*Confidential*

**A Business and Marketing Plan**

**for**

***The All Nations Art Retreat Center***

***at***

***Saxonia House***

***Fillmore, Wisconsin***

A white and black cover of a building

Description automatically generated

**Prepared for: The Ruth Foundation for the Arts**

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**1.0 Executive Summary**

The Historic Saxonia House property (8 rural acres just east of the village of Fillmore in north east Washington County, Wisconsin) has been owned since 1990 by Friends of the Saxonia House Inc. (FOSH). FOSH is a 501 ©3 tax exempt educational organization dedicated to the restoration, promotion, and activation of the 1855 Saxonia House, its role in early Wisconsin history, its connection to mid-19th century Romantic Landscape Painting, and it is an example of rare and traditional German half-timber building style (Fachwerk.) Essentially, it is a multifaceted rural “Art Museum” destination offering transformational and innovative programs both in the arts and in Wisconsin history.

This program builds on the seven critical things that a visitor wants and is a short 26-mile drive from the edge of its major marketing area of Milwaukee. \*

**1.1 Why an Art Retreat Center?**

There are several reasons for an art retreat center at the historic Saxonia House. Romantic landscape paintings (1840-1900) remain popular today because they capture pleasing idealistic cultural environments and detailed images of nature. They are soothing to view. Large framed original and reproduction paintings are often used in attorney offices, clinics, hospitals, and quality retail establishments such as hotels and restaurants. People enjoy getting lost in these paintings.

Historically, it was through romantic landscape paintings that people discovered their glorious past and saw a glimpse of a brighter future. The original era of romantic landscape painting covered the same period and reasons that led to the development of the Saxonia House. In particular, one single year-1848, later called “The Spring of Nations,” heralded national revolutions in more than 40 European countries. It marked the peak of Romanticism, and it defined European 19th century art and politics. Turning to an imaginary past, Romanticism brought previously ignored legacies to light. Romanticism drew inspiration from overlooked European legends and folk traditions.

\*According to the **Wisconsin Heritage Tourism Initiative** project (1990-1993) conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism and the National Trust for Historic Preservation the seven basic needs of a tourist are: Scenery, Lodging, Food, Gift Shop Sales, Accurate Information, A “Hands-On” Experience, and a chance to make New Friends. **All seven of these will be available at Saxonia House.**

This all took place before the invention of photography. Future European and American landscape painters often began work as engravers in publishing companies and newspapers. These highly talented people illustrated local news and human images on wood and metal surfaces. Some later moved into fine art careers. Their rural and naturalistic paintings often captured a world of wellbeing, personal freedom and beauty compared to the chaos, disease and squalor often found in urban areas of the time. These artists were revolutionaries whose paintings helped define a better world for all.

Lastly, and not widely known, southeast Wisconsin was a preferred destination for politically minded German intellectuals, visionaries, artists, musicians and utopian thinking farmers. Using the format of a stimulating art retreat center, Saxonia House will creatively tell the exciting story that formed Milwaukee into the “German Athens” and power house of art, culture, manufacturing, brewing, community parks, and excellent educational institutions. In addition to the Germanic story lines, landscape paintings of Native American, African American and additional Wisconsin 19th century European immigrant groups will be featured using rotating annual exhibitions.

The people who built the Saxonia House were part of a revolutionary movement for freedom and democracy and built the Saxonia House as a gathering place for like-minded individuals. And so, it can be again!

1.1 **Program Understandings:**

1. FOSH intends to never have major outstanding debt.
2. The financial goal of this plan is to be entirely self-supporting while offering an entertaining and fresh approach to art and history education.
3. There are three phases of project and program development envisioned in the Business and Marketing Plan. 2025-2030, 2030-2035, and 2035-2040. The first phase covers five years using the unrestored house as a **“work-in-progress”** run by volunteers only on week-ends. The second phase is a restored house with special events, some lodging and educational classes. The third phase finds a fully functioning property with all the seven things a visitor wants, ie. lodging, food, scenery, etc. All three phases will be shortened or lengthened depending on obtaining adiquite development funding.
4. Eventually, there will be 20-30 guest rooms in recycled historic buildings brought onto the property and adapted for guest lodging.
5. A fully developed phase III property will offer two distinct weekly scheduled programs: Weekdays will use an **Adult Vacation School** format with overnight lodging, meals, classes, entertainment, etc. If unused lodging rooms are available personal and group retreats will be welcomed. On weekends the property will welcome walk-in **“Day Tripper”** families and groups to enjoy guided tours of the restored buildings and grounds, a beer garden with a sandwich shop, museum store, and art and music demonstrations. Regional plein-air painters will be encouraged to set up and paint this property as has historically happened at other rural roadside inns in popular Eastern tourist destinations.
6. There will also be a rotating year-round **“Artist-in-Resident”** demonstrating and selling Romantic Landscape paintings.
7. At least four annual special events will be offered that may include: Log Cabin Day, a “Shootzenfest”, Octoberfest, and a Holiday Art Show.

2.0 **Corporation Overview/Background:**

2.1 This Business and Marketing Plan was prepared by Alan C. Pape the current president of FOSH since 2018. Mr. Pape is currently the lead in restoring and overseeing the Saxonia House project. The first president at the time of incorporation in 1990 was attorney Mary Williams from Janesville, Wisconsin. Mrs. Williams is a descendant of the original owners of the Saxonia House, Ernst and Liberta Klessig.

Over a period of three years, Mary and her team of volunteers, raised more than $100,000 to purchase the property and place it on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, designated it as a Washington County Historic Landmark, completed professional preliminary and final *Historic Building Reports* and a *Project Feasibility Report*. In time they had more than 50 paying members, generated much publicity, published quarterly newsletters and sought to inform and motivate the local citizenry. Like any other historic preservation project, it was found to be tough going without major funding sources. Volunteer enthusiasm wore thin, buildings needed new roofs, liability insurance and property taxes had to be paid. Unfortunately, by 2018, the property was in a state of “nearly lost hope” with only regular lawn mowing and a few private guided tours being given. Currently, there are 36 paid members, a new web site, and an active and engaged board of directors. It is hoped that because of its historic importance this property will eventually rise to the level of “*National Landmark*” status.

2.2 **The Management Team:**

* James Derringer: Retired local businessman, former Farmington Town chairman, volunteer fireman, and host of many drop-by Saxonia House tours.
* Rhonda Hare: (FOSH Secretary) School teacher, local antique & craft shop owner.
* Fredrick Klessig: (Vice-president) Klessig Family Historian, retired Chicago fireman.
* Alison Witt-Janssen: Graphic artist, a Klessig family descendant.
* Alan C. Pape: (President) Retired professional historic preservation planner and former director of Wade House historic site.
* Ed Ritger: Attorney specializing in rural property and family legal assistance.
* Greg Zahn: (Treasurer) Former architect specializing in historic renovation.

(Please see website for detailed descriptions. **saxoniahouse.org**)

**2.3 Business Advisors:**

* Dr. Michael Besch; Retired Concordia University professor of history and business management.
* Dr. Robert Teske; Management and fund-raising Consultant to Non-profits organizations. Former executive director of the Cedarburg Cultural Center and The Milwaukee Historical Society.
* James Pape; Historic Hotels and retail center, Cedarburg, WI.
* Steve Rewolinski; Johnson Bank, Business Relations Manager, Green Bay, WI.
* Tryg Jacobson; retired Jacobson/Rost Advertising, Sheboygan, WI.
* Lola Roeh; former owner of The Osthoff Resort and Conference Center, Elk Heart Lake, WI.
* Cary James “Rip: O’Dwanny, President, Harp & Eagle Ltd., Irish Inns and Tours, Green Bay, WI.
* Richard Hartman, Owner, consultant, collector, Gallery of Wisconsin Art, Fox Point, WI.

**2.4** **Property History:**

As mentioned earlier, this classic, unusually large, rural Saxonia House was built in 1855 by savvy politically leaning immigrants from Saxony Germany to be a public gathering place for intellectuals, artisans, and utopian thinking farmers. Besides being a residence for the owners, the main building served several functions that included a store and post office, an inn, a tavern, a beer hall/dance hall, and rooms for the local gymnastic Turner and the Humanitist Society. (Reported to have over 400 books in their library)

By 1860 a working “farm brewery” was in full operation on the property producing slightly less than 1000 barrels per year until the early 1880’s. Unfortunately, the small wooden and stone brewery buildings were destroyed in the 1980’s but the large stone and mortar vaulted “Beer Cave” still sits into a hill 600 feet southwest of the main house.

In short, this property was a very busy place before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. The restoration and interpretation period of 1862 was chosen for the house because the owners, Ernst and Liberta Klessig, were still alive and all of their children were already born, the brewery was in operation. It was also the year of the “Great Indian Scare” in eastern Wisconsin.

The Saxonia House structure was built using a rare and significant half-timber-framing technique that used hand hewn tamarack timbers held together by pegged mortice and tenon joints and brick infill “nogging.” Each framing timber was “precut” and numbered at another site and brought to the Klessig foundation by horse drawn wagons for erection. The exterior walls were stuccoed over with light buff colored lime plaster that gave it a stately Germanic impression of an American “Greek Revival” appearance that was popular in 1850’s Wisconsin.

Over time the house and property gradually lost most of its original functions and slowly became a large residence for a succession of different farm families. A dairy barn was built ca. 1880 and the original dancehall/beer hall addition was destroyed ca. 1920. The original 79-acre farm was parceled out in 1990 leaving only eight-acres for museum development.

3.0 **Products and Services:**

The restored and activated Saxonia House and completed Master Plan will be an innovative Art Retreat Center featuring lodging, food, guided site tours, a museum store, special events, art retreats, an artist-in-residence, a beer garden, young farm animals, historic crops and gardens, art demonstrations, a reconstructed wood fired bake house, lectures, and hands-on workshops/classes. The program is particularly designed to encourage socializing through formal and casual interaction among its guests and hosts.

The following products and services are designed to entertain and educate visitors who will happily share their experiences with their friends and neighbors. “Word-of-Mouth” advertising will be key to the financial sustainability of the Saxonia House. The program will strive to have all overnight guests be on a first-name-bases by the end of the week. Many will consider memberships, and perhaps return with friends as well as offer long-term support of the organization. People naturally want to be a part of something that is as satisfying as what the Saxonia House will become. This business concept is based on the success of the Harp & Eagle Ltd.’s weekly Irish Tour program established in 2000 in Milwaukee and Athlone, Ireland that Alan C. Pape help create, promote and manage.

3.1 **The income producing programs for a “non-profit educational organization”:**

1. **Memberships**: Providing a membership program at Saxonia House is essential for long term “buy in.” If this was a for-profit project, visitors thrilled with the program, would enjoy having stock in the company. The Green Bay Packers football team took advantage of this concept and sold stock as a method to offer a more tangible way for the thousands of fans to have a sense of belonging while raising additional revenue. Using the existing corporation, Friends of the Saxonia House Inc., will provide this membership “buy in” concept and opportunity.
2. **Lodging:** Historically, Saxonia House was a place of lodging. Contemporary week-long class and “retreatants” will generally come from longer distances than nearby neighbors and need over-night and meal accommodations. Like any retreat experience a visitor should be on site at least two complete days to get into the “rhythm” of the place. Lodging will not be located in the main house but in rescued historic pioneer buildings brought onto the site and cleverly adapted for contemporary visitors. (Please see appendix #1 the Master Plan.) Weekly unused rooms will be available to any visitor wanting to just be a part and sample a very special cultural offering not available anywhere else.
3. **Week Day Classes**: Stimulating and unusual topics/themes such as learning to paint the “Romantic Landscape,” the history of Milwaukee’s German culture, the world of beer brewing, historic restoration and preservation skills, wood fired bake oven construction and use, gardening for health, famous composers, writers, and poets, discovering HYGGE (The European life of happiness), and log cabin building 101, will be offered to week day participants.
4. **Museum Store sales**: Approximately 30% of income will come from sales at the Saxonia House museum store. Using a special sales building called “The Straw Barn Store” or by the Saxonia House mail order catalog, distinctive private label products will be available including clothing and country furnishings to decorate one’s own pioneer log lodging structure. *Saxonia* *House* beer and other private label food products will be offered.
5. **Day Tours to other art sites and programs**: Optional off-site dailyguided tours with interesting lunch offerings will include The John Michael Kohler Art Center, Art Preserve, Waelderhaus, Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden and the Mary Nohl Lake Cottage Environment.
6. **Food and beverage sales:** Week Day participants will have a three meal per day food service available while weekenders will only be offered the Sandwich Shop and the Beer Garden options. The Beer Garden will be fashioned after the widely popular public beer garden at Estabrook Park in Milwaukee. This river side park location uses custom tables and seats adjacent to a German style half-timber and stuccoed kitchen/sales counter/ public rest room structure.
7. **Week Day student and retreater admission sales:** These sales are expected to be 30% of total income and patterned after the “Clearing” in Door County at approximately $1,000.00 per participant for a five-day experience. (i.e., $200 per day average cost.)
8. **Week End admission sales**: Day-Trippers and walk-ins will account for 30% of the income. On the hour guided and self-guided options will be available only on the weekend for this easy to walk 8-acre property filled with interesting architecture, gardens and landscaping. Competitive ticket pricing similarly used at other Wisconsin historic sites like the Wade House historic property in Greenbush will be used at Saxonia House. Adults: $15.00/18.00. All students and children under 12: $6.00.
9. **Special event merchant space rental**: The rental of outside sales space under tents will bring additional income during the four special event week-ends per year..
10. **Building rental**: Limited occasion rental of the existing buildings will be considered as demand is proven.
11. **Annual European tour sales**: A VIP and premium Saxonia House experience is envisioned as an annual guided European Trip Program similar to what the Friestadt Pomeranian Historical Society presently offers every other year.
12. E**ndowment Fund:** Interest from a $500,000 corporate endowment fund will help to maintain the property in perpetuity.

4. **Market Analysis:**

It is understood that it will be nearly impossible to analyze Saxonia House as a future art retreat center in the context of comparisons because there are no real comparisons in Wisconsin. There is also no established “need” for this type of high-level art immersion experience. Besides the ***Clearing*** in Door County and the ***Shake Rag School for the Arts*** in Mineral Point Wisconsin, the closest program to what Saxonia House will become is the ***Dillman’s Bay Resort*** in Lac du Flambeau, WI. Dillman’s is a traditional Northwoods Wisconsin resort that has done very well offering arts and crafts programs. Lodging is offered in cottages and cabins. The beautiful lake and woods setting is an important factor. The resort caters to families and seeks the reunion business but has no art collection and is 350 miles from Milwaukee.

The Saxonia House restoration project is actually an outgrowth of the multi-ethnic Old World Wisconsin (a 576-acre outdoor museum 30 miles west of Milwaukee) which has 60,000 visitors each year and a budget of nearly $2 million. OWW does not offer over-night lodging, full sit-down meals, hands-on experiences, formal class and lecture opportunities, an ample selection of resale items, and few opportunities for making new friends. It does provide trained guides who supply accurate information about early pioneer life in Wisconsin and a quick lunch option. Over a period of 12 years, Alan C. Pape, the writer of this plan helped create this historic attraction.

In the best of German/American traditions, it appears that a restored and activated Saxonia House property could serve a market as a multi-faceted rural art retreat center. The Saxonia House could develop significant profit streams that would enable the property to grow beyond mere preservation to a fully activated historic site connecting the topic of Romantic Landscape Paintings with large multi-national movements. It will educate and inspire people to understand and appreciate the widespread awakening that challenged the authoritarian and ruling elites who oppressed the everyday European working peasants and underclass.

If this vision is accurate, the Saxonia House’s approach to operating a historic site could well stand as a model for preserving other significant properties, replacing other limited models that too often fail to engage the imagination, visitation, that results in a small number of visitors. The Saxonia House vision presents a preserved, vital, living historic property that serves a purpose, is appreciated, involves and contributes to the community and engenders loyalty and support that go well beyond local interests. It will in time develop a broader base to include the regional and national artist and immigrant communities and international organizations and businesses.

4.1 **Overview:**

Besides the fact that 60% of Wisconsin residents have an ancestorial connection to the German culture, and may also be followers of history, the arts, and reappreciate “hands-on” rural educational experiences. The Saxonia House will always be especially attractive to beer, brat, and good times folks. An old time “Bowling on the Green” course will be available during Beer Garden weekend hours as well as a small assemblage of baby farm animals to pet and feed. Friendly cats maybe living in the shed and a house dog will be available. A guide, for example, in period clothing depicting an Irish farmer in Ireland might greet weekend visitors and engage them with the problem of the 1848 Irish famine. “Should we risk going to America or stay here and possibly starve?” These types of theatrical and emotional connected offerings can be part of the historic site experiences at Saxonia House.

As the reader can visualize***, The All Nations Art Retreat Center at Saxonia House,*** will be a completely new offering within a “historic and intellectual experience category” offering innovative new possibilities when existing models and sites too often fail to deliver. The fundamental vision for the Art Retreat Center is a preserved, vital, living historic property that provides programs that link the world of art and national strivings for freedom of expression and individual initiative. The entire program will also slow the visitors down, “to sit a spell” and breathe in the memorable moments of **Gemütlichkeit!** (A state of friendliness, and belonging, often describing the atmosphere at a German beer garden. Saxonia House will be like visiting an Oktoberfest in Germany where one is likely to hear the song “Ein Prost der Gemütlichkeit” a toast to coziness.) It is time to celebrate human striving for a better life!

**4.2** **Target Market**

Similar to the adult vacation school called the Clearing in Door county, the target market for the week day retreat programs are upper income adults from Metropolitan Milwaukee and Chicago. These people are eager to experience something different in the arts, who appreciate history, and who frequent places like Old World Wisconsin at Eagle. These adults have attended Milwaukee’s ethnic festivals, have done world traveling, and have enjoyed seeing the landscape paintings at local and national art museums. These potential visitors may already be fans of 19th century landscape paintings like the von Schleintz collection of German folk landscape paintings at the Milwaukee Art Museum.

Week end visitors will be any age families desiring to leave their urban environment for a brief adventure with art and culture in the countryside.

**Old Milwaukee Wealth:**

Families like Vogel, Brumder, Pabst, Trostel, Schlesinger, Uihlein, Kieckhefer, Harnishfeger, Miller, Gallun, Falk, Cudahy and Bradley come to mind as a group of Milwaukeean’s who in the past have supported art and cultural projects and would enjoy recommending that 24-mile Sunday countryside drive to Saxonia House. Many of these familiar families were part of the building of Milwaukee’s German/American culture that held numerous breweries and other successful industries.

Saxonia House will also seek a broader base than the wealthy Milwaukeeians. Among the visitors who represent segments of a broader base are individuals who value craft beer, lean and tasty bratwurst, and special blended mustards, and wood fired bake oven breads. These are interests that will attract a significant number of visitors who have also been attending the Milwaukee summer ethnic festivals on the Lake.

***RECENT THINKING:*** *Using the “All Nations” theme, a fresh new effort to attract underserved audiences can now be offered. Two of the guest room buildings at Saxonia House could be minority designed and built 21century ethnically and culturally inspired houses by and for African and Native Americans. These two ultra contemporary houses will be situated in their own landscaped settings between the main building cluster and the beer cave on the north facing hillside that overlooks the entire site. Examples of these building types have never been built in America and promise to bring nation-wide attention to this otherwise European themed destination. Collaboration with the architecture school at UW-Milwaukee and existing minority organizations will be stressed to help bring about two award winning designs.*

All who come to Saxonia House will view creative videos and exhibits of not only the above-mentioned new houses, but also the traditional German, Norwegian, Italian or Danish 19th architecture and romantic landscape paintings and the impetus that brought those images to life following the upheavals in Europe.

Visitors might just remark “Now I understand how all of this is connected to the Old and New World with its painters daring to record nature in new ways that helped to bring a sense of peace and order to their canvases, writers offering hope to a troubled world during the 1848 revolution, and musicians, poets, and intellectuals who risked their lives to bring fresh ideas of forward progress and then had to flee Germany and other countries to the United States. They brought their revolutionary zeal with them to Milwaukee and created the “German Athens” of the 19th century!”

***Destination Saxonia House*** will also attempt to avoid the usual “information over load” found at many historic sites by injecting a variety of short lively, easy to understand major concepts. Visitors will touch and hold objects from the past, while savoring the smells and tasting the flavors suitable for every age group.

Tens of thousands of people are hungering for something new and special in the old. They will find it at the All Nations Art Retreat Center atSaxonia House!

**Our vision:**

***Imagine an art retreat that offers inspiring art that evolved out of disruption and despair that offers calming images that brought new hope that life can be secure, and serine.***

***Imagine an art retreat that’s offers lodging in historic structures with hearty family style dining in a relaxed environment that encourages socializing and friendly sharing.***

***An art retreat that invites you to enjoy its landmark architecture, ancient beer brewing traditions and its mid-19th century rural landscape in the rolling hills of Wisconsin.***

***This is Saxonia House. A place like no other. A place of discovery that awakens you to new worlds of thought and enjoyment.***

***Come, experience art and Wisconsin in a whole new way!***

4.3 **Competition:** Comparablecompetition cannot be identified. While there are hotels in Milwaukee that have art collections on display (the Pfister and the Milwaukee Art Hotel) nothing quite compares with the All Nations Art Retreat Center with its quiet countryside location and its variety of engaging on-site programs and activities. Two other culturally significant and successful multifaceted art programs do exist in Wisconsin. One is called “The Clearing” located in northern Door County and the other is the “Shake Rag School of the Arts” in Mineral Point. Both programs do not weave art and history together and are more than 150 miles from Milwaukee. Saxonia House is perhaps more like a vintage Northern Wisconsin resort but only 26 miles away from Milwaukee.

4.4 **Location:** At 24 miles from the edge of Milwaukee, Saxonia House offers a nice weekend destination that is unlike any other experience presently available. Once the traveler drives off of Interstate 43 and State Highway 57 at Fredonia, Wisconsin’s beautiful rolling landscape features the rural village and farm living that made Wisconsin “Americas Dairyland.”

4.5 **Drive Time:** Just under one hour from Milwaukee.

4.6 **Access:** Interstate 43 to State Highway 57 to Fredonia. West on County Highway “H” to the eastern edge of Fillmore.

4.7 **Obvious possibilities**: There are many options with this multi-themed approach that would attract the craft brewing adherents, art lovers, German heritage enthusiasts, history buffs, and visitors who love landscape painting but never knew the depth of inspiration for some of the best. Just entering the stone arched beer cave or the cellar under the house may inspire connections with Europe’s historic castles. It is possible that no other building like this with this story line and heritage exists in Wisconsin or even the United States may generate significant media attention. The question is, “Where can one find another building and program like it in Wisconsin?” Nothing similar has yet to be found.

Even before the property is well developed, media will be invited to tour the property and press relations will regularly report on progress. Maintaining an excellent relationship with newspapers and magazine publishers is paramount to creating a high level of outreach and public awareness. Similar to the development of the Old World Wisconsin project back in the early 1970’s, the **All Nations Art Retreat Center at** **Saxonia House** will be recognized as a worthy effort undertaken by committed volunteers as a non-profit educational organization.

**5.0 Market Plan:**

5.1 The Market Strategy for an Art Retreat Center that features lodging, food, tours, entertainment, etc. is not rocket science. The general Site Manager for the program must be familiar with the tourism industry and satisfying the seven things a visitor needs. If the fare is reasonable, and the food and rooms are exceptional, the “Word of Mouth” advertising will kick in as seen in the Harp & Eagle Irish tour program managed by Alan C. Pape back in the mid 1990’s. Nearly no paid advertising was used over a five-year period sending more than 6,000 Americans on weekly tours to Ireland. This popular program still exists today but scaled down because of Covid 19’s impact.

5.2 Positioning: Feature stories in Wisconsin newspapers and travel magazines will start the process. Television features will keep viewers intrigued with the concept. Public Television programs like Discover Wisconsin, and other food and travel programs will enjoy covering this new and unusual art and cultural offering. Beginning with German and Norwegian heritage and other cultures including Native American and African will be featured. In subsequent years all cultures with their own version of Romantic Landscape Paintings, music, poetry, and food types will be featured.

5.3 Promotions: Promoting the All Nations Art Retreat Center atSaxonia House will be media heavy. Connecting it to the story of how Milwaukee became such a great manufacturing power house and culturally “The German Athans,” Milwaukee visitors will appreciate learning more about its early beginnings, the early German/American families that fled German and brought a new vision to the city.

This **Business and Marketing Plan** will be available to other nonprofit groups interested in a “How To” approach to historic preservation. A small Historic Preservation School program has been suggested in partnership with a local county historical society. The property would be perfect for this type of organized program helping to make this effort extra beneficial for Wisconsin’s long term preservation efforts. Wisconsin could do better. It must do better. It is always a race against time!

* 1. **Distribution:** Reporters at the Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel newspapers can become friends of this project and be offered “scoop” opportunities whenever something new and interesting is happening at Saxonia House.

Social Media “Blasts” will be handled in timely and creative ways similar to two other successful nonprofit cultural Wisconsin destinations. *“The Clearing”* in Door County and the *“Shake* *Rag School of the Arts”* in Mineral Point. These two destinations attract similar visitors as the Saxonia House will have. Both destinations provide on-site lodging and meals in a historic setting but are not an Art Museum and do not explore European and American history, architecture, farm animals, hops growing, beer brewing, a Beer Garden, or a wood fired bake oven.

The Clearing in Door County has a membership category but not the Shake Rag School of the Arts. Professionally run public membership programs are good ways to build a committed following as well as having an additional and consistent profit center. Members appreciate and support projects that they believe in. Historically, the Saxonia House was envisioned and built to be a “club house” for the two local organizations that were involved in its creation. Their motto was “A sharp mind, a healthy body, and a satisfied soul.” That would fit well with our contemporary audiences.

**6.0 Implementation Plan:**

6.1 **Personnel Plan:** The proposed “DRAFT BUDGETS” leading up to a fully operational Art Retreat Center begin with one part-time manager and lead up to eight full time paid employees and ten-part timers including a book keeper. As a possibility and with the permission of all the major donors, the operational aspect of this program may in time be leased to a separate “for-profit company” to be overseen by the Friends of the Saxonia House volunteer board of directors.

**6.2 SWOT Analysis** (strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats)

*Strengths:*

The property contains an original adaptively restored and activated National Register Historic site in northeast Washington County that is only a one-hour drive north of Milwaukee in a pleasant rural setting on a well-maintained road. Eight other area tourist destinations include Kohler, Cedarburg, Port Washington, and West Bend, and the Wisconsin Museum of Art, Lizard Mound State Park, Shalom Wild Life Park, and a canoeable north branch of the Milwaukee River.

The Saxonia House program is a unique combination of **art, history, and hospitality** woven into an on-going year-round series of stimulating and innovative art exhibitions, classes, art retreats, lectures, live entertainment, a beer garden and beer cave, site tours, lodging, food and annual special events that are designed to satisfy the seven basic needs of a visitor.

There is no other building in Wisconsin or perhaps in the United States that was historically built as a rural public gathering place for immigrant intellectuals, gymnasts, and political visionaries using the rare and architecturally important German half-timber “fachwerk” building technique.

The program will feature a well-trained staff of mission orientated professionals delivering a story that embraces art, imagination, world-shaping political disruption and fresh starts for talented, educated and energetic leaders desiring a new life.

*Weakness:*

The projects rather remote location can be both a strength and a weakness. Milwaukeeans have been traveling to other excellent rural destinations for generations such as the “Fox and Hounds” countryside restaurant and Holy Hill, near Friess Lake west of Richfield also in the same county as the Saxonia House. Set among the hilly glacial landscape, these three destinations in the Northern Kettle Moraine State Forest region have been a traditional Sunday afternoon drive out in the country for more than 80 years. With good management, food and lodging at a reasonable fare, the Saxonia House will also join others as a satisfying destination in the Milwaukee region.

Similar to Old World Wisconsin and the Ten Chimney’s attractions, attracting and training good staff who will commute to the property will be an ongoing challenge.

Parking for visitors during annual special events may be a problem with only 8-acres. (The purchase of the neighboring 2-acre private residence is recommended for over flow parking and a manager’s residence.)

*Opportunities:*

The current interest in hand crafted beer and the brewing industry in general is one of the strongest “site theme” waiting to be developed.

Secondarily, the site’s historical connection to the 1848/49 European Revolutions is another important theme to exploit. Mid-19th century artists, musicians, poets, and composers are strongly linked to this Revolution that happened in more than 40 European countries and resulted in the Saxonia House originally being developed.In particular,The Romantic Landscape Painters present the strongest cultural theme connected to this property and offer an unending variety of exhibitions, events and classes not found anywhere else in the upper Midwest. Having a year-round “Artist-in-residence” will also be a nice draw for the program as it will offer interaction with the visitor making new friends and help bring in additional income.

The display and activation of certain “ethnic/Old-World connections like the half-timber architecture, beer garden, music and dance, and a working wood-fired bake oven create authentic experiences popular with today’s visitors.

The neighboring Hunting Club presents another tie into the German and Dutch traditions of a “Shootzenfest.” The Beer Hall will be decorated as a traditional “after the hunt” type of experience using dark wood, antique guns, wrought iron fixtures, mounted animal trophies, and original landscape paintings of the period. The entire ambiance of the house will project a German Country Inn. A place where travelers will gather to share their own experiences abroad and their best *enplain-air* painting techniques and locations while giving a toast to the house’s beer, music, and food. Sit down, set a spell and enjoy an art museum like no other!

*Threats:*

Covid 19 infections, fire, and a national recession.

**6.3 Time line Phase I: 2025-2030, Phase II: 2030-2035, Phase III: 2035-2040**

**7.0 Financial Plan and Statements:**

7.1 Key Assumptions:

By 2030 there will be a restored and activated Saxonia House and Beer Hall in place with a possibility of some over-night lodging available. By then the weekend admissions with volunteer guides has been mostly replaced by part-time paid guides. At least four annual events will be held along with weekly classes, and an artist-in-resident. The beer garden will be available during the summer season as well as a gift and sandwich shop. An initial Mail Order Catalog Sales program may be up and running as well as special membership newsletters and meet ups. With skilled staff there will be ongoing media coverage with occasional visits from organized bus tours.

7.2 Sales Forecast: Good

7.3 Break-even Analysis: Good. Please see accompanied Cash Flow analysis.

A drawing of a house

Description automatically generated

*This sketch demonstrates what the Saxonia House could look like in 2030 as funds are available. Note that the in-drive into the property is still in its original location with parking on a grassy area southwest of the house. The crane and scaffolding are helping to finish off the last wall with new lime mortar stucco over insulated concrete block wall reinforcements. To the east (left) is the Nelson/Bailey Norwegian log house from Norway Grove, Wisconsin brought in during 2024 and adaptively restored as an exhibition area, artifact storage area, and a public rest room for the phase one development. Behind the house is the reconstructed “Beer Hall” addition, brick walled Bake House, restored out house, modern events tent and the reconstructed brewery. Not shown is the restored 1920 garage/poultry barn converted to a welcome center, office, and orientation media room.*

**Proposed Annual Expense/Income Budget Phase I (2025-2030)**

Payroll Expense

Part time General Manager $30,000.00

Part time maintenance/restoration 25,000.00

Weekend Bartender/cook 10.000.00

Payroll/insurance (9%) 5,850.00

Employee benefits (30%) 19,500.00

**Sub Total $90,350.00**

Insurance Expense 5,000.00

Office Expense 2,000.00

Utility Expense (Internet/phone) 1,000.00

(gas/electricity) 3,000.00

(Septic/Plumbing) 1,500.00

Maintenance expenses 10,000.00

Advertising 2,000.00

Membership Dues & Subscriptions 200.00

Computer Software/Hardware 500.00

Bank Fees 200.00

Travel/mileage (for employee reimbursement) 500.00

Leased Equipment 1,000.00

Professional Expenses (tax preparation/legal) 2,000.00

Sales Merchandise 13,000.00

Food and beer costs 20,000.00

Contingency Funds 4,000.00

Sub Total expense: $47,900.00

**Grand Total expense $156,250.00**

**Proposed Annual Income Phase I:**

1. Memberships: [100@$30.00per](mailto:100@$30.00per) year average 3,000.00
2. Admission Sales: 6,000 @ $10.00 60,000.00
3. Grants: 4,000.00
4. Retail Sales: 30%of admission sales 27,000.00
5. Food and Beer sales @ $10.00 per visitor 60,000.00
6. Donation Box: 3,000.00

**Sub Total income:** **$157,000.00**

**Proposed Expense Budget for a Full Year during Phase II (2030-2035)**

**Payroll Expense**

Salaries

*General Manager* $70,000.00

*Assistant/Program Manager* 40,000.00

Hourly Wages

1 Bar and Food manager (plus tips) 35,000.00

1 Assistant bar/food manager “ 25,000.00

1 Head chef 35,000.00

2 Cooks/washers 60,000.00

2 Waiters (plus tips) 60,000.00

Book Keeper 16,000.00

1 Grounds/maintenance 30,000.00

Store Manager 30.000.00

1 Asst. Store Manager 20,000.00

1 House Keeping Manager 30,000.00

1 Asst. House Keeper 20,000.00

3 weekend guides for 7 months 20,160.00

Payroll taxes (9%) 42,404.00

Employee benefits (30%) 188,298.00

Total **$654,912.00**

Insurance Expense (Liability, Workman’s Comp) $20,000.00

Office Expenses (Supplies, Postage, etc.) 1,000.00

Utility Expense (Internet/phone) 2,000.00

(Gas/Electricity) 10,000.00

(Septic Pumping/Plumbing) 3,000.00

Advertising 20,000.00

Membership dues & subscriptions 500.00

Computer Software/hardware 3,000.00

Bank Fees 200.00

Travel/mileage (for employee reimbursement) 500.00

Professional expenses (tax preparation/legal) 2,000.00

Lodging/laundry Expenses @ 10% 35,000.00

Contingency funds 4,000.00

Food costs for 12 students/guests for 24 wks per year 25,920.00

sub total $127,120.00

**Expenses: Grand total: $895,095.00**

**Projected Revenue for Phase II:**

1. Memberships: 200@ $30.00 per year $6,000.00
2. Admission Sales: 20,000 @ $18.00 360,000.00
3. Endowment interest on $200,000 @ 3% 6,000.00
4. Grants/fund raisers 10,000.00
5. Gift Shop sales: 30% of admission 90,000.00
6. Food and beer sales @ $15.00 per visitor 300,000.00
7. Lodging: 15 rooms % 50% occupancy @ $125 per, 24 wks 168,000.00
8. Specialty classes 250 students @$100.00 25,000.00
9. Donation Box 7,500.00
10. Property rental 3,000.00
11. Annual Art, Beer/Brat trip to Europe for 35 @ $200 profit 7,000.00

**Income: Grand total: $982,500.00**

**Proposed Expense Budget for a Full Year during Phase III (2035-40)**

**Payroll Expense**

Salaries

*General Manager* 80,000.00

*Assistant/Program Manager* 55,000.00

Hourly Wages

1 Bar and food manager ($15.00 /tips) 40,000.00

1 Assistant bar/food manager ($10.00/tips) 30,000.00

1 Head chef ($20.00 per hr) 40,000.00

3 Cooks/washers ($13.00 per hr) 90,000.00

2 Waiters ($10.00/tips) 60,000.00

Book Keeper ($30/hr 15hr/wk) 22,500.00

1 Grounds/maintenance ($20/hr 40 hr/wk) 50,000.00

Store Manager ($15/hr 40 hr/wk) 40,000.00

1 Asst. Store Manager ($12/hr 40 hr/wk) 30,000.00

1 House Keeping Mng. ($15/hr 40hr/wk) 40,000.00

1 Asst. House Keeper ($13/hr 40hr/wk) 30,000.00

Payroll Taxes (9%) 54,675.00

Employee benefits (30%) 182,250.00

Total $844,275.00

Insurance Expense (Liability, Workman’s Comp.) 35,000.00

Office Expenses (Supplies, Postage, etc.) 1,000.00

Utility Expense (Internet/Phone) 2,000.00

(Gas/Electricity) 10,000.00

(Septic Pumping/Plumbing) 3,000.00

Advertising 15,000.00

Membership Dues & Subscriptions 500.00

Computor Software/Hardware 3,000.00

Bank Fees 200.00

Travel/mileage (for employee reimbursement) 500.00

Leased Equipment 1,000.00

Professional Expenses (Tax Preparation/legal 2,000.00

Lodging/Laundry Expenses @ 10% 67,000.00

Food 24students/guests/3meals/5 days/24weeks 51,840.00

Contingency Funds 4,000.00

Sub total $197,040.00

Expenses: **Grand total: $1,041,315.00**

(note: no week end/food/beverage costs as well as wages for tour guides.)

**Projected Revenue for Phase III:**

1. Memberships: [300@$30.00](mailto:300@$30.00) per year $9,000.00
2. Admission sales: 30,000@$18.00 540,000.00
3. Endowment Fund interest on $500,000.00 10,000.00
4. Grants/fund raisers 20,000.00
5. Museum Store Sales: 30% of admission sales 90,000.00
6. Food and beer sales: @ $20.00 per visitor 400,000.00
7. Lodging: 30 rooms@50% occupancy@ $100.00@per night 195,000.00
8. Specialty classes: 750 students@$100.00 75,000.00
9. Donation box 10,000.00
10. Property Rental 5,000.00
11. Annual Art, Brat and Beer trip to Europe: 35@$200 profit 7,000.00

Income: Grand total: **$1,361,000.00**

**8.0 Appendix.**

Page 26 A Preliminary Grand Master Plan “Birds Eye” sketch

Page 27 A Preliminary Grand Master Site Plan

Page 28 Location map

A drawing of a landscape

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A blueprint of a park

Description automatically generated

A map of a neighborhood

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