



TOWN OF STRATHAM

INCORPORATED 1716

Heritage Commission

10 BUNKER HILL AVENUE • STRATHAM NH 03885

VOICE (603) 772-7391 • FAX (603) 775-0517

September 26, 2018

Stratham Board of Selectmen
10 Bunker Hill Avenue
Stratham, NH 03885

Gentlemen,

The Stratham Heritage Commission fully supports the application of Mark Perlowski/Perlowski Properties LLC for tax abatement for a period of nine years covering the property known as the Old Town Hall at 151 Portsmouth Avenue. We find that the property and the rehabilitation project meets the qualification requirements of New Hampshire statute RSA 79-E, enabling legislation adopted by voters at Town Meeting.

We find that Mr. Perlowski's rehabilitation of the Old Town Hall, deemed eligible for the New Hampshire Register of Historic Places in 2016, satisfies both the letter and the intent of the statute – that is to encourage the public benefit of projects that enhance the economic activity, preserve the historic character, and provide residential opportunities within New Hampshire's town centers.

We further find that the project meets the Town's goal of encouraging rehabilitation of the many underutilized structures in our Town Center as a means of encouraging growth of economic, residential, and municipal mixed uses in a more compact pattern.

We further find that the project is a public benefit in that it fulfills the Town's goal of increasing energy efficiency through the rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures.

By adopting the provisions of RSA 79-E, the Town's voters embraced the concept that short-term property assessment tax relief and a related covenant to protect the public investment are considered to provide a demonstrated public benefit if they accomplish the above stated objectives.

The Heritage Commission fully supports the statement of public benefit contained in Mr. Perlowski's application. Adding four apartments in the Old Town Hall, a historic structure that has been underutilized since the Town sold it in 1997, adds economic and social vitality to the Town Center. With the historic structure remaining in place it provides the sort of historical background and context that gives meaning to New Hampshire communities.

The Heritage Commission also supports this application because the project is in line with the 2011 Plan New Hampshire Charrette report that recommended mixed-use development combined with preservation of the historic features of the Town Center.

We recommend that the Board of Selectmen approve Mr. Perlowski's application and grant tax relief for the full nine years as requested,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Canada". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

David Canada, Chair
Stratham Heritage Commission