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Alliance drives a good bargain for the good of the community

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Waldwick – The Waldwick Community Alliance is chugging forward with its plans for the historic train station and say a new roof could top the deteriorating building by winter.

The group will finally be able to start spending some of the money it's been raising since 2005, Alliance vice president Doug Cowie said last week, with help from a new architect, L+C Design Consultants PA of Secaucus.

Cowie said the Alliance decided to make the switch when the company originally tapped, HQW Architects in Newton, wouldn't budge on aspects of the plan that Alliance members felt were too expensive and "not applicable."

Finding a new architect took time, as it had to have experience in historic preservation, Cowie said. The new architect is almost done



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with a restoration plan that must be submitted to the Department of Community Affairs, the state Preservation Office and NJ Transit.

Once the plan has those approvals, work can begin.

The first phase of the restoration will involve the replacement of the sill plate and roof, and, depending on cost estimates, installing new siding, windows and doors and re-grading and excavating around the building.

Restoration of the train station has been the sole focus of the Alliance's fund-raising efforts; it has raised over \$50,000. The Alliance also is seeking \$250,000 in grants from the historic preservation trust fund.

The application for that grant is must be submitted to the county by Oct. 8.

Requirements for the funding include demonstrating such things as the group's ability to raise money and its depth of planning. Cowie said the \$17,000 the Alliance

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spent in 2009 for McCabe and Associates to complete a historic structure report detailing the materials used, changes to the station over the years and a painting analysis could give the group an edge over any competition.

The historic train station has been in the borough since the 1870s when the borough's name was Orvil Township, but has been vacant for the last 30 years. After a three-year struggle, the Alliance secured a 25-year lease on the station from NJ transit.

The most recent fund-raising effort is also its most visible: a raffle for a black Mercedes-Benz C300, which is being displayed through Dec. 17 on East Prospect Street. Tickets are \$100 and only 750 will be sold.

Cowie said the car, donated by Prestige Motors in Paramus, is worth about \$39,000 and the Alliance is hoping to raise \$25,000 from the raffle.

The Alliance is also selling pieces of coal that were found in the train station among ashes and a stove used to heat the building in 19th century. A commemorative coal piece can be purchased for \$25 from WaldwickCommunityAlliance.org.

And, Cowie said, the group's Donate A Buck campaign is also going strong. Donation



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boxes can be found in 35 area business, and money can also be donated through the Alliance's website.

"I realize that it must be frustrating to the public that they keep donating to this cause and do not see any visual progress, but rest assure, that we are doing everything the right way to eliminate any major stumping blocks once construction begins," Cowie said. "Because the building is so old, we are trying to eliminate as many of the unforeseen [problems] as possible."

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