

# State board tables bid to nominate Docking Building for Register of Historic Places

## Supporters feel encouraged to hear state is looking at all options

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TIM HRENCHIR/THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Rachel Nugent, at the lectern, spoke on behalf of the Docking State Office Building Saturday before Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review members, from left, Kathryn Herzog, John W. Hoopes, Joseph Johnson and David Sachs.

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A divided Kansas Historic Sites Review Board voted Saturday to table a proposal to recommend placing the Docking State Office Building on the National Register of Historic Places.

Still, Docking Building supporter Mel Borst said he felt encouraged to hear Kansas Secretary of Administration Sarah Shipman say at the meeting that the state was looking at “all possible options” for the building, including arranging for someone else to renovate and occupy it.

Due to an increased understanding of its value, Borst said, “I’m optimistic the building will live on.”

The board voted 4-2 to table the matter, with votes from a majority of the quorum of six members present being required to approve any action.

Board members J. Eric Engstrom, John W. Hoopes, Joseph Johnson and Toni Stewart voted in favor of tabling the proposal while David Sachs and Kathryn Herzog dissented.

Engstrom, Herzog and Johnson are from Wichita, Hoopes is from Lawrence, Sachs is from Manhattan and Stewart is from Topeka.

Shipman said the state plans in July to close the Docking Building at 915 S.W. Harrison, which opened in 1957.

The Kansas Preservation Alliance nominated the Docking Building to be placed on the National Register on Feb. 16, after Gov. Sam Brownback sought to have it imploded.

Brownback in March vetoed a bill that would have blocked the governor from taking future action to implode the building, and a Senate attempt to override that veto failed. Senators voted 26-13 in favor of an override, with a two-thirds majority of 27 votes being needed to override.

The state review board Saturday considered expressing support for placing the building on the National Register, which is the official list of the nation's places worthy of historic preservation. Structures on the national register may still be demolished.

The governor appoints the 11 volunteer professionals who serve on the state review board.

Properties on the state and national registers are eligible for incentives that include tax credits and government grants that can be used to preserve or rehabilitate them.

Inclusion on the registers also ensures that the State Historic Preservation Office will have a voice in whether the properties may be altered or demolished, though units of local government have the final say.

Rachel Nugent — an associate with Kansas City, Mo.-based Rosin Preservation, LLC — appeared Saturday on behalf of the Preservation Alliance. She talked about the Docking Building's architectural and historical significance.

Shipman spoke on behalf of the building's owner, the state of Kansas. She asked board members to table the proposal and give the state more time to look at its options.

Shipman said she was willing to appear again before the board when the state has plans in place.

Board member Sachs said he considers the Docking Building to be significant. He said the board could "help the public to see that" by voting in favor of the National Register nomination.

Engstrom, the board's chairman, said he thought the board should defer to the state's wishes.

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