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Foundation restoring Battersea wants to buy the house

Related Info

If you go:

Public hearing on proposal to purchase Battersea

When: Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

Where: Union Train Station, 103 River St., Petersburg

If you want to donate

Online: <http://www.batterseafound.org/support.html>

By phone: (804) 732-9882

By mail: Make check payable to the Battersea Foundation, P.O. Box 111, Petersburg, Va. 23804

By [Jeremy Slayton](#)

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PETERSBURG -- A nonprofit group is making a bid to purchase the 18th century house Battersea.

Battersea Foundation, which partners with Petersburg to preserve, restore and revitalize the villa, recently presented a proposal in which the group would purchase the historic building and property from the city for \$200,000. That figure represents the same amount paid by the city when it bought the property in 1985.

"We felt like this was a way to still preserve this landmark, but to take a little bit of the burden off the city," said Tempy C. Barbru, executive director of Battersea Foundation.

A public hearing will be held Tuesday night for community members to speak about the sale of the building.

Col. John Banister, the first mayor of Petersburg and a signer of the Articles of Confederation, built Battersea in 1768 near the south bank of the Appomattox River. The home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The city has been receptive to working with Battersea Foundation and other nonprofit organizations, said Joanne Williams, a spokeswoman for Petersburg.

"For some time now, the city has hoped to form partnerships with nonprofits that would take over the tourist attractions and really be able to concentrate on completely restoring them . . . and helping them grow as a tourist attraction," Williams said.

She likened the impact of restoration efforts at Battersea to the impact a restored Maymont had on Richmond.

"You can see how it certainly has enhanced the quality of life [in Richmond] and Petersburg certainly hopes that this venture will turn out as well," Williams said.

The first restoration phase at Battersea was completed in September to address water and moisture damage to the building. A second phase will replace chimneys and stucco on the exterior.

Barbru estimates the foundation will spend between \$4.7 million to \$5.3 million in next five to seven years for the restoration effort.

"We don't need another house museum. We have a wonderful plan for a cultural and civic and educational campus out there," said Barbara P. Moseley, president of the Battersea board of directors.

Barbru acknowledges the task facing the foundation is daunting during these tough economic times. The group applied for grants to help pay for restoration costs and cast a wide net for donors.

"My belief, and I know the board of directors shares it: Anything is attainable when you've got the passion, the drive, the experience, the knowledge and the desire to do it," Barbru said.

Contact Jeremy Slayton at (804) 649-6861 or jslayton@timesdispatch.com.

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