

ARTS MATTERS: COMMUNITY PREVAILS

PREMIER GREG SELINGER MAKES AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

✧ Merchants Corner Project ✧

With an \$11 M investment from the province and the solid backing of the community, the old Merchants Corner Hotel on Selkirk Avenue is set to undergo a major transformation.

A large crowd gathered outside the old Merchants Hotel on Selkirk Avenue on Tuesday, June 24, 2014 for an important announcement by Premier Greg Selinger about the Merchants Corner Project. But it was more a celebration than an

and his friends would cash in empty beer bottles at the Hotel after the weekend. “For our children,” we will go “from beer bottles to books,” he declared, to the approval of the community members and other friends and supporters of the Merchants Corner Project.

announcement. Against a cheery backdrop of posters, banners and artwork, the Honorable Kevin Chief, MLA for Point Douglas and Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities, opened the event by recalling how, when growing up in the neighbourhood, he

Selinger announced that with an investment of \$11m from the province, the 100-year-old building will be redeveloped as an educational hub, a community gathering place, and, literally, a home to many as

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Kevin Chief

The Honourable Kevin Chief, MLA for Point Douglas, Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities, and a UWinnipeg alumnus, declared we will go “from beer bottles to books” with the redevelopment of the old Merchants Hotel.



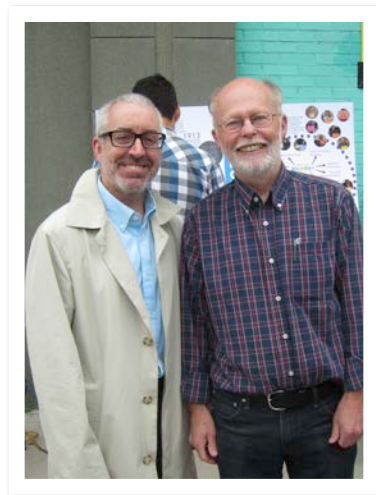
✧ Merchants Corner Project Announcement cont'd ✧

DEVELOPMENT PLANS INCLUDE THE RELOCATION OF WINNIPEG'S DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AND INNER-CITY STUDIES TO THE NEW SPACE



Greg Selinger

Premier Greg Selinger, far right, added that the Merchants Corner Project will bring with it a change from "hotels to homes."



Glenn Moulaison, Dean of Arts, with Jim Silver, UIC Dept. Chair

it will include 30 units of much-needed affordable housing. The University of Winnipeg's Department of Urban and Inner-City Studies will relocate there along with the Community Education Development Association: Pathways to Education Program. CEDA: Pathways will work to ensure there is support for youth at-risk to finish high school. The Department of UIC Studies will help adults to achieve Mature Student status

and pursue post-secondary education.

Jim Silver, Chair of UIC, said "this is great example of what can be achieved when the North End Community comes together to create a vision and a plan and when the Provincial government—which deserves a great deal of credit on this and other North End projects—supports us with serious funding. This project, with its innovative approach to education, will be transformative."



Pictured here Greg Selinger with Dept. Chair of UIC Studies, Jim Silver; faculty member, Shauna MacKinnon; and staff members, Cheyenne Henry and Laurel Cassels



Read on for more of what was said.



STAN MCKAY

Elder Stan McKay opened with the blessing, saying “It’s about human beings in family.”

MICHAEL CHAMPAGNE

Michael Champagne, Member of the Board of the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC), described the project as an example of what happens when the people of a community collaborate. Here, he says, “everyone has a place in the circle.” Champagne is a driving force among the progressive youth in the North End and a student in the Department of Urban and Inner-City Studies. He sees the Merchants Corner Project as part of a larger



change and says the “North End rising” slogan is catching on.



PETER BJORNSON

The Honourable Peter Bjornson, MLA for Gimli and the Minister of Housing and Community Development, said that the project is “transformative for the community because of the vision of the community.”



KATHY MALLET

Community leader Kathy Mallett remembered working on Selkirk Avenue in the 1980’s when there was a single community agency on the street. The Merchants Corner Project, she says, will be the “jewel of Selkirk Avenue” and the “hope of the North End.”

LLOYD AXWORTHY

University of Winnipeg President, speaking on behalf of the University, extended his congratulations to Michael Champagne on NECRC’s work and to Sherman Kreiner and Jeff Palmer of the University of Winnipeg’s Community Renewal Corporation, and described the Department of Urban and Inner-City Studies Department Chair, Jim Silver, and faculty member, Shauna MacKinnon as “pioneers in our university.”

Axworthy stated that part of the mission of the University is to be a partner and to build a better community and a better city. He went on to describe community, in the words of the great American community activist, Saul Alinsky, as “a place where people prevail” and concluded by declaring “You have prevailed!”

