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June 6, 2019

The Honorable Mr. Mike DeWine, Governor of Ohio
Ohio Power Sitting Board Chairman, Mr. Sam Randazzo
Ohio Statehouse
Columbus, OH

Dear Governor DeWine and Chairman Randazzo,

It is a fortunate community that houses a pillar of strength, one that bears witness to all that its many generations of residents and passersby have endured. In the tiny village of Fairhaven in Preble County, Ohio, that pillar is the historic Bunker Hill House. 'If walls could talk' is an understatement. In structures of this significance, the stories seem to be as numerous as the old bricks themselves.

Why do so precious few of these treasures dot our landscapes and towns? Because it takes someone with a passion for their story and a deep understanding and appreciation of their significance to step in and save them. For the Bunker Hill House, that someone is Walter Mast, a one-man restoration crew, historian, and preservationist, who has dedicated his time and treasure over the past two+ decades to painstakingly reconstruct this important and prominent dot on the timeline of not only Ohio history, but our nation's, too.

The Institute for Learning in Retirement at Miami University values the living history found at the Bunker Hill House. No textbook can rival the benefits of experiential learning. On numerous occasions, our seniors have travelled to the historic inn to witness firsthand the closet under the stairs where Gabriel Smith, a conductor on the Underground Railroad, would rest or hide while assisting countless runaway slaves toward Canada's beckoning freedom. A trapdoor opened from the floorboards sheds light on another hiding place, as well as a very dark period in our nation's history. To tour the building, peeking through the crack between the stairs and out the back window toward Four Mile Creek as "Old Gabe" did thousands of times, you get chills as you realize the significance of this space and all that took place in it.

There is a reason the Bunker Hill House is on the National Register of Historic Places, in addition to being an Ohio Historic Site, an Ohio Underground Railroad Historic Site, and a National Underground Railroad Historic Site. History happened here, and it must be protected and preserved. The threat posed to this national and Ohio treasure by the proposed Angelina Solar Project is real due to its proximity to Four Mile Creek and the creek's propensity to overflow its banks. Since walls can't talk, it's up to us to speak up and protect the grand inn so that generations to come will see and understand what happened here, lest we ever forget.

Most sincerely,

Judy Macke
ILR Program Manager

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