

Neal and Katy Sakash  
11 Lake Ave  
Higganum

April 20, 2021

Economic Development Commission  
30 Field Park Drive  
Haddam, CT

Secretary Bunny Batzner,

Last September we wrote to the Planning and Zoning Commission to voice our opposition to the demolition of the Leverett Spencer House at 140 Dublin Hill. Today we are doubling down on that opposition and ask the town to work in conjunction with the Friends of the Cove to relocate the house for the community's benefit. We believe Haddam has a cultural obligation to protect and preserve these historic worker homes to honor our manufacturing past and showcase our efforts to revitalize Higganum Village. This house is one of the more ornate examples left in town and would serve as the perfect interpretive center to compliment the town's long-term vision of the Cove. An asset like this would catalyze our revitalization efforts and help Haddam compete with other towns in the lower river valley already building vibrant tourism economies.

If our goal is to attract new visitors and residents, including this historic home in the town's vision would have an immense lasting impact and give residents a huge sense of pride. Sadly many historic buildings in the village were demolished last century and that lack of charm has allowed the villages of Tri-Town and East Haddam to shine compared to our own. Haddam can no longer afford this to happen, and it starts with saving the Leverett Spencer House. We understand an investment like this is not cheap and requires dedicated work, but our family will certainly donate funds and volunteer hours to help the town and Friends of the Cove with this endeavor. Below is an open letter from another supporter of the Cove's vision. We would like to share their words with you again.

I am writing in support of the plan of the Friends of the Cove to relocate the endangered Leverett Spencer House to Higganum Cove and re-purpose it as a town resource.

First, transforming Higganum Cove to a destination for hiking, birding and other outdoor activity, as well as, outdoor class room and cultural arts venue would draw businesses, visitors and new residents to Higganum. Its location on the Connecticut River and adjacent to Swan Hill makes it an obvious choice for recreational activities. The Cove's industrial history could tell the story of American ingenuity from the 17th century through 20th century and focus on the many

factory workers who sought the American dream.

Second, moving the Leverett Spencer House to Higganum Cove would provide a place for sharing the area's heritage and serve as a center for those biking, hiking or accessing the river. The house could serve as a nature center and offer sundries and be the base for outdoor classes and cultural events.

The goal of the Planning and Zoning Commission denying the application to demolish the Leverett Spencer House last year was to see if alternative options to demolition could be found. Here is an option. The Spencer House is the best remaining example of factory housing in the area and demolishing it would erase a piece of Higganum's working-class history.

The plan for Higganum Cove has been carefully thought out and many local residents have donated considerable time in formulating it. In addition, a number of local contractors and businesses have indicated they will donate substantial services to relocate the building to the Cove.

We ask that the Board of Selectmen, Land Use Office, Planning and Zoning Commission carefully review and support the proposal to move the Leverett Spencer House to Higganum Cove and not only save a piece of history but create a destination Higganum can be proud of.

Please show your dedication to preserving Higganum's historical legacy. Support saving the Leverett Spencer House and join the efforts of Friends of the Cove to relocate the building for all to benefit. Residents and visitors have long deserved the chance to enjoy the beauty of the Cove while learning about Higganum's past. Let's make this a reality.

Sincerely,

Neal and Katy Sakash