
Fwd: Lucketts Volunteer Firehouse and the Journey Through Hallowed Ground

Bill Sellers <bill@jthg.org>

Fri, Sep 3, 2021 at 4:00 PM

To: Michelle Kellogg Burrelli <michelle@jthg.org>, Katherine Wilkins <katherine@jthg.org>, Brent Glass <brent@brentdglass.com>

FYI below

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bill Sellers** <bill@jthg.org>

Date: Fri, Sep 3, 2021 at 3:59 PM

Subject: Lucketts Volunteer Firehouse and the Journey Through Hallowed Ground

To: Kershner, Caleb <Caleb.Kershner@loudoun.gov>, Carey, Stacy <Stacy.Carey@loudoun.gov>

Dear Supervisor Kershner,

I've had a couple conversations in the last few days about the old Lucketts Volunteer Firehouse that will be vacated in the next month. The Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area is potentially interested in the building, and I would very much appreciate your help and advice.

As background, we sold the Journey's previous headquarters in Waterford in December 2019. The Waterford building was fine as an office for internal use, but it was rare for visitors to stop in; sometimes months would pass without anyone knocking on the door.

Our staff has been working remotely from home since the sale, and because the pandemic hit just a few months after we sold the building, we have not been seriously looking for a new permanent headquarters. However, the Lucketts Firehouse has gotten us to think seriously about the potential of the Journey's using the building for multiple community, county, state and regional purposes. The biggest benefit of the location is that Lucketts is the first village across the Maryland/Virginia border, and is just a few hundred feet off the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway, which is the spine of our \$700 million plus heritage tourism impact within the National Heritage Area. The firehouse could be a near ideal location for us.

In the western two bays with the second floor above, we could create a Virginia Welcome Center and regional tourist information center, encouraging tourism throughout the 15 counties of the National Heritage Area in Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. Along with that, we could host a small coffee shop with seating for visitors, and a small gift shop where we could sell local history books and that would allow artisans and artists of the Journey to sell their wares. The second floor could provide the Journey with office space, and perhaps reserved shared space for existing or emerging nonprofits.

The four bays on the east side of the building could allow for flexible exhibit, meeting and classroom spaces. The Journey's signature program over the last few years is National History Academy, through which we bring young people from around the country to this region (we lease out the Foxcroft School for the 5-week summer program) to learn about the foundations of American government and the responsibilities of citizenship, while taking the students to DC, Mount Vernon, Monticello, Gettysburg, Harpers Ferry, Manassas, etc., to learn about history where it happened. This space could allow us to host schoolchildren and adults to learn about our country's history throughout the year in a permanent space, while also being used to convene small conferences, to provide meeting space for local community citizen groups, and providing overflow space for the Lucketts Community Center when needed. A small exhibit on the history of the building's use as a volunteer firehouse would also be appropriate.

I have not been inside the building, so I'm not aware of the particular costs of renovating and retrofitting the building for use as a Tourist Information Center. I imagine there would be a need for handicapped accessible bathrooms, a small downstairs kitchen area, and addressing the potential of asbestos issues with abatement if necessary. In addition, the sewer issue with the County has been highlighted to me.

We could have access to a number of potential funding sources for an adaptive reuse of the building. We understand that the building needs to be transferred to another nonprofit, and we are a 501(c)(3) with connections to federal, state,

county and private funding. As a National Heritage Area, we work closely with and receive annual funding from the National Park Service, and we have a former Acting Director of NPS on our Board of Trustees. Scenic America (www.scenic.org) has recently worked with Congress to create new federal funding sources for our country's National Scenic Byways, and we regularly work with their Executive Director Mark Falzone. In addition, we would want to talk with the Virginia Tourism Corporation in Richmond, and we have a meeting scheduled with Beth Erickson at Visit Loudoun next week.

Such a use of the building could provide great benefit to the Catoctin District, the Lucketts Community, Loudoun County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the entire multi-state region. I know that other organizations have interest in the building, so this may be a nonstarter for us, but I would at least like to explore the possibility. I would appreciate the chance to get your thoughts about this. Would you have time in the near future to discuss?

With best regards,
Bill

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William W. Sellers
President and CEO
Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area

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HallowedGround.Org

The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership is a non-profit, four-state partnership dedicated to raising awareness of the unparalleled American heritage in a region running from Gettysburg, PA through Maryland and Harpers Ferry, WV to Jefferson's Monticello in Albemarle County, VA. With more history than any other region in the nation, JTHG is recognized by Congress as a National Heritage Area and offers authentic heritage tourism programs and award-winning educational programs for students of all ages. Take the Journey to *Where America Happened*.

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