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Wychwood City Centre *13*

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■ Wychwood Car barns set to be transformed into unique urban art and eco space

Ambitious eco project prepares to raise the roof

By JOANNA LAVOIE
Staff Writer

It's going to cost \$10 million to restore the historically designated Wychwood Car barns and surrounding urban land into a unique space for art and the environment.

And the group chosen by the city for the project (Toronto Artscape Inc., a non-profit organization engaged in real estate and program development for the arts and creative sector) is set to host a roof raising event to bring the ambitious Green/Arts Barns project one step closer to fruition.

"We're just about the kick off the public part of the fundraising campaign," said Toronto Artscape Inc.'s executive director, Tim Jones. "At

that event we'll also be announcing the short list of arts and environmental organizations that have been selected for the site and we'll be updating everybody on the fundraising campaign."

The Urban Barn Raiser fundraising event, which happens April 21, will include a semi-formal evening of cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, a silent and a live auction, and guest speakers and live music.

Local artists/photographers Barbara Astman, Edward Burtynsky, Susan Dobson, Vid Ingelevics, Geoffrey James, Katherine Knight and Hugh Martin will all contribute some of their work to the auctions.

All proceeds from the fundraiser, which Toronto Artscape Inc. hopes will hit \$75,000, will go directly to the redevelopment.

Ward 21 Councillor Joe Mihevc (St. Paul's West) has been a strong supporter of the initiative since its inception.

His office reported that at this time a series of administrative committee meetings and community councils are in the works to have the Wychwood site declared as surplus city-owned land, settle a lease agreement and obtain any approvals and rezoning.

With a series of meetings planned for the upcoming months, Mihevc's office expects various aspects of the Wychwood project should be discussed and voted on at both the May and June city council sessions.

"There's a lot of behind the scenes work going on right now," said Jones, who also mentioned the project's design drawings are currently being refined and that rezoning has been one of his organization's main challenges as of late. "We're making good progress there."

Artscape plans to restore and renovate four of the site's five former TTC car barns, which were built between 1913 and 1921. For more information about the Green/Arts Barns fundraiser call Dlanina Kisanin at 416-392-1038, ext. 29.

