



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ulster County Legislature's Chairman Donaldson Announces Exploratory Committee To Better Utilize The Persen House

Ulster County Legislature Chairman David B. Donaldson has announced the formation of an exploratory Committee to Better Utilize the Persen House.

Built in 1660, the Persen House, located in historic uptown Kingston, is one of four National Historic Landmark buildings on each corner of the intersection of John and Crown Streets. This four-corner site is the earliest remaining original site in the United States with Pre-Revolutionary stone buildings.

The last active use of the Persen House ended in September of 1999 when Ulster County's Cornell Cooperative Extension moved out due to serious structural roof failure.

The building was immediately stabilized and significant structural renovations were made in accordance to historical guidelines. In the course of the required archaeological work at the site, over 1,600 artifacts and evidence of prehistoric habitation that spanned over 3,500 years were found. The burn marks from the "Burning of Kingston" by the British in 1777 was one such find as were burn marks associated with an earlier burning by the Esopus Indians.

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The building's exterior has been brought to its original condition but the interior still needs significant work in order to utilize the building. The last two summers the public has responded enthusiastically after Donaldson gave permission to the Friends of Historic Kingston to supervise self-tours of the incomplete historic restoration project, with many of the archeological finds from the site on display.

The committee will be charged with bringing back both a short- and long-term plan for future use of the building to the Legislature and County Executive Mike Hein.

“Like many other good projects, the Persen House has become a victim of the jail fiasco,” said Legislator Rich Parete, D-Accord, who will be chairing the committee. “This is a remarkable historical structure that should not continue to languish in uncertainty.”

The other members of the five-person committee will be Legislators Alan Lomita, D-Rosendale, Wayne Harris, R-Clintondale and Kenneth Ronk, R-Wallkill, along with City of Kingston Alderman Thomas Hoffay.

People interested in attending the meetings can call the Legislature at 340-3900 or check the legislative calendar on the Ulster County Government website, www.co.ulster.ny.us, for meetings that have been scheduled.