



CITY OF EVANSVILLE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
JONATHAN WEINZAPFEL

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, September 21, 2011

CONTACTS:

Katy Nimnicht
Communications Director
Office of Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel
(812) 436-4962 Office
(812) 760-5089 Mobile
knimnicht@evansvillegov.org
www.EvansvilleGov.org

Ann Ennis
President
Keep Evansville Beautiful
(812) 425-4461 Office
(812) 483-5671 Mobile
annennis@sbcglobal.net
www.KeepEvansvilleBeautiful.org

Unique Partnership Forms to Preserve Downtown Park

Kempf Family, KEB, ONB, and City Join Forces for Site at Corner of Fourth and Main Streets

(EVANSVILLE, IN) – September 21, 2011 – Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel was joined today by representatives of the Gregory and Edwina Kempf Family (“Kempf Family”), Keep Evansville Beautiful (“KEB”), Old National Bank, Evansville Board of Park Commissioners, and Evansville Board of Public Works to announce that a unique public/private/non-profit partnership has been established to maintain the site at the corner of Fourth St. and Main St. in Downtown Evansville as a public park for at least the next five years.

“Green space is as vital to the quality of life in Downtown Evansville as it is in any other part of the City of Evansville. The number of residents, business people and visitors who utilize and enjoy this park, this green oasis in the middle of our central commercial district, every day is phenomenal,” said Mayor Weinzapfel. “This is yet another example of the kind of positive results that come from collaboration and creativity.”

For a number of years through late 2010, a large portion of the site had been owned and maintained by Old National Bank, with the remainder owned by the Kempf Family, represented by Jeff Kempf. When Old National Bank put its portion of the site up for sale late last year, the Kempf Family expressed its desire to ensure that the site is protected and maintained as a public park. Sharing that desire, Old National Bank sold the property to the Gregory and Edwina Kempf Family for well below market value, essentially “contributing” more than \$380,000 to the preservation of the park.

– more –

“Old National Bank is pleased to partner in this project to maintain and enhance green space in Downtown Evansville,” said Kathy Schoettlin, Old National Bank Community Relations and Communications Officer. “This park will be utilized and enjoyed even more as a result of the architectural redesign of the park and the extensive business and residential development that is taking place Downtown.”

Recognizing that they do not necessarily have the resources or experience to undertake such a project, the Kempf Family approached KEB about KEB playing a direct role not only in the preservation of the park, but also in the revitalization and ongoing maintenance of the site. KEB and the Kempf Family then reached out to the City of Evansville and other partners to formulate a unique, mutually-beneficial partnership.

“The Kempf Family is very excited to have this partnership with the City and KEB and look forward to a long-term relationship that not only will benefit the Downtown community but the entire community as a whole. Our family has been very blessed over the years and we are very pleased to be able to share and give back to our community in this way,” said Jeff Kempf. “I would like to give special thanks to Ann Ennis and David Herrenbruck for all the effort put toward this project and am looking forward to working with them in the future.

“Keep Evansville Beautiful has a great history of installing and caring for public landscaping, and of engaging the community in these efforts,” said KEB President Ann Ennis. “We are humbled that the Kempf Family sought to work with us and will do everything in our power to ensure success. This renewed park will be a jewel for the renewed Downtown business and entertainment district.”

The KEB Board of Directors endorsed the partnership yesterday morning, and the City of Evansville Board of Park Commissioners voted today to approve an agreement whereby the City will lease the site from the Kempf Family for \$1.00 per year for five years, with the option of two five-year renewals. This lease agreement will not only protect the site and ensure its continued use as a public park, but will also afford the site the protections (such as coverage under the City’s liability insurance policy) of City-owned parks and facilities.

To ensure that this new park facility does not detract from the Evansville Parks Department’s ability to maintain and operate existing public park facilities, the City and the Kempf Family have agreed that KEB shall serve as the park manager, overseeing the upcoming redesign of the park, ongoing maintenance, park rental, event scheduling, etc.

KEB anticipates that \$150,000 in cash and in-kind donations will be needed for initial redevelopment of the park. As such, the City has committed to make a one-time restricted donation of \$50,000 from the County Option Income Tax Fund to a special fund established by KEB. The Evansville Board of Public Works will review and is expected to approve the lease agreement with specific respect to this donation and other provisions, such as general trash/waste collection and disposal services, at its regular meeting tomorrow, September 22, at 1:30 p.m. in the Kevin Winterheimer Chambers, Civic Center Room 301. The Kempf Family will also donate \$50,000, and KEB will seek at least \$50,000 in additional cash and in-kind donations toward the effort. The Kempf Family will work with KEB regarding the park’s redesign, which will be subject to approval from the Evansville Redevelopment Commission.

KEB also estimates that at least \$6,000 per year will be needed to maintain the park. So that this project doesn't deplete KEB's own operating fund, KEB is working to secure an anonymous matching grant which will also be used for Downtown image/greenscapes, including an assurance of maintenance funds for this renewed park. The KEB Board has committed to securing maintenance funds if the grant is not received.

Utility costs related to the use of the park will be the responsibility of the Kempf Family. The Kempf Family will also be responsible for all real property taxes and all special assessments, while the City agrees to pay all personal property taxes assessed to the property with respect to any property specifically designated as belonging to the City and located on the site.

In addition, the Kempf Family retains final control over the naming rights of the park and any sponsorship opportunities available on the park site.