



CITY OF ALLENTOWN

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**RESOLUTION**

**R17 - 2019**

***Introduced by the City Council on March 6, 2019***

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Recommends preserving the architectural and cultural value of the State Hospital by recommending the introduction of a zoning amendment to include the property under the Historic Building Demolition Overlay District, having the State establish a Covenant or deed restriction on the property to preserve architecturally significant structures prior to the demolition and conveyance of the property and recommends the state pursue listing the State Hospital on the National Register of Historic Places which will recognize the properties place in history and will allow potential developers to use state and federal historic preservation tax credits to assist with the development of the property.

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***Resolved by the Council of the City of Allentown, That***

**WHEREAS**, The Comprehensive Plan of the City of Allentown, entitled "Allentown Vision 2030," has proposed a goal to "recognize, preserve and promote the architectural and cultural value of the City's historic structures, neighborhoods, and resources."

**WHEREAS**, The City of Allentown created the Historic Building Demolition Overlay District, in part, to "promote the retention of community character through preservation of the local heritage by recognizing and protecting historic and architectural resources;" to "encourage the continued use, appropriate rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings;" and to "carry out the recommendations of the City's Comprehensive Plan, including recommendations to preserve historic buildings and community character."

**WHEREAS**, The Allentown State Hospital, located at 1600 Hanover Avenue, has met all the guidelines required to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**WHEREAS**: To meet the National Register of Historic Places criteria for evaluation, the Allentown State Hospital contains a "quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture," and possesses the "integrity of location, design, setting, and workmanship.

**WHEREAS**, the Council of the City of Allentown promotes the preservation of historical significance of buildings, land and artifacts; and

**WHEREAS**, Allentown State Hospital was a psychiatric hospital located at 1600 Hanover Avenue which served counties of Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, Monroe and Pike; and.

**WHEREAS**, Allentown State Hospital opened its doors on October 3, 1913 and was the first psychiatric hospital in the United State to be completely seclusion-free.

**WHEREAS,** The Pennsylvania Department of General Services has placed bids to demolish all the buildings on the property (including the historic main building) by the end of 2019, after which time the property will be purchased; and

**WHEREAS,** Allentown State Hospital was built on 209 acres in Hanover Township, which included the former estates of Robert E. Wright and J. Marshall Wright, where Architect Philip H. Johnson presented a copper box containing the newspapers of the day, assortment of coins, a copy of the Act of Legislature ordering the building of the hospital and a list of all the homeopathic physicians in the state. The Governor then spread cement over the cornerstone and the “time capsule.”

**WHEREAS,** Allentown State Hospital has rich history with the lobby having marble floors and columns, stately wood trim and wood doors, and a spiral staircase with brass railings and marble steps.

**WHEREAS,** the architectural features and historic main building of the Allentown State Hospital should be preserved. The tops of columns, chandelier and wall sconces, stained glass and door hardware should be protected for its architectural significance; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the City of Allentown hereby encourages the State House and Senate to support our request to preserve the architecturally significant structures and architectural elements within the Allentown State Hospital.

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED** that City Council recommends the state place a covenant or deed restriction on the property to preserve the original structure of the hospital and any other historical significant buildings on the property prior to the conveyance of any property for development.

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED** that City Council recommends the state pursue listing the State Hospital on the National Register of Historic Places which will recognize the properties place in history and will allow potential developers to use state and federal historic preservation tax credits to assist with economic development of the property.

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED** that City Council introduce legislation amending the Zoning Map to include the Allentown State Hospital in the Historic Building Demolition Overlay District to promote the City’s goal to recognize, preserve, and promote the architectural and cultural value of the City’s historic structures, neighborhoods, and resources within the City’s boundaries.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of the Resolution be sent to elected state officials in the Lehigh Valley asking for support of such measures.