

# Letter to the Editor: City should work with the community on granary issue

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**By John Hauser**

I am writing to express my strong objection to the decision to raze the granary on the west side waterfront in Sturgeon Bay. This building, while currently in poor condition, has the potential to become a landmark that sets our waterfront apart from other developments in small communities around the state. The decision to destroy it is a short sighted one and flies in the face of trying to provide visitors with the kind of unique cultural experience that would draw them into our community. The economic impact of this move will be negative.

I am also discouraged by the process used in making this determination. Just a couple of months ago the City Council voted to defer a decision on the destruction of this landmark until 2018, giving the community time to propose, and gather support for, alternatives. It is bewildering that the City is not honoring that Council decision and is instead moving forward with the destruction at this time – just as the community has reached its goal of securing the funds needed to stabilize the structure. Adding to the confusion is the Fire Chief's comment that "We cannot determine if the Granary has moved to date as we have no prior readings that we know of." Those readings do exist as a result of a City commissioned engineering study in 2013, and they should have been used to make a more objective and accurate determination of the short term risks of leaving the structure standing. The fact that he wasn't aware of that study is certainly an indication that his decision was hasty and poorly thought out.

Rather than destroying this piece of history, I encourage the City to work with the members of our community who have already raised sufficient funds to stabilize and preserve it. There is clearly a public interest in preserving and re-purposing this building; I encourage the City to support, rather than discourage, that interest. As a first step, the City should engage the services of an engineering firm that is qualified to do this kind of analysis; rather than ignore the information that the City paid for in 2013, I encourage the City to update that information to make a determination of whether the possibilities outlined in that earlier study still exist.

I know that decisions like this are difficult, but certainly they should at least be made with all the facts in hand and with the counsel of those who have the ability to consider the broad impact of the decision.

Respectfully submitted,

John Hauser