

August 7, 2007

Dear Dover City Councilmen and Mayor:

It has come to our attention that the Dover City Council is considering backing out of the agreement with the Portsmouth Children's Museum due to costs of repairs required to ensure that the Butterfield building is structurally sound.

The cost of repairs may be great, but the cost of not repairing the building, and/or losing the Museum is far greater.

The tourist industry is a vital part of the NH economy. Dover has the opportunity to share in this wealth by attracting the Museum and its visitors - drawing 97,000 people a year to their current facility. 97,000 more people will likely be eating and shopping in Dover, having arrived downtown to visit the Museum. That is great for business! The addition of the Children's Museum has the potential to ensure the vitality of downtown - providing programs and exhibits for children that would otherwise travel to Boston or Portland for this cultural and educational experience - dollars lost to those states booming economies?

We are sure that the economic viability and potential of this project were considered in the initial phases of the Museum project - including its perfect fit with the development of the waterfront parcel. Obviously, a lot of hard work has been done to revitalize the downtown area and secure the Museum's relocation to Dover. Why reverse course? This is an opportunity that should not be passed up - there is too much to lose.

As residents of Dover, we are concerned about a recurring theme... there seems to be more frequent references to the City potentially backing out on agreements. This was a concern raised about the waterfront project and about the Museum. Backing out on agreements with outside partners like Dickinson and the Children's Museum could send a message to other future potential partners as well as residents that may commit their volunteer time to such projects. We may unintentionally send the message that it is NOT worth the risk to invest in Dover - because they may back out in the end?

We strongly ask that you consider what the Museum could mean to the viability and success of Dover before backing out of the agreement. The benefits of locating the Museum in Dover will greatly repay the City back for the expenditures required now.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Regards,

Ken, Amy and Katie Costello  
4 Page Ave.  
Dover, NH