

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

- Ted Krieg -Territorial School

**Submitted to the Dillingham City Council
For the October 5, 2023 City Council meeting**

By Ted Krieg, Dillingham resident since 1992.

No public notice and no chance for public discussion. The Territorial School was NOT on the agenda for the September 7, 2023 Dillingham City Council Meeting. This is an important issue, and the Public deserves to know in advance and be given the opportunity to comment.

At the meeting the issue was raised that the Public should be given notice before a council decision was made concerning the Territorial School. **The importance of the public's right to be informed was ignored by the council.** Revisit that vote and set a time frame –at least 6 months - to thoroughly explore options before making a decision about the building. Address the following points.

Contact Polyseal Insulation, 23605 S. Old Glenn Hwy, Palmer AK 99645 (phone 907 745-7325). They have concrete lifting foam which could be used to support the floor and they also work with foundations. This is just one company that I found online.

More time would allow the application paperwork to be completed to have the Old Dillingham Elementary School (Territorial school) nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. This would qualify the building for state grants-in-aid and other funding (The Rasmussen Foundation Alaska) that could be used to renovate the building (see below).

The Public deserves to hear a report from qualified engineers that are in the business of preserving Historic buildings. The engineer's report should explain the condition of the building and what it would cost to fix it. I don't believe the building is going to fall over or collapse. And fix the water pipe issues whatever they are? Presently the building doesn't need water so isolate it from the main line, or whatever takes. A cost comparison needs to be made between renovating the Territorial School to make it usable and the cost of constructing a new building of similar square footage and usefulness.

It is hard to put a price on the historic and aesthetic value of the Territorial School in downtown Dillingham. It is the most recognizable building in Dillingham. The building could be a valuable asset to the City of Dillingham - apartments upstairs could provide income to the city – there is a housing shortage in Dillingham.

Creative solutions for the use of the building need to be explored – it is valuable historically and it could be valuable functionally to the City of Dillingham, the residents of Dillingham, and the character of downtown Dillingham!

In 1991 the Dillingham Historic Preservation Commission completed the "Inventory of Historic Buildings - City of Dillingham – Phase 1."

In 1993 the commission completed the 'Inventory of Historic Buildings – City of Dillingham – Phase 2.

Copies of these documents are on file in the City Planners Office – copies should be printed and distributed to the City Council and be made available to others for future planning to preserve historic buildings in Dillingham.

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In Volume 1 the Snag Point Elementary School or the Old Dillingham Elementary School (Territorial School) - Inventory Number: D91-04 is listed. The Commission recommended that the “building should be considered for National Register nomination.”

“The nomination of a building to the National Register may include benefits to the owners such as tax incentives for renovation and state grants-in-aid. The nomination to the National Register does not compromise the owner’s right to rent and/or sell. In fact the owner may alter or even destroy the building. The National Register is a means of recognizing historically important buildings and of offering assistance for their preservation (Inventory of Historic Buildings - City of Dillingham – Phase 1, 1991: pg. 4).”

In 1991 the Dillingham Historic Preservation Commission had 7 members. For the inventory project 20 residents of Dillingham were listed as Inventory support. Also listed were a Photographer, Consultant, Editor and a Manuscript Revision person. That was huge support for the project. I believe the support is still in the community to save the Territorial School and the residents of Dillingham deserve the opportunity to support that effort.

This issue concerning the Territorial School is very similar to the issue a few years ago with the Dillingham High School gym. “We have to tear down the gym, it’s going to collapse.” Then Neil Bennett took over the project and fixed the beautiful gym that we are still using today! Approached positively anything is possible.

Thank You!