

KENTUCKY TRUST

For Historic Preservation

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MCPS

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June 5, 2016

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Dear Members of the Board of Marion County Schools,

The Kentucky Trust for Historic Preservation was founded in 1998 to save Kentucky's endangered historic places. Our founders realized that a non-profit entity could directly preserve Kentucky's historic places where others could not. To date we have directly invested in, and saved dozens of historic properties and contributed to the preservation of hundreds more all across Kentucky.

This work recently led us to Lebanon where by we are now in discussion with local entity's regarding the future potential of an endangered historic building downtown where by the Ray house was mentioned to us. It is my understanding that the School Board has interest in exploring options for the Ray house property located on Main Street. I understand the School Board might consider selling the property but are also considering demolition.

My organization feels demolishing the Ray House would be a great loss to the community and should be avoided entirely in favor of our proposal. I recently visited Lebanon and walked through the home and believe the it has great potential, a desirable location, and is overall in good restorable condition. As such the Kentucky Trust would like to acquire the Ray House property for the consideration of \$1.00 to include the house and the lot immediately surrounding the home, the size of which is yet to be determined.

The Kentucky Trust has vast experience stabilizing, renovating and finding new uses and new owners for historic building with successes in ever region of our state. As such, our purchase of the Ray House will enable us to find a new and viable use for the property with a new owner who will create an asset for the community. We will immediately take steps to see the home's deficiencies addressed and begin exploring options for new stewards of the home. A benefit of a sale to the Trust is that we will hold an easement on the property, ensuing that it will be perpetually maintained to a high standard, and we will retain oversight as to the use and occupancy of the home.

The Trust will leverage funds from our revolving fund, membership base, dedicated supporters, grants, and local partners to make necessary repairs and renovations of the property so that we might explore a best use of the house. Our principal goal will be to see the house preserved, but we intend to find a use that will again contribute local property tax revenues and directly contribute to the local school district. Already I have had many favorable conversations with potential partners to assist in this project and an individual who may have interest in the home.

To accomplish this task, we would ask that the you consider our offer instead of expending the funds to demolish the property, or offering it to another entity who may not ensure the preservation and perpetual care of the the historic Ray home. Acceptance of this proposal will be a fiscally responsible alternative to expending funds to demolish, while it will ensure the retention of the historic fabric of the community, return revenues

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to the local tax base, and build on a rich heritage that may yet prove to be an asset to the local economy.

I respectfully request that you the Members of the Marion County School Board consider our proposal to purchase the historic Ray House. I am happy to answer additional questions and I would like to attend the Board meeting on June 9th where I may further speak to this proposal. I hope we may find an agreeable solution that will save the important Ray House as a historic landmark of Lebanon and see the buildings put back into service for the good of the community.

Respectfully,

Eric Whisman
Executive Director,
The Kentucky Trust for Historic Preservation
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