

Dear Honorable Members of the Bristol Historic Commission,

The James D. Rielly Foundation humbly requests the permanent placement of the Bristol Santa House on the property of the Bristol Statehouse, located on the Bristol Town Common. While seeking “permanent” placement, we recognize that the structure is not a permanent structure and can be removed, if desired, without adversely impacting the site. This proposal outlines the multifaceted benefits and assurances provided by the James D. Rielly Foundation, emphasizing its significant impact on the community and alignment with the Commission's values of historic preservation and community engagement.

1. **Community Impact and Accessibility:** In the 2023 season alone, the Bristol Santa House welcomed over 4,100 visitors across 21 days in December, including 150 families with children with disabilities. This demonstrates the house's role as an inclusive and cherished holiday destination.
2. **Economic and Structural Considerations:** The Bristol Santa House's annual relocation is financially burdensome and physically detrimental to the structure. Establishing a stable location would alleviate these concerns, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the house.
3. **National Recognition and Local Tradition:** The Bristol Santa House has become an annual tradition attracting visitors from as far as Alaska and California and has also gained national media attention for its inclusive approach, particularly for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).
4. **Regulatory Compliance and Safety:** The structure is fully ADA compliant, meeting the Bristol building inspector and the State of Rhode Island standards. It adheres to all safety requirements, is fully insured, and will include hurricane ties and added security measures such as additional outdoor lighting and cameras to enhance safety for the Town Common and surrounding areas.
5. **Support and Assurance:** The proposal enjoys the support of the Bristol Statehouse Foundation Board of Directors and has garnered extensive public backing. Additionally, the James D. Rielly Foundation will establish an escrow account specifically for the removal and restoration of the site, should it ever be necessary, ensuring no financial burden falls on the town.
6. **Enhanced Community Service:** Granting permanent status to the Bristol Santa House would enable the James D. Rielly Foundation to expand its services throughout the year, further benefiting those in need, enhancing community engagement, and helping to serve as an economic engine for the town.
7. **Architectural and Historical Integrity:** The design of the Bristol Santa House, reminiscent of an 1890s train depot, complements the historical character of the Bristol Statehouse and the Town Common, respecting the aesthetic and cultural significance of its proposed permanent location.

In conclusion, the permanent establishment of the Bristol Santa House on the Bristol Statehouse property represents a unique opportunity to enrich the Bristol community, preserve and enhance local traditions, and provide a model of inclusivity and accessibility. We respectfully request the Bristol Historic District Commission's approval, confident that this initiative aligns with our shared goals of community service, public engagement, respect for Bristol's historical character, and desire for its economic growth.

Sincerely,

James D. Rielly Foundation

Appendices:

- Site Plan
- Letter from Bristol Statehouse Foundation Board of Directors
- Documentation of ADA compliance and building inspector approval
- Harmonizing New Construction with Historic Charm: The Bristol Santa House at the Bristol Statehouse
- Letters of support from community members and stakeholders