

Deteriorated 1840s log cabins coming down

Associated Press

CHARLESTON — One day after City Council passed a bill that could extend the stay of demolition of historic buildings from 90 days to nine months, crews began to disassemble two log cabins in South Hills that date back to the late 1840s.

Developer JD Stricklen, who purchased the four-acre property where the Gilliland cabins stand in February, made the decision to start dismantling the cabins after the previous owner, Jean Miller, turned over possession and vacated the property May 2.

With the main house on the site now vacant, "the liability and responsibility of public safety becomes too great to prevent curious passersby and vandals from coming onto the property," Stricklen said on May 3, during a meeting with his lawyers, Kent George, Chris Hamb and Chelsea Richmond, of Robinson & McEwee PLLC.

It likely will take a few weeks to completely disassemble the cabins, depending on the weather, George said.

Crews began dismantling the log structures with hand tools on May 3, and any usable salvaged material will be reused locally, Stricklen said.

Stricklen has entered into a contract with Charleston lawyer William Pepper, who owns Benedict Haid Farm, in Clendenin. Stricklen said Pepper has experience in salvaging material from historic structures.

"The goal is to eventually reconstruct a structure that has historic components," George said.

Pepper said he will take any usable materials from the cabin to be used in constructing a "historic replica" on his farm.

"We made an agreement where he's giving me whatever I can use in exchange for properly dismantling (the cabins) and taking away a considerable amount of worthless wood," Pepper said.

Stricklen noted his liability concerns as the cabins' new owner. On May 3, he said, one of the chimneys collapsed unexpectedly.

In the smaller cabin, crews



Workers begin to dismantle the historic Gilliland cabins in Charleston. AP file photo

found 4 feet of standing water in the cellar, he added.

"What happens if a curious child gets down there and throws?" Stricklen said.

City Councilman Tom Lane, who was vocally opposed to moving or dismantling the cabins, introduced the bill the City Council passed May 2 although it has no bearing on the cabins because the stay of demolition for those structures expired in February.

"Obviously, there was a demolition delay in this

case, and it provides a pretty good example of how the bill could have operated," Lane said on May 3. "In many cases like this, I think the public was caught by surprise that the cabins might be demolished."

The cabins have been at the center of a heated debate between Stricklen and South Hills residents.

"I've always been clear that the cabins weren't staying. Their deterioration has been going on for a long time," Stricklen said.

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1. WVU will not increase campus enrollment to 40,000 students as President Gee has suggested.
2. WVU is losing enrollment, in reality.
3. WVU, in fact, is losing student population and is below the 2007 level of enrollment.
4. WVU has less than 29,000 on the Morgantown campus.
5. WVU has more out of state students than in state. This means we are basically subsidizing other states.
6. WVU refuses to compete fairly and pay their fair share.
7. WVU and the city collude to cheat the public and refuses to participate in local planning.
8. The city refuses to make WVU, and their private partners, comply with local zoning.
9. WVU refuses to be transparent, hiding behind their WV logo.
10. WVU refuses to pay their fair share of property taxes on their for profit public/private partnerships -over \$4 million a year.
11. WVU refuses to pay property taxes on businesses unrelated to the mission of education and academics.
12. WVU partners with the county assessor, who supports WVU over local tax payers by refusing to assess WVU and its for profit partners equal assessments. Local private owners pay more than their fair share in the end.
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15. WVU has over 8,000 beds all built for undergrad students. Which is over 40% of the market.
16. WVU is being sued by the contractor of U Place and wants it to be sold on the court house square.
17. WVU is not being honest with the public and refuses to follow state law procurement procedures.
18. WVU has been sued by a whistle blowers accusing them of unfair business and procurement practices.
19. WVU has been accused of the lack of transparency and unethical behavior that has compromised their exclusive entity relationship of the state of West Virginia.
20. WVU is being sued over their public private partnership dealings.

The public needs to know and understand that WVU is breaking procurement laws and cheating the local community and the tax payers of West Virginia. This is sad that President Gee, Narvel Weese & Rossi Wiles think they can get away with this activity.

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