

# The Berkshire Eagle

## Movie cinema now on track

### Summer launch set for construction

By Ellen G. Lahr, Berkshire Eagle Staff

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PITTSFIELD — A redesigned downtown cinema project, which includes an additional 15,000 square feet of commercial space, appears on track for a summer construction launch, a city official said this

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week.

The city's community development director, Deanna Ruffer, said financing for the public-private partnership project to be built inside the Kresge-Kinnell building at 49-55 North St. is being finalized and that construction is expected to last about 14 months.

The long-awaited six-theater project suffered a setback a year ago: The National Park Service determined the design did not retain enough historic elements of its two old North Street buildings to qualify the project for \$900,000 in historic tax credits.

The project has since been reworked by developer Richard Stanley of Egremont, who also built the Triplex Cinemas in Great Barrington in the 1990s.

Stanley could not be reached for comment. It's not yet clear how the redesign — and the project's delay — will impact what had been projected as a \$12.6 million project a year ago.

The Beacon Cinemas project has received a total of \$1 million in loans from the city's economic development fund, and Ruffer said the new design is likely to

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satisfy historic tax credit requirements.

"It's looking really good," said Ruffer, noting that the redesign effort dramatically improved the overall project. "With the redesign, it's greatly enhanced as a mixed-use project from our perspective."

The project has also qualified for \$2 million in public grants, and Stanley will make a private equity investment as well, Ruffer said.

Initially just 5,000 square feet in non-theater commercial space was included, but the new design is reconfigured in a manner that adds another 15,000 square feet.

Space for a restaurant has always been set aside in the plans, and the city is holding an all-alcoholic liquor license on reserve for use by an eventual restaurant.

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The commercial space will be dispersed among the three floors of the theater facing North Street, with the theaters toward the rear of the building, in a "three-over-three" design.

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