

Group stands ready to try to rescue Sheboygan Theater

By JOHN FAIRBANKS
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If Milwaukee's Marcus Corp. is interested in selling the Sheboygan Theater, then the Sheboygan Theater Foundation says, "Hey, remember us?"

"A small band of disciples has met," said foundation member Reynolds Honold. "All we're doing is saying, 'Are you interested?'"

The foundation was formed in 1988. About two years ago, there was talk of perhaps buying the movie house from Marcus and renovating it for use as a community theater.

Plans stalled for lack of leadership and money. After Wednesday's flood in the building's basement, the disciples met anew.

Marcus Corp.'s initial reply is that the company is "on the fence," said Richard Pauls, another member of the group.

Honold said foundation members may begin sending feelers out to other local organizations, including the Sheboygan Devel-

opment Corp., to see if there is any local interest in the project.

The 64-year-old theater has been closed since Feb. 9 while the company conducts an architectural and engineering study to determine whether the downtown landmark should be remodeled.

Damage from the flooding — which Fire Department officials believe might have resulted from a broken sprinkler head — was extensive.

In 1990, cost estimates for buying and converting the movie house to a live performance theater ran between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. Such a facility would also require staff and a reliable operating budget.

That means an intimidating amount of time and money must be spent to get the project up and running, if, of course, Marcus is interested.

"We're here and they're there," Honold said. "We're waiting to see what direction Marcus will take."