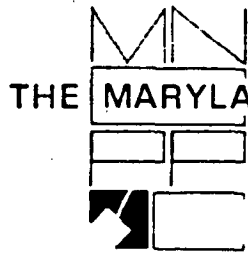


Bighorn Range



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

January 18, 1991

Jody S. Kline
Miller, Miller & Canby
200-B Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Jody,

I am writing as a follow-up to my letter of January 4th concerning the Brighton Grange, owned by St. Luke's Episcopal Church. The Church has asked for a firm commitment on the property, which must include a specific proposal by a property owner to acquire the Grange Hall and relocate it within a reasonably short time frame. This letter will outline, in detail, such a proposal along with a second option which is presented for the Church's consideration.

A lot of time and effort has gone into the preparation of this proposal. Since the Church has not responded to my request to make a personal presentation to either the Vestry or the full congregation, I would like to specifically request that this letter - in its entirety - be not only transmitted to Church representatives, but also distributed to all Vestry members and, if possible, to all congregation members. I feel it is vitally important for members of the Church to have as much information as possible as they make decisions regarding the Grange Hall.

Option #1

After extensive deliberation, Montgomery Preservation Inc. (a County-wide private, non-profit preservation organization) and Robert L. McKeever III (owner of the property at the northeast corner of the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Brighton Dam Road) have come to a preliminary agreement to preserve the Brighton Grange Hall by moving the structure to Mr. McKeever's land.

Under this scenario, the Church would convey the structure to Montgomery Preservation Inc. This organization would - in addition to owning the building - coordinate the moving of the Grange and gather the funds for the project. As part of the move, Montgomery Preservation Inc. would continue to own the Grange and would enter into a lease agreement with Mr. McKeever for their utilization of his land.

Specific groundwork has been laid for this effort:

1. A total price of \$35,000 for the relocation of the Grange Hall has been calculated and, preliminarily, confirmed.
 - * Bids from three house movers have been obtained, with Dillard & Sons House Movers providing the lowest bid of \$12,000. Mr. Dillard is available to sign a contract as soon as the project is ready to go.
 - * C&P Telephone, Baltimore Gas and Electric Co., and Montgomery Cablevision have inspected the site and have provided prices for temporarily relocating the overhead cables. C&P's price is \$13,000, BG&E's price is \$5,000, and Montgomery Cablevision will work on the project at no charge.
 - * Foundation work, trimming of trees, and other miscellaneous expenses associated with the move are estimated at \$5,000.
2. Annette Van Hilst, Director of Community Planning for the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Development, has made a verbal commitment of \$25-30,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to be used for moving the Grange. These funds must be granted to either a governmental entity or a private, non-profit group. In the best-case scenario, the paperwork associated with obtaining these funds will take 6 to 8 weeks.
3. Staff at the Department of Environmental Protection and M-NCPPC's Development Review Division have been briefed on the proposed move and, after preliminary consideration, see no problem with carrying out the relocation project.

I would like to emphasize that the project as outlined above is real and viable. The parties in the cooperative agreement described above are trustworthy and responsible. They share a strong commitment to preserving the Grange Hall for future generations. Mr. McKeever is a long-time resident of the Brighton area. His father, Robert McKeever, Jr., sister, Sherry Ratliff, and other family members all live in the community and have a long standing commitment to the area. Montgomery Preservation Inc. is an active organization with a track record of successful preservation projects, including years of operating the County's salvage center, "Old House Parts", and organization of the annual County Preservation Awards Ceremony at Strathmore Hall.

It is the intention of Montgomery Preservation Inc., working cooperatively with Mr. McKeever and his family, to fully restore the Grange Hall after it is moved. This complete restoration will have to be done as funds are raised, but there is a total commitment that the Grange will be preserved as a positive and attractive asset to the Brighton community and to the intersection at which it is located.

To make this relocation option successful, the Church must

also be a partner in the effort. Several specific actions that the Church is asked to consider are:

1. Delay further action on the demolition of the Grange Hall for four months from the date of this letter. This time is needed to complete all legal contracts of conveyance and, most importantly, to get the paperwork done to obtain the Community Development Block Grant funds.
2. Assist in the project by directing you, as the Church's legal counsel, to coordinate the preparation of all documents of conveyance - including conveying the Grange to Montgomery Preservation Inc. and developing the formal agreement between Montgomery Preservation Inc. and Mr. McKeever.
3. Contribute any funds which would have been used to demolish the Grange Hall toward the effort to relocate the building. As the figures above demonstrate, the Community Development Block Grant commitment will not cover all the costs of the move. The Church's agreement to transfer funds - that had already been earmarked to destroy the Grange Hall - to the effort to save and preserve the building would be a great gesture of good-will and would add to the community spirit that must be at the heart of this project.

Mr. McKeever, representatives from Montgomery Preservation Inc., and M-NCPPC staff stand ready to meet with any Church group or representative to move this project forward to a successful conclusion. All parties are serious, committed, and ready to enter into formal agreements if the project details can be worked out with the Church.

Option #2

This option involves the retention of the Grange Hall at its current location, but transfers responsibility for ownership, restoration, and maintenance of the building to a private, non-profit group. The group most likely to undertake the project would be Montgomery Preservation Inc.

Specifically, Montgomery Preservation Inc. would consider purchasing the Grange Hall from the Church (building only) for a nominal fee and entering into a lease agreement on the land on which it is located. Montgomery Preservation Inc. would then be responsible for all restoration and maintenance of the Grange Hall, including fundraising to accomplish all needed repairs. It would be possible, in all likelihood, to work out a specific time schedule for completion of the restoration work.

In addition to restoring the Grange Hall, Montgomery Preservation Inc. would take responsibility for programs in the building - anticipated to be public meetings, fund-raising activities, and other uses compatible with the building and the community. Clearly, if the Church would be interested in utilizing the Grange Hall for any purpose after it was renovated, Montgomery Preservation Inc. would gladly cooperate.

Some of the major advantages of this option to the Church and to the community include:

- * Retention of a Brighton community landmark and identification of St. Luke's Church with its rescue and rejuvenation.
- * Transfer of legal and financial responsibility for the Grange Hall from the Church to a responsible private, non-profit group.
- * Legal retention by the Church of the land on which the building is located.
- * Resolution of a long-standing problem - the Grange Hall has been deteriorating for many years; its rejuvenation would serve as a symbol for Brighton that would boldly state the permanence of the community and the resurgence of the traditional values upon which it was founded.
- * There would be more funds available for restoration of the building because they would not have to be used for moving.
- * The Church would have access to and use of a restored building that architecturally complements the existing Church building. Building an attractive new structure for Church activities will be more expensive than the nominal cost of using the renovated Grange Hall for functions.
- * The positive publicity generated by the preservation of the Grange will attract new interest in the Church and may assist in bringing in new members. It is possible that a dynamic pastor could identify with the rejuvenation of the Grange Hall and its possible use for Church functions.
- * This project would be a symbol to the community of the Church's good-will and commitment to the area, of its capacity for constructive activity.

To assist the Church in its consideration of this second option, I have included with this letter a conceptual rendering of the restored Grange Hall and its relationship to the Church, which was prepared by architect Dean Brenneman.

As with the first option, the parties involved in this second option are equally serious, committed, and ready to enter into formal agreements if the project details can be worked out with the Church. All parties are willing to meet with the Church to discuss options #1 and #2 in more detail.

In conclusion, this letter details two viable options for the preservation of the Brighton Grange. Much thought and effort has gone into the development of these options - I hope that the Church will take great care in considering them. At the heart of this entire project is the Grange - a rare and vitally signifi-

cant historic resource. For your information, I have attached a letter that I received from Maurice L. Wiles, Master of the Maryland State Grange. Mr. Wiles strongly supports preservation of the building and emphasizes, very eloquently, the historic importance of the Brighton Grange.

Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of this letter.

Sincerely,



Gwen L. Marcus
Historic Preservation
Planner

cc: Eileen McGuckian
Roberta Hahn
Robert L. McKeever III
Annette Van Hilst

MARYLAND STATE GRANGE

Patrons of Husbandry

Organized 1874

Maurice Wiles

5543 Buffalo Road
Mt. Airy, MD 21771

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Donna D. Wiles

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(301) 829-0545

January 10, 1991

Gus Bauman, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Mr. Bauman:

It has just recently been brought to my attention the possible fate of the old Brighton Grange Hall, now owned by St. Luke's Episcopal Church. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the Maryland State Grange supports the preservation of this building. The National Grange, founded in 1867, and the Maryland State Grange, founded in 1874, has an excellent heritage and proud record of accomplishments in both the nation and the State of Maryland.

Brighton Grange Hall holds the honor of being the birthplace of the first Farmer's Institute. It would be sad to see a part of Maryland history disappear when I understand there is support for its survival. I am told there is land being offered to set the building on so that it can be restored to its original look.

I would like any possible proposals for destruction of the property to be held up until all possible parties interested in its restoration be heard from.

This issue will be discussed at the next Maryland State Grange Executive Committee Meeting to be held February 23, 1991.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maurice L. Wiles".

Maurice L. Wiles, Master
Maryland State Grange

MLW/ddw_

