



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jeffersonville Carnegie Library Foundation statement about Remnant Trust decision

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Brian Bex of The Remnant Trust informed JCLF by letter that the Trust will vacate the building later this year and move its collection. The Carnegie library building in Jeffersonville is owned by the Jeffersonville Carnegie Library Foundation, and was leased to the Trust for \$1 per year as part of a five-year lease.

We are all dismayed at this decision, but we are not surprised. We were always told that the Trust would have the collection regularly open to the public, which they have never been willing to do once the collection was moved into the building. We look forward to gaining a true community partner who is willing to make a serious, long-term commitment to the building and to Jeffersonville. We believe finding a long-term, local tenant is in the best interest of the building and our foundation, as well as the residents of Southern Indiana, many of whom have supported the restoration of the building. We appreciate so much the patience and support we have received from the public.

The Timeline of Liberty, bas relief work which is property of JCLF, will remain in Warder Park. The work was purchased for more than \$750,000 from The Remnant Trust.

Some background is necessary to understand how and why the board of JCLF has attempted to work with the Remnant Trust.

The board of the Jeffersonville Carnegie Library Foundation added \$1 million to its restoration and construction budget to create the facility that the founders of the Trust believed was needed for the collection, much of which had nothing at all to do with the safety of the books but much more to do with Brian Bex's own desire for certain aesthetic enhancements. We had faith in the Trust that creating such a public place for their collection and staying in the building for the long term was their intent, which is why the board agreed to complete so many of the requested changes.

We know that staff of the Trust believed there were problems with the HVAC system in the building. But part of the problem was the Trust's own inaction. Even though they were only paying \$1 per year, they were unwilling to pay for routine maintenance to the HVAC system, which they were required to do in the lease. Also, the fact that the building was not open to the

public contributed to the problems. The HVAC system was designed for the building to often be open to the public, with people coming in and out to see the collection. Since this has not happened, this has affected the operation of the system.

Nevertheless, we have attempted to work in every way possible with the Trust staff and its board. We presented a proposed solution to the Remnant Trust board at their February meeting in Florida. The board accepted our proposal, and we were working towards nailing down the problem. We had secured a donor who was willing to fund the replacement of the system, if necessary, and were working with several contractors to find out exactly what the problem is and fix it. Also, the dome of the building was damaged in the recent ice storm, and after initial repairs to stop a leak, permanent repairs were to begin this week. We were awaiting estimates and reports from contractors on the HVAC system work.

On many, many occasions we have attempted to talk to Brian Bex, and his son, Kristopher Bex, who lived in Jeffersonville. Kristopher was invited to every board meeting of the JCLF, and only attended two meetings in two years. That simple act would have greatly improved communication with us.

For the board of the JCLF, this is greatly disappointing. Our organization is comprised entirely of volunteers, and we have worked diligently on our own time to try to solve issues with the Trust and its staff. We are sorry that the many efforts we made have come to naught, but we are also relieved that we can now move forward to find a true community partner who wants to be in Jeffersonville.

Ultimately, the Trust's decision to come to Jeffersonville was the impetus for the restoration of the Carnegie Library building, which has become one of downtown Jeffersonville's shining examples of restoration. We know the restored building is a personal point of pride for many who live in Jeffersonville. We are thankful that the Trust's occupation of the building spurred that support. We truly believe that another partner can be found to occupy the space for the long term. We look forward to connecting with such a partner.