

# Design firm hired to finalize Brownsville stage project

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An ongoing Brownsville project will move to its next phase following action taken by the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority.

In unanimous action of the authority members present on Tuesday, Studio for Spatial Practice LLC of Pittsburgh was hired to complete schematic designs and construction documents for the Snowden Square Park Project at a cost of \$35,250.

The urban park project was spearheaded by a group of Brownsville Area High School students, who along with community officials and residents, wanted to aid in the revitalization of their downtown, said Andrew French, authority executive director.

“It has been a cooperative effort,” said French of the three-year planning process.

The nearly 2-acre parcel along Market Street where the project is to be located, is owned by the redevelopment authority.

In addition to the planning, the high school students and project supporters have applied for grants from various agencies and initiated a local fund drive — totaling about \$300,000 — to defray the design and construction costs. The Heinz Foundation contributed \$50,000 of the total amount.



## Revitalizing a community

A project to build a stage downtown started by a group of Brownsville Area High School students in the Students in Action organization has grown into a \$300,000 project to renovate Snowden Square and build a large stage decorated by salvaged items relating to the borough's history. Pictured in this May 13 photo are members of the Students in Action team at Brownsville Area High School with the original model for the stage and park redevelopment idea.

“Now the funding is all in place for the first phase that includes the construction of a stage and some green space,” said French. “We’re going to make the money go as far as possible.”

French said that he anticipates future phases will be needed to complete the entire park project.

“The students have been the spark plug that has pushed this project forward,” he said. “There are likely some people who thought we would not reach this level.

“These young people have shown an interest in their community. They have indicated that they have pride in Brownsville — the place they grew up and want to remain to raise their families.

“This is positive news for Brownsville.”

Bids for the construction will likely be advertised before September.

The hiring of Studio for Spatial Practice was supported by board members Paul Bortz, Jonathon Garlow and Dale Malinzak. Phil Michael left the meeting prior to the vote on the matter.

Board member Dee John was absent from the meeting.

In other action, the board earmarked \$85,000 to City Mission — Living Stones Inc. and \$168,000 to Fayette County Community Action.

The county received a \$262,487 state Department of Community and Economic Development Emergency Solutions Grant to defray services’ costs incurred by the two agencies.

In other action, the board also conducted the following business:

n Agreed to renew a one-year lease agreement with James Photographic owner James Stepanick at a monthly cost of \$542. The business is located within the redevelopment authority office building.

n Learned Dick’s Sporting Goods store is nearing completion. French also reported that Holiday Inn Express, Mike Wood Toyota and Hilton Garden Inn construction projects are ongoing. All the businesses are located within the Fayette Business Park.