

From: Ute Luxem

Sent: Wednesday, September 03, 2014 11:37 AM

To: Michael Behrendt

Subject: Support of the demolition of the current Town Hall

Dear Mr. Behrendt,

can you please provide this email to the HDC to be added to the public hearing comments on the feasibility of demolishing the current Town Hall offices?

Dear members of the HDC,

we are writing this email in support of the demolition of the current Town Hall.

It is our understanding that you evaluate the cultural and architectural value of a building before allowing it to be demolished.

The current Town Hall, although a contributing structure to the Historic District, has limited historic value only and was added as a contributing structure just because of its location. Two old buildings were joined together to create the space currently used. This alteration in itself diminished the historic value of the original homes.

Not permitting the removal of the buildings would create extreme hardship for the current owner, the Town of Durham.

The Town of Durham decided to move its operations to the former Bank building across the street because it was not economically feasible to renovate the existing building and bring it up to code. With the sale of the current Town Hall property, the existing facility would no longer be grandfathered because of a change of use. The entire building would have to be brought up to code before it could be repurposed. This is economically not feasible, no builder would agree to this.

Keeping the structure would make the property unsellable and leave the taxpayers of Durham with the responsibility to maintain this building and bring this building up to code plus paying for the new Town Hall. This would leave the community with a significant and unexpected tax bill and an unusable structure.

The best use of the property is that of a pharmacy, followed by other uses. Both options require the existing Town Hall to be removed.

While we are strongly advocating for the removal of the existing building, at the same time, we would like to encourage your use of guidance in influencing the design and appearance of any new structure presented to replace the existing Town Hall. We applaud the HDC for its conscientious guidance provided to developers with appearance of the Grange and Orion projects and hope such

service would be available to the developer of the Town Hall site. It is in the community interest to replace the Town Hall with a visually pleasing, yet functional structure that harmoniously compliments its historic surroundings.

Sincerely yours,

Heiner and Ute Luxem
23 Ross Road, Durham