performing arts groups and venues so as not to duplicate efforts?

The committee intends to work with other groups that own and operate alternative performing and fine art venues. It is the committee’s objective to construct a facility that compliments, not competes, with the facilities that already exist in Port Angeles. The committee will reach out to organizations that have existing facilities to make sure this project supports the efforts of all organizations to promote the cultural vitality of our community.

27. Is this going to force the shut-down of existing facilities?

The committee does not intend to force other facilities to shut down. The nonprofit corporation that owns and operates the performing and fine arts facility will work with other existing organizations in an effort to complement their programs and activities.

28. Could the gift from the Donna Morris estate be used to upgrade the existing high school auditorium or construct a smaller facility adjacent to the auditorium?

Dorothy Field offered to purchase the Oak Street property as the location for the Performing and Fine Arts Center. Prior to accepting her gift, the committee considered alternative sites to locate the facility. The Oak Street property was determined to be the best site to locate the facility for a number of reasons, including its central location within the Port Angeles community, its accessibility to both Port Angeles residents and tourists, available parking, and the positive impacts that locating the facility on the Oak Street property would have both culturally and economically for the entire community. Ultimately, the committee determined that locating the Performing Arts Center in downtown Port Angeles would have a more significant, positive impact for the entire community than locating it on the high school campus.

29. How will this project impact the high school auditorium facility?

The committee is committed to developing a Performing Arts facility that compliments, not competes, with other existing facilities within the Port Angeles community. Locating the Performing Arts facility on the waterfront will create and expanded opportunities for art organizations to grow within this community. The committee believes this can be done in a way that does not adversely impact other venues such as the high school auditorium.

30. Is the committee coordinating its efforts with the Port Angeles School Board, PACE and Friends of the PA High School Performing Arts Center and will these organizations have an opportunity to provide input on the project?

The committee has already reached out to the school district, PACE and Friends of the PA High School Performing Arts Center. Each of these groups will have an opportunity to provide input in the feasibility study process. The committee believes that the new facility can be made available to not only the organization's identified in Donna Morris' will, but also other user groups such as the Port Angeles School District.

31. How will the PAWC facility affect the school district's ability to successfully pass a school bond?

The committee supports a bond to upgrade the Port Angeles High School. The committee also believes that building a new performing arts facility on the Oak Street property will make Port Angeles a better place to live and will encourage voters within the school district to support school facility upgrades. A school bond is funded through a tax which is voted on by citizens within the Port Angeles School District. The source of funds used to build the Port Angeles Waterfront Center is entirely different than bond and/or levy taxes. The source of funds will include charitable contributions from private citizens, foundations and other granting organizations.

32. Will this facility be designed to serve as a conference center as well as a performing and fine arts center?

It is clear that Port Angeles is in need of a conference center. The committee is considering designing the facility to include a conference center. The architect consultant hired to assist the committee will conduct a needs assessment that will be used to determine whether a conference center is feasible and can be combined with a performing and fine arts center.

33. How will parking be addressed?

There are currently several publicly owned parking lots in the downtown area. The architect consultant will address parking needs as part of the feasibility study.

34. How will money be raised to construct a larger project which includes a conference center?

The committee envisions using existing contributions, which total \$10.5 million, as leverage toward securing grants and other funding. Traditional charitable fundraising methods involving businesses and individuals will be employed as well.

35. How will the project impact downtown Port Angeles?

The Oak Street property in downtown Port Angeles was selected as the site to build this facility because its accessibility and visibility will contribute to the economic success of our entire community. The performing and fine arts facility will serve as an anchor for downtown Port Angeles. It will be within walking distance from the ferry and other transportation hubs, lodging, food and many businesses. The project will complement the millions of dollars of recent investment in the downtown and waterfront areas.

36. What is the timeline for the project?

The architect-consultant's predesign study and report will frame the timeline for construction of the project.

37. This is a wonderful idea, but our community has so many other needs, like families without jobs, homes or food. Wouldn't it be better to spend this money for the needs of our community rather than wasting it on a performing and fine arts center?

Donna Morris envisioned a performing and fine arts center in Port Angeles. The money that she has given must be used for this purpose. The committee's goal is to construct a performing and fine arts center that is beautiful and has a positive and lasting cultural and economic impact on the Port Angeles community. Building amenities such as a performing arts center in the community increases the local tax base through improvements to the Oak Street property and economic activity related to ongoing facility use. There will be an increase in jobs, both on and off site, which will also increase tax revenue. In the long term this provides more sustained support for those in need.