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McCollum Hall restoration moves forward

BY [ADAM WRIGHT](#) • JUNE 3, 2015

FORT MYERS, Fla. – Community leaders want people to know they haven't forgotten about the restoration of McCollum Hall.

Built in 1938 on the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Cranford Avenue, McCollum Hall was once a centerpiece of activity in Fort Myers, with jazz greats like B.B. King and Louis Armstrong playing to packed houses.



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But long gone are its days of glory. Abandoned for years, the once grand dance hall is now an eyesore collecting dust. However, hope is on the horizon.

Tuesday, the Fort Myers Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) met and agreed it's time to get the ball rolling.

"We are getting ready to do a \$500,000 restoration of the outside of the building, and so we want to let folks know that things are about to happen, work's underway," CRA executive director Don Paight told WINK News.

As a matter of fact, the CRA has already made improvements many can't see.

"From the outside it doesn't look like anything's happened, but if you go in, we've put all new concrete floors, some columns, a completely new roof on it," said Paight.

The goal is to restore the dance hall and add a restaurant and shops. There's still a lot of work to be done, though, and that means more money is needed. So far, funding for the improvements has come from state grants and CRA funds, but Tuesday the board agreed it's time to ask the city for taxpayer dollars to help.

"My guess is we're probably looking at still around a million dollars to finish it off," said Paight.

While details are still being ironed out, the CRA board wants to assure the community that improvements are on the way.

"Sit tight, work's getting ready to start. It may be later on this summer but it is funded and you'll see changes happening."

The CRA plans to host an open house at McCollum Hall some time after summer to show off new design plans and generate interest from possible tenants.

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