

Resolution in Support of the Restoration and Preservation of the Historic 18th Century DeBaun House in Emerson

WHEREAS, the Peter DeBaun House (also known as American Legion Post 269), located on Main Street, is one of only two 18th century structures still remaining in Emerson; and,

WHEREAS, the DeBaun House was built by one of the Emerson area's founding families and survives as a physical reminder of an all-but-vanished rural, agricultural lifestyle and a Dutch-American culture that dominated northern New Jersey for well over a century; and,

WHEREAS, the DeBaun House exhibits important architectural features unique to Jersey Dutch homes of the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, including a gambrel roof which can be found nowhere else in Emerson; and,

WHEREAS, in 1982, the Historic Sites Advisory Board of Bergen County, which included members with expertise in local history and historic architecture, cited the DeBaun House as an important structure worth preserving, noting in its survey that "the frame house with a five bay vernacular, Federal style gambrel roof main section ... is a typical example of early regional frame architecture;" and,

WHEREAS, over the past 50 years Emerson has lost much of its dwindling historic heritage, through the demolition of some its most historic homes, which will never return; and,

WHEREAS, at the time of its original lease agreement with the American Legion, the Housing Authority of Bergen County (HABC) pledged to restore the DeBaun House both for its historic value and as a meeting place for American Legion members and the residents of the on-site veterans' housing; and,

WHEREAS, an architectural firm, Connolly & Hickey, hired by the HABC to do an analysis of and preservation plan for the DeBaun House, determined that rehabilitation of the structure is feasible, specifying "recommendations for the repair of the building's remaining historic fabric, while also making recommendations for upgrades to support its continued use as an American Legion Post and meeting space and planned use as a center for veterans' housing services"; and,

WHEREAS, the HABC received a considerable grant of \$450,000 to help restore the DeBaun House but then re-directed the entire amount for other purposes; and,

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Committee of the Borough of Emerson is of the understanding that the HABC may now be considering an alternate use for the DeBaun House site, which may result in the demolition of the historic building; and,

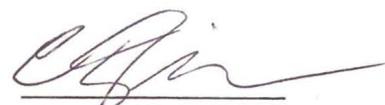
WHEREAS, it is the mission of the Historic Preservation Committee of the Borough of Emerson to be the public voice of historic preservation in Emerson and, accordingly, to do everything in its capacity to save Emerson's irreplaceable historic structures.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Committee of the Borough of Emerson strongly encourages the Housing Authority of Bergen County to cease any plans to demolish the historic DeBaun House and to reestablish its commitment to its restoration by aggressively seeking out any and all sources of funding to rehabilitate the structure.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a true copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Housing Authority of Bergen County, Bergen County Trust Fund Public Advisory Committee, Bergen County Historical Society, Senator Gerald Cardinale, Assembly Members Holly Schepisi and Robert Auth, Bergen County Executive James Tedesco and the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Emerson.

Committee Members	MOVED	SECONDED	AYES	NAYES	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
P. Mazzo			X			
M. Castrovillari			X			
A. Basile			X			
C. Triana			X			
F. Varoli			X			
J. Varoli			X			
C. Wamsley			X			

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was duly adopted by the Borough of Emerson Historic Preservation Committee at a meeting held on March 18, 2019.

Attest: 

Acting Secretary