

\$\$\$\$ for Banana Factory plazas

The Bethlehem Gadfly Banana Factory Expansion, Fun Stuff September 22, 2019

(8th in a series of posts on Banana Factory Expansion)

Festival UnBound

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This Banana Factory project, which Gadfly senses is much appreciated and anticipated by all, rolls along nicely!



Nicole Radzievich, “Bananas were once warehoused here. Check out the artsy plazas pitched at this south Bethlehem spot now.” Morning Call, September 17, 2019.

One plaza would feature seating wrapped around large sculptures and other outdoor art located around the corner from the artsy south Bethlehem business district. The other would be an outdoor classroom where students in preschool classes or after-school programs would be able to learn about the arts while adults could paint en plein air in a space featuring more sculptures and artwork.

Those proposed plazas, part of a larger \$15 million to \$18 million expansion of the Banana Factory, got a boost Tuesday when state Sen. Lisa Boscola announced that a \$100,000 recreation grant will go toward funding the plazas. The state also awarded \$60,000 for the Whitehall Parkway Pavilion Rest Area development, \$25,000 for the Special Needs Park equipment upgrade project, and \$70,000 to Lafayette College for the Easton Art Park master site plan.

ArtsQuest, the nonprofit behind the Banana Factory and festivals such as Musikfest, hopes the proposed plazas will continue to draw people to experience the arts in what is a vibrant community amassing on the South Side, spokesman Mark Demko said.

He said ArtsQuest hopes to break ground on the expansion project by the end of 2020 or beginning of 2021.

Earlier this year, ArtsQuest received word it would be getting \$500,000 from the state’s Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program for the expansion of the Banana Factory.

The 80,000-square-foot Banana Factory expansion, dubbed a community cultural center, will include an arts-based preschool

program, more classes for people of all ages, a black box theater and more at the location of the current Banana Factory, 25 W. Third St.

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