

Union Hotel Repairs: Moving in the Right Direction

The Friends of Historic Flemington are pleased to see progress finally being made concerning Flemington Borough's enforcement of its property maintenance ordinance regarding the historic Union Hotel. Under the previous mayor the Borough Council repeatedly failed to enforce this ordinance, giving a variety of excuses for their inaction. In the meantime, significant deterioration of the building occurred.

On May 1, in response to Union Hotel owner Steve Romanowski's repeated failure to maintain his property per the Borough's property maintenance ordinance, the Hunterdon County Construction Board of Appeals directed him to hire a licensed structural engineer to analyze the hotel's condition.

The Board specified the engineer should make recommendations to reinforce the building's structure where required; devise a comprehensive plan to prevent additional rain and snow from getting into the structure, causing further deterioration; and address other related issues. Mr. Romanowski was directed to appear at the Board's May 15 meeting to provide an update on his progress. He was given 60 days to come up with an acceptable plan.

At the Monday, May 13 Council meeting, Mayor Betsy Driver announced that Mr. Romanowski's engineer conducted a structural evaluation of the interior and exterior of the hotel the previous Thursday, May 9.

According to Mr. Romanowski, his engineer inspected the interior of the hotel on Thursday, May 9, and found the timber frame structure to be in exceptionally good and restorable condition, though some reinforcement in certain locations will be necessary. The engineer said the hotel, like many commercial buildings from that period, was substantially overbuilt, enabling it to survive many years of neglect and exposure to the elements.

We look forward to the Union Hotel being properly protected, reinforced and integrated into a redevelopment plan that is appropriately-scaled for our small town, protects residents' quality of life, and pays its fair share of taxes and infrastructure costs.