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WEST ROXBURY

Irish Social Club moves toward reopening; membership drive Sunday

Posted by Matt Rocheleau June 24, 2011 09:12 AM

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

The Irish Social Club of Boston is moving toward resuming its 65-year run in the West Roxbury building on Park Street it has called home for the past three decades.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The Irish Social Club of Boston is taking steps toward reopening its West Roxbury headquarters, including a membership drive Sunday and plans for a future fund-raiser.

The move comes just over two months after the [club abruptly closed](#) in what club leaders then said signaled the beginning of the end for not only the club's dance hall, but also for the entire 65-year-old organization and its membership.

A combination of factors -- discouraging attendance at the club's Sunday night dances, a dwindling and aging membership, rapidly shrinking savings and a looming to-do list of repairs -- sparked talks that led club officials to close the club's building on Park Street in mid-April after a final, bittersweet dance.

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Club member Kathleen Adams, alongside a team of fellow members, concerned residents and elected officials, has led an at-times frustrating effort to stop and reverse plans to eventually sell the former bowling alley venue the Irish club moved into 33 years ago.

That campaign, which has felt not enough effort was put into trying to save the club, saw its first significant victory last week when club leaders agreed to the idea of holding a fund-raising dance in the near future.

On Thursday, more progress was made. The club will hold a membership drive Sunday, June 26, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the club. The cost to join is \$5. Additional membership drives at later dates are expected.

"Hopefully, if we have a good turnout at the membership drives, it will show that people really are interested," Adams said by e-mail Friday.

Planning for a fund-raising event – likely to be held toward the end of summer – will go into full force at a meeting scheduled for July 7 at 7 p.m. at the club.

"As much as I'd love to hold a fundraiser tomorrow, it's the summer, people have plans already, and if we want to do this right, we have to take the time to plan it," wrote Adams.

Next week, officials plan to begin to revive aspects of the club's large interior space, including beginning to replace the club's furniture and re-hang pictures, she said.

The club's list of needed repairs was a main consideration in its initial decision to close and sell the facility. One immediate repair: The club needs to bring its fire-alarm system up to current code – a fix estimated previously at \$15,000, or half the club's remaining savings.

Advocates for the club's revival have said previously that IBEW Local 103 and Sprinkler Fitters Local 550 have offered to do that labor pro bono.

"While the dances aren't going on, I'd like for us to move forward on the fire alarm system," Adams said Friday.

The club also has an old, leaky roof. Jim Calvey from local Irish group, the Knights and Ladies of St Finbarr's Club, has offered to assess the roof's current state next week and explore possible temporary solutions, Adams said.

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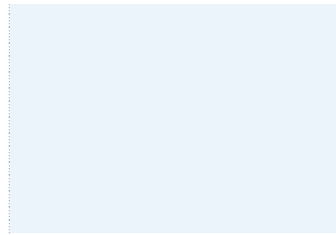
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