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*In memory of:*  
Philip Davis  
1908 - 1998  
James E. Mitchell  
1941 - 2016

October 8, 2024

To: My Fayette Neighbors and the Select Board:

I moved to Fayette in January 1971 and am very committed to our town. I have been actively involved in town affairs since I moved here from the NY area. I was our town's first Town Manager; I have been chair of the Planning Board for about 20 years; and I have been engaged in various other capacities.

Starling Hall is an important part of our town's heritage; and it would be a big loss if it were to be sold. Furthermore, I have concerns about the possible legal consequences to us as property taxpayers if the Town votes to and the Board of Selectman approves the petitioner's request to sell Starling Hall. Having experienced impacts to tax rates as Fayette's first Town Manager and resident for over 50 years, there are several potential issues I am concerned about.

The Hall is on the National Registry of Historic Places and is owned by the Town, which overwhelmingly voted in 2014 to keep it. The value of Starling Hall has increased significantly since then through the efforts of the Friends of Starling Hall (FOSH).

The Hall certainly has value. However, it has been publicly stated that the additional renovations and improvements necessary for it to meet current codes and to be fully utilized will potentially cost more than \$500,000. This additional cost would also fall to anyone who may have an interest in bidding on it if the Town does pursue bids. This additional necessary cost is highly likely to significantly reduce the Hall's market value.

The Town has received private and corporate donations and government, foundation and public grants. These monetary and capital donations have been provided to the Town based on the 2014 Town Meeting vote to retain it. The donors' intent was that these improvements provide a facility that the Town could once again utilize as a Community Center. Most came with specific instructions on use or purpose.

Therefore, my first legal concern is that, if the Hall is sold, those corporations, government agencies, and public and private foundations and donors may well look to the Town for reimbursement. The Town has benefitted from over \$200,000 worth of donations.

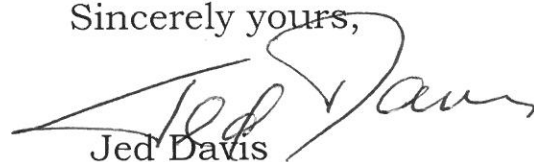
In addition, if the Hall is sold, FOSH will be under no obligation to continue to make the annual bond payments. The remaining payments total approximately \$66,000.

In summation, my understanding of the petitioner's intent with the sale of the Hall was to prevent future costs to the Fayette taxpayer. I am concerned that the sale would not only result in the loss of an important community building, but also that it would result in higher property taxes with the sale proceeds not covering the unanticipated expenses created by the sale.

I do not believe that the potential negative aspects of the sale of Starling Hall were considered when the petition was initiated.

I am voting against the sale both to preserve an important part of our town's heritage and to avoid a likely increase in our property taxes.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jed Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Jed Davis