

Letters and handouts provided to the Minnesota Housing Board at its March 23, 2017 meeting by the following:

- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council
- Board of Hennepin County Commissioners
- Minnesota Historical Society
- Larry Peterson, Fort Snelling State Park Manager (retired)
- Dominion
- United States Department of the Interior
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

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**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

March 17, 2017

Commissioner Mary Tingerthal
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
400 North Sibley Street, Suite 300
St. Paul, MN 55101-1998

RE: Dominion Fort Snelling Redevelopment

Dear Commissioner Tingerthal:

I am writing to urge you to approve the Dominion proposal to redevelop 26 buildings on the Upper Post at Fort Snelling. The National Trust named the greater Fort Snelling area as a National Treasure in 2016, and we are committed to working with landowners and stakeholders in the area to preserve the history on this site and promote the preservation, through adaptive use of the remaining buildings.

Dominium's plan to convert the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources-owned buildings into housing is financially sustainable, meets a great need in the community, will restore these long-vacant historic structures and expand economic development opportunities in the greater Fort Snelling area. It can be part of a model for redeveloping a former Army base into reimagined 21st century uses.

Fort Snelling has great potential for redevelopment. The Minnesota Historical Society is doing excellent work with its restoration projects at Historic Fort Snelling. The Boy Scouts of America's urban base camp restoration project, along with its planned new construction of a leadership center immediately adjacent, has reactivated that corner of the Upper Post area. Common Bond has successfully redeveloped several historic buildings into quality veteran housing. The Veterans Administration is restoring one of its large buildings on the Upper Post. Dominion is well-positioned to add to this success story with its redevelopment of the DNR properties.

Over the years the Minnesota DNR has been an excellent steward to these buildings, minimizing deterioration and collapse. However, continuing to hold these vacant buildings is a risk against time and the elements, and the

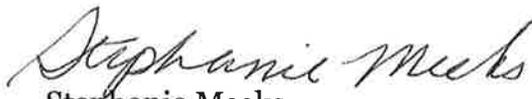
Stephanie K. Meeks | PRESIDENT

The Watergate Office Building 2600 Virginia Avenue NW Suite 1000 Washington, DC 20037
E smeeks@savingplaces.org P 202.588.6105 F 202.588.6082 www.PreservationNation.org

DNR is not equipped with the resources to market and redevelop historic structures. Dominion has a track record of extraordinary work converting historic buildings into housing. They are the best hope to see affordable housing units secured and a historic site brought back to life in Minnesota.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,


Stephanie Meeks

cc: John DeCramer, Chairman
MHFA Board
Governor Mark Dayton



Building and Construction Trades Council

Affiliated with BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES DEPARTMENT, AFL-CIO



March 22, 2017

Mary Tingerthal
Commissioner
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
400 Sibley St, Suite 300
St. Paul, MN 55101-1998

Subject: Upper Post at Fort Snelling

Dear Commissioner:

I am unable to attend your meeting Thursday, but I ask that my letter be part of the public comments given on "The Upper Post at Fort Snelling."

The Upper Post at Fort Snelling is a unique and important part of Minnesota's history. It served our State and Nation at a critical, yet tragic time, as we developed as a young state and a growing nation.

Today the Fort continues to reflect our past, and now can start a new chapter in its history with the renovation of over 300,000 square feet into affordable housing for Minnesotans.

This project will not only provide needed housing units to the region, but it also gives preference to veterans that served our country. This is all part of a great story. With the preservation of a unique part of Minnesota's history, how can we lose?

An added bonus is the 10's of thousands of work-hours that will go to hard-working Minnesotans and Building Trades members, many who have also served our country.

The Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council encourages the agency to assist in making this project a permanent piece of Minnesota's history.

Thank you, Commissioner, for all that you and the agency's employees do to make housing affordable for those that need it most. Great work! Let's do more projects like this that provide housing and needed jobs for Construction Workers throughout our State.

Sincerely,

Harry Melander
Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council
President

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BOARD OF HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

A-2400 GOVERNMENT CENTER
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55487-0240

March 22, 2017

Members of the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency:

Because of legislative activity affecting Hennepin County, it is unclear whether I will be able to attend the Board meeting on March 23. I would, however, like to thank you for the opportunity to address the Fort Snelling Upper Post redevelopment project, as proposed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Dominion.

In addition to being one of the only remaining urban military posts in the country, the Fort Snelling Upper Post is perhaps Minnesota's most critically endangered National Historic Landmark. A decade ago the National Trust for Historic Preservation named it one of the Eleven Most Endangered Historic Sites in the Nation. Last year ago the National Trust went even further and named Fort Snelling the first and only National Treasure in Minnesota with only 48 of the original 312 buildings remaining. The preservation and restoration of the Upper Post is critically important to our state and community. I am happy to offer my support for the redevelopment and affordable housing project.

As you may know, Hennepin County and the Department of Natural Resources have invested significant resources over the last decade to preserve this landmark for a future redevelopment. During this period, the DNR, alongside the county, solicited requests for qualifications and proposals from an interested and capable developer. Dominion was the only party to bring forward a sound and feasible proposal to save the historic landmark, while also finding a productive use for the buildings.

Dominium's proposal would add nearly 200 units and 350 new bedrooms to the Twin Cities' affordable housing stock. As well as anyone in the state, you know the need for affordable housing in Hennepin County is critical. The many nearby public transportation options, including light rail transit and bike trail connections, make it an even better site for affordable housing.

If we are ever to save the Fort Snelling Upper Post, we must take action now. One building has already collapsed, and we nearly lost the deteriorating hospital building – the largest of them all. An enormous amount of work has been done to stabilize the historic structures on the Upper Post, but each additional Minnesota winter without full rehabilitation poses an increasing threat to this historic landmark. As it currently stands, if Dominion's proposal does not move forward, there is no other viable option available. If the timing to move this forward is not now, when we decide the time is right, we may no longer have a chance to save this cherished state and national landmark.

So, in the name of both affordable housing and historic preservation, I ask for your support of this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter McLaughlin".

Peter McLaughlin
Hennepin County Commissioner

C: Mary Tingerthal

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March 23, 2017

Mr. John DeCramer, Chair, MHFA Board
Commissioner Mary Tingerthal
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
400 Sibley Street, Suite 300
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Chair DeCramer and Commissioner Tingerthal,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of the proposal for housing at the Fort Snelling Upper Post. The Minnesota Historical Society is a signatory to the Fort Snelling Area Joint Powers organization. Since 2012, five public agencies have worked collaboratively to preserve and promote this important area.

We would like to comment in three specific areas: the historical significance of the Fort Snelling area; the collaborative work that the Joint Powers signatories have done; and the importance and challenges of historic preservation work.

Historical Significance

The greater Fort Snelling area, including the Upper Post, is one of the most historically significant areas in Minnesota. It is a National Historic Landmark, the highest designation given by the US Department of the Interior. Minnesota has only 27 National Historic Landmarks, making this one of the most important historic places in our state.

And, while most of us are familiar with the 19th century military history of the Historic Fort, which is operated by the Minnesota Historical Society, the stories of Fort Snelling go far beyond that narrow span of history. In our redevelopment of the Historic Fort, we are working to tell the many stories that capture Minnesotans' interest and imagination – stories such as the story of Native Americans who have been in that area for thousands of years; the story of Dred and Harriet Scott, whose landmark case was based on their presence in free territory in Fort Snelling; the stories of the Japanese Americans in the World War II era, who in some cases had lived in internment camps, then served our country as language interpreters and contributed to our victory in the war.

We mention these diverse stories to illustrate the opportunities that this project presents for residents from all walks of life to enjoy and benefit from being a part of this history, a history that is relevant to all Minnesotans.

In addition, as we consider historical significance, we are reminded of Minnesota Statute 138.665 which directs that the State of Minnesota work to protect its heritage, particularly in the built environment:

The state, state departments, agencies, and political subdivisions, including the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota, have a responsibility to protect the physical features and historic character of properties designated in sections 138.662 and 138.664 or listed on the National Register of Historic Places created by Public Law 89-665.

Joint Powers Agreement and Governance

In order to preserve and redevelop the greater Fort Snelling area, in 2012, five public organizations, the Department of Natural Resources, Hennepin County, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the National Park Service (Mississippi River National Recreation Area) entered into a Joint Powers Agreement.

The Joint Powers group has assisted the DNR in trying to move redevelopment of the historic structures of the Upper Post forward. Among the many tasks this group has worked on is planning for the future of the area, in the context of working in an area that essentially does not have a local government. This is "unorganized territory." We would be having a very different conversation if this area were in a municipality, or perhaps, not having this conversation here today. Since this is the reality with which we have to deal, our hope is that the MHFA can assist in the effort that is supported by other units of government to reach our common goals of preserving history and providing desirable housing for Minnesotans.

Importance of Historic Preservation and Incentives

When the federal and state governments each passed incentives for preservation of historic structures through the historic preservation tax credit, they recognized the importance of preserving our heritage through the built environment. We recognize that sometimes, not always, preserving a historic structure can involve some additional costs. And that is the purpose of the state and federal historic tax credit – to provide a financial incentive that supports the costs of preserving historic resources. That is the public contribution to projects such as the Upper Post project – there is a public good achieved in preserving historic structures for future generations.

As you look at some of the metrics for projects such as this, it is important to factor in the incentives that are provided to preserve our most significant historic structures.

Thank you for the opportunity to support the efforts to preserve the Fort Snelling Upper Post.

Sincerely,



David Kelliher

Director of Public Policy

Schack, Becky (MHFA)

From: L. Peterson <larzp@swissmail.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2017 4:19 PM
To: Tingerthal, Mary (MHFA); Butler, Wes (MHFA); jdecramer@bhelectronics.com; tthao@nexuscp.org; jjohnson@banknorthshore.com; craigklausing@comcast.net; mayorer@charter.net; rebecca.otto@osa.state.mn.us
Cc: Wilson, Tamara (MHFA)
Subject: Fort Snelling Upper Post Affordable Housing Proposal

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Commissioner Tingerthal, Chair DeCramer, and Board Members of Minnesota Housing:

I am writing to urge you to carefully and thoughtfully weigh the merits of the Upper Post Flats affordable housing proposal by Dominion, LLC, located at the Fort Snelling Upper Post. I write this as a private citizen, having spent 31 years in service to state and local government, retiring last year. The last five years of my career as a civil engineer and natural resource manager were spent as manager of Fort Snelling State Park, a job I found to be both humbling and incredibly rich with the vast diversity of the people I served.

The Fort Snelling Upper Post is at the heart of Minnesota's history; cross-roads and leaping off point for thousands of young soldiers going off to fight many of our nations wars. The Buffalo Soldiers lived here for a time, along with hundreds of Asian-American soldiers who served our country as interpreters and cryptographers in the Second World War. Whiskey the trick horse entertained generations, and lives began and ended at the Post Hospital.

I would urge you to take a risk here; this may not be a typical affordable housing development, but it is certainly one of the most unique in the nation. Residents will enjoy large green lawns and immediate access to soccer fields and baseball fields. The Boy Scouts of America are on site with high quality youth programming. Light-rail transit is minutes away, with stops at the MSP Airport and the Mall of America a five minute ride. This is a chance to blend the most important National Historic Landmark in Minnesota with high-quality affordable rental housing. Please look past the stone walls in need of tuck-pointing and the slate roofs that are in need of replacement, and try to see the vibrant community that can exist here, rooted in both our nation's history and offered a green space ripe for recreation and growing new families.

This is an opportunity that I worked toward for eighteen years of my career. The blend of historic tax credit assistance and affordable housing tax credit assistance that is being proposed is in my opinion, the only way a complex project like this can succeed. Please give the project your most thoughtful and careful consideration.

Thank you for your time,

Larry Peterson
Maplewood, Minnesota

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I would very much appreciate it if my letter could be read and considered as part of your discussion on March 23rd. I would be there in person, but am out of the state helping my wife celebrate her 60th birthday.

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To: MHFA Board, Commissioner Tingerthal
From: Dominionium
Date: March 23, 2017
Subject: Response to March 16th Staff Report on the proposed Upper Post Flats Redevelopment

Project Overview:

The adaptive re-use of 26 long-vacant historic buildings owned by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in to approximately 180 affordable large-family apartment homes with a preference for U.S. service veterans. Put simply, we are asking for your help to:

1. Save the Upper Post, Minnesota's first National Historic Landmark and only National Treasure
2. Provide new housing for low-income veterans and their families

Summary of Request:

Dominium, in partnership with the DNR, has applied to Minnesota Housing for an issuance of up to \$58 million in tax-exempt bond allocation for 2018. If approved, this partnership will (i) save an iconic Minnesota landmark and (ii) house low-income veterans and their families.

Dominium cannot continue to invest resources in this redevelopment without assurances that tax-exempt bonds will be available from Minnesota Housing when this redevelopment is ready to close, which is anticipated in late 2018. If final development and construction costs are less than anticipated, Dominionium would limit the bond request, or issuance, to no more than 55% of the anticipated aggregate basis.

Dominium and the DNR respectfully request that the MHFA Board not just discuss our request, but commit to the redevelopment the requested bonds in addition to the needed waivers identified by MHFA staff with respect to the Debt Management Policy. It is our understanding that similar projects have received similar waivers of this policy and that the MHFA Board approves waivers and permanent changes to the Debt Management Policy routinely.

If and when MHFA makes this determination, it would jump start an 18 to 24-month process to get to an ultimate closing, or issuance, of the requested bonds. This process will also include an investment of \$3 to \$5 million in architectural plans, environmental studies, archaeological studies, legal fees, structural reports, façade condition surveys, and historical window surveys to name a few. This 18 to 24 month period will also entail a detailed review by the State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service of the full construction plans.

None of this process or investment can move forward until there is an assurance that MHFA is in full support of this redevelopment, and that at the time of closing in late 2018, bonds and 4% tax credits will be available.

Additional Background:

The original fort at Historic Fort Snelling was built in 1820. Additional buildings were started on the Upper Post in the late 1800s and into the 1900s. Although at one time it was known as the “Country Club of the Army,” for its extraordinary accommodations, the Fort was decommissioned after World War II.

Fort Snelling originally consisted of over 300 buildings, of which only 48 remain intact today. The Upper Post Flats proposed redevelopment consists of over half of these buildings. The remaining 26 buildings have been vacant and boarded-up for over 30 years. While most were ‘moth-balled’ a decade ago, the freeze-thaw of our harsh Minnesota winters has resulted in many buildings having significant leaks that are further compromising their structural and historic integrity. In fact, one building has already collapsed and cannot be rebuilt. It is uncertain how many more winters these buildings can withstand.

In 2006 the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the Upper Post one of America’s “11 Most Endangered Historic Places” to focus attention on dozens of rapidly deteriorating historic buildings in this National Historic Landmark—the first ever site in Minnesota designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960. Then, last year the National Trust took that a step further and designated Fort Snelling the state’s very first “National Treasure.” Now we need your help to save it.

Debt Management Policy Waivers:

It is time to save history and house low-income veterans and their families, but this will require the MHFA board have flexibility—a flexibility that has been used in the past.

The “Debt Management Policy” of Minnesota Housing requires a waiver for any conduit bond issuance that creates new affordable housing—including new construction and historic adaptive-reuse. Therefore, unless one is preserving and renovating existing affordable housing, all other developments require a waiver. Because we are creating new affordable housing, it is clear that particular waiver of the Debt Management Policy will be required. However, we did want to provide some comments regarding the other two threshold conditions that MHFA staff suggested require waiver.

- **Threshold Condition: “Significant barriers to issuance by a different government issuer exist, such as properties located in multiple jurisdictions, making public notice and authorization requirements difficult.”**

On numerous occasions, Dominion has made very clear to Commissioner Tingerthal and MHFA staff that these “significant barriers” do in fact exist and explained why applying to MMB for bonds from the housing pool was not a feasible option. This is why Dominion applied to MHFA for a conduit bond issuance in the first place.

One of those discussions with MHFA staff occurred at a September 6, 2016 meeting at MHFA’s offices. At that time bonds were oversubscribed from the Unified Pool administered by Minnesota Management and Budget. Dominion explained to MHFA staff that due to this shortage, and likely shortage in the future, this important redevelopment would require MHFA to utilize a portion of its carryforward or annual entitlement allocation. Dominion described the \$3 million to \$5 million investment that would be required to get to a closing and explained why it was not reasonable to expect a sufficient bond award from the oversubscribed Housing or Unified Pools.

This was discussed again at a January 11, 2017 meeting called by Governor Dayton’s Chief of Staff Jaime Tincher, which was attended by DNR Commissioner Landwehr, MHFA Commissioner Tingerthal, and Dominion—along with other representatives of each the DNR, MHFA and Dominion. Again, Dominion explained in detail to all parties why a “significant barrier” existed to getting tax-exempt bonds because of oversubscription. Dominion further described the \$3 to \$5 million of investment that would be required to get to a closing, or bond issuance, and that we could not make that investment and the redevelopment could not proceed without MHFA agreeing to issue tax-exempt bonds.

- **Threshold Condition: “Bonding authority used for conduit issues does not cause a significant loss of authority available to operate priority programs, in the sole judgment of the Agency.”** It is absolutely true that a choice by the MHFA Board to utilize some of its available bonds to allow the redevelopment of the 26 buildings at the Upper Post will come at a cost; however, saving these buildings is a prudent decision. It should not be taken lightly that preserving this historic landmark is absolutely the right thing to do for the State of Minnesota. The bond issuance will save the remainder of arguably the most important historic site in Minnesota and, in addition, it will provide new affordable large-family affordable housing for veterans and their families in the process. This is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do something special—how can this not be a priority?

We are asking the MHFA Board to say ‘yes’ to saving the Upper Post and ‘yes’ to creating new affordable housing for veterans and their families.

Total Development and Construction Costs:

There is no “predictive model” for saving and redeveloping 26 historic buildings military buildings, comprising over 350,000 gross square feet, that are spread across 40+ acres and that have sat vacant and deteriorating for over 30 years. The anticipated total development and construction costs reflect the complexity of the redevelopment. If it were easy and inexpensive, we would not be here today asking for your help. These buildings would have already been saved.

The bond request and waivers needed are very similar to the wonderful deal the MHFA Board approved in 2014—the Upper Post Veterans Community that was done by Common Bond, which saved 5 of the 48 buildings at Fort Snelling and provided needed housing for veterans. That is a perfect example of leveraging various resources and provides a great comparison to our request. While the per-unit costs are significantly higher for what we are proposing, that is not a reasonable metric for comparison.

When comparing the development cost or construction cost on a square foot basis, a much more relevant figure, the Upper Post Flats redevelopment has equal or lower costs than the Common Bond project. Per square foot costs are more relevant because the Common Bond redevelopment was primarily SRO units, which averaged 590 square feet per unit. The Upper Post Flats is large-family housing with units expected to average over 1,060 square feet—or almost double the size. This additional square footage needed to serve veterans and their families comes at a cost.

When comparing total development costs, the Upper Post Flats is the same per rentable square foot, 35% less per gross square foot, and 13% less per bedroom. When comparing hard construction costs, the Upper Post Flats is 4% less per rentable square foot, 37% less per gross square foot, and 16% less per bedroom.

Finally, when the historic costs, and corresponding sources of funds, are isolated from the typical costs related to a new construction low-income housing tax credit development, this looks very much like many of the developments the MHFA Board has approved and granted similar waivers on in the past. The state and federal historic tax credits were approved by our policy makers for a reason—to provide public resources to save historic buildings just like this.

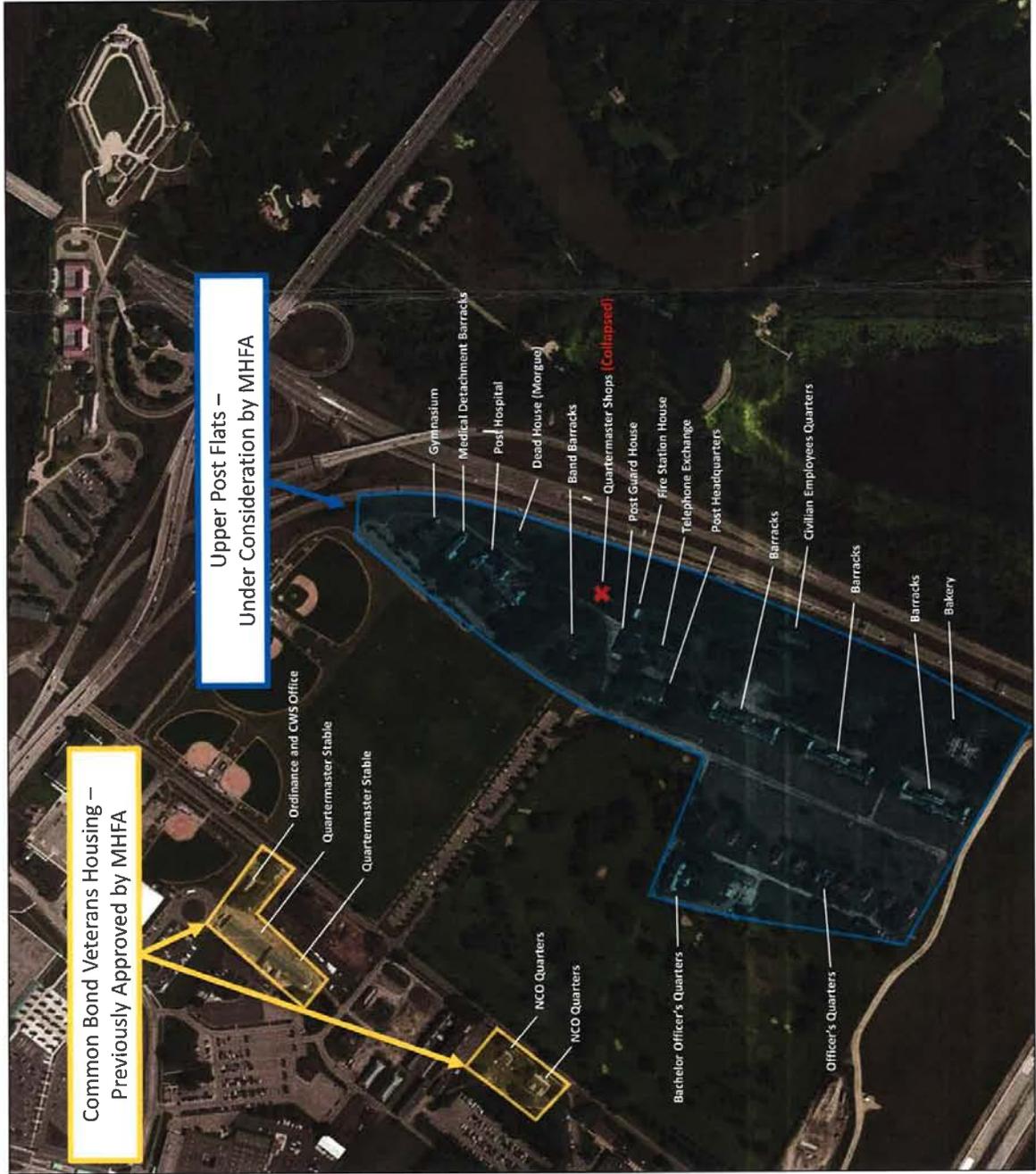
Conclusion:

Please help save the Upper Post at Fort Snelling, Minnesota’s first National Historic Landmark and only National Treasure. These 26 vacant, boarded-up buildings deserve your careful consideration and we urge you to join the partnership between the DNR, Hennepin County, National Park Service, Minnesota Historical Society and Dominion. With your help we will ensure no more buildings are lost to further deterioration. Please help write a new history by:

1. Saving the Upper Post, Minnesota’s first National Historic Landmark and only National Treasure
2. Providing new housing for low-income veterans and their families

Upper Post at Fort Snelling: Affordable Housing Overview

Distributed by Dominion



	Dominium Upper Post Flats	Common Bond Upper Post Veterans Community
Acres	42.8	5.76
# of Units	176	58
Average Unit Size (square feet)	1,065	591
# of Buildings	26	5
Average Units per Building	6.8	11.6
Buildings w/ 7 Units or Less	19	2
Total Gross Square Feet	368,553	44,136
Total Development Cost* per Square Foot	\$283/sf*	\$434/sf**
Total Development Cost* Per Bedroom	\$272,000*	\$337,000**
Construction Costs per Square Foot	\$206/sf	\$327/sf**

* Net of Deferred Fee
 ** Inflation Adjusted

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Fort Snelling from Minnesota River

Provided by Dominion



War Training by Officers Row



Aerial Looking at Upper Post



War Training on Marching Grounds



Colonel Mason's Residence



Fort Snelling from Minnesota River



Barracks Bunk Room



Ft. Snelling Hockey Team Practicing Behind Officers Row (c1938)



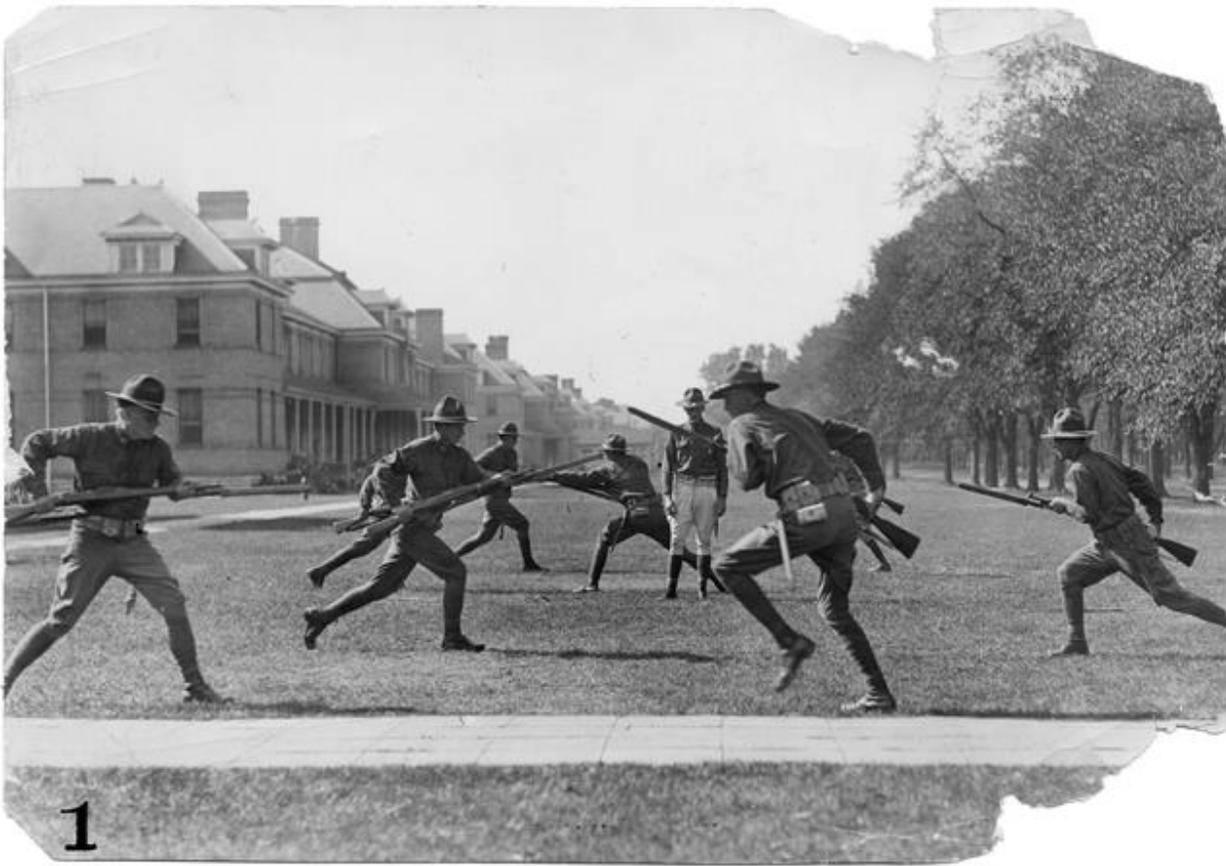
Japanese Translators at Fort Snelling



War Training by Barracks



War Maneuvers by Barracks



Final Retreat at Post Headquarters c 1946 (transferred to Veteran's Administration)



B Row Wards, US General Hospital Number 29



WARD INTERIOR SURGICAL PAVILION
U.S.A. GEN. HOSPITAL NO. 29
FORT SNELLING MINN.

"Whiskey", United State Government Horse behind Post Headquarters



Departure of 39th Infantry to Cuba by Barracks (c1898)



Wo-wi-na-pe (One Who Comes in Sight), Little Crow's son, captive at Fort Snelling (c1864)



WO-WE-NA-PE—"One Who Comes in Sight."
LITTLE CROW'S SON.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY UPTON.

Post Headquarters



Post Headquarters



Quarter master Shops



Quartermaster Shops - Collapsed



Bachelor Officers Quarters



Bachelor Officers Quarters



United States of America General Hospital Number 29



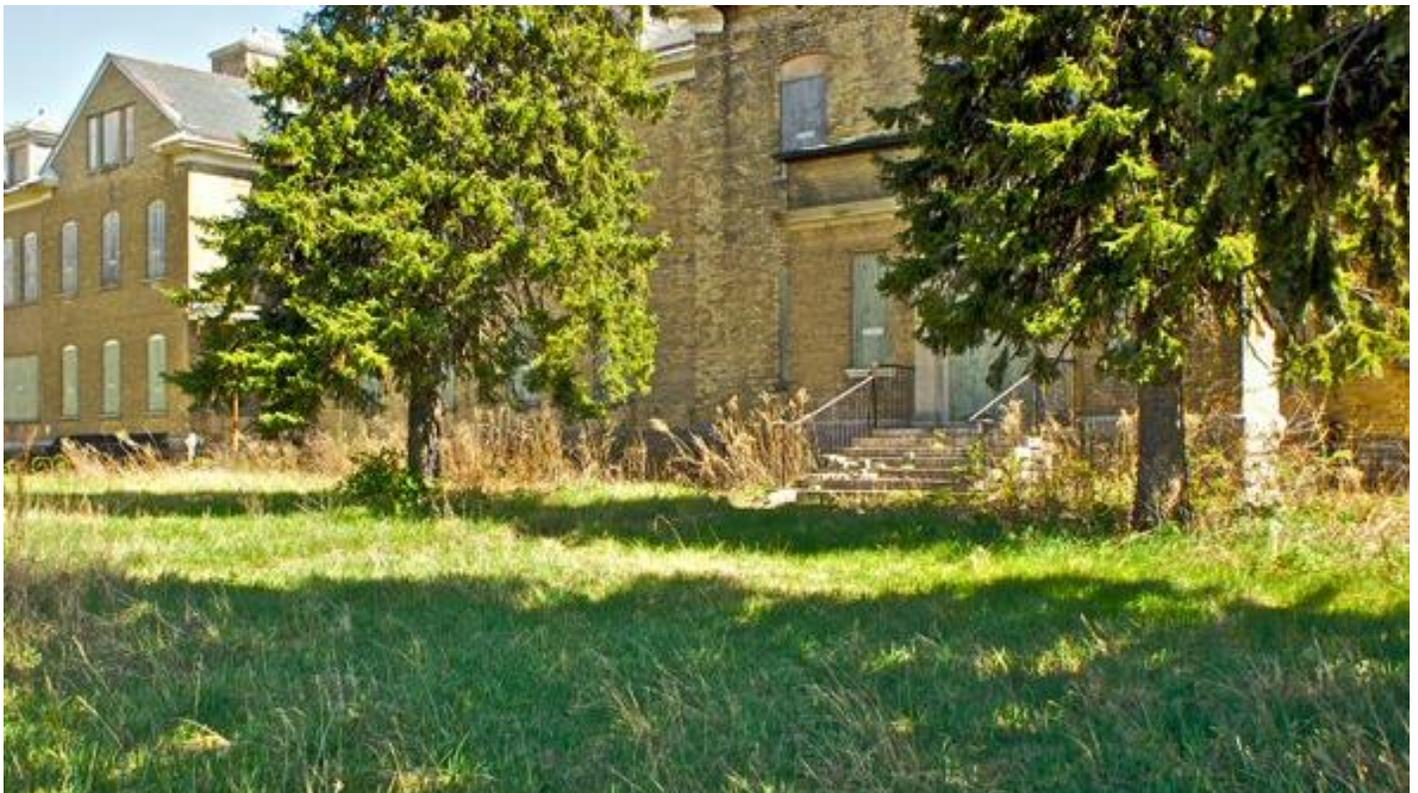
United States of America General Hospital Number 29



Nurse Corps by US General Hospital Number 29



US General Hospital Number 29



Barracks



Barracks



6530 Taylor



6530 Taylor



6460 Taylor



6460 Taylor



6500 Taylor



6500 Taylor



Telephone Exchange



Telephone Exchange



Post Bakery



Post Bakery



Guard House



Guard House



Fire Station House



Fire Station House



Gymnasium



Gymnasium



Band Barracks



Band Barracks



Dead House (Morgue)



Dead House (Morgue)





United States Department of the Interior

NAT
Mississippi
111
St. J

Public Inspection Copy
*****DO NOT REMOVE*****

March 23, 2017

Mary Tingerthal
Commissioner
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
400 Sibley Street, Suite 300
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

John DeCramer
Chair, Board of Directors
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
400 Sibley Street, Suite 300
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Commissioner Tingerthal and Chair DeCramer:

Toward the end of World War II, my father left Benson, Minnesota, and traveled to Fort Snelling. From there he went to bombardier training and then to the European theater. Like him, men throughout the state came to Fort Snelling during every major conflict from the Civil War through World War II. There are veterans parks or memorials in most cities in this state, and most of the veterans they honor came through Fort Snelling. No historic site in Minnesota is of greater importance to all Minnesotans than Fort Snelling.

Congress established the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area in 1988 to protect, preserve and enhance the nationally significant resources associated with the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Fort Snelling is one of the most important historic sites in our 72-mile corridor. So I am writing to ask that you consider what this place means to the people of Minnesota and the nation.

Fort Snelling is Minnesota's first National Historic Landmark. Landmark designation is reserved for the nation's most significant historic sites. They are as important to someone in New York or California as to someone in Minnesota, because they are integral to our national narrative. Situated above the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, the site has been a major social, cultural, and historical center since long before Minnesota was a state. From the time Fort Snelling was established nearly two centuries ago, the fort has been integral not only to Minnesota's history but that of our entire nation.

Fort Snelling's Upper Post reflects the diverse history of the military and the United States. Originally the Department of the Dakota headquarters, it oversaw the final settling of the plains and speaks to the consequences of that to American Indians. African American soldiers—or Buffalo Soldiers—were stationed at the fort and played key roles on the plains and in the Spanish American War. Japanese Americans attended the Military Intelligence Service Language School at the fort to help with America's effort in the Pacific during World War II. This was a dramatic counterpoint to the Japanese American experience in internment camps.

Because of the site's national significance, the National Park Service has been partnering with many other entities, including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota

Historical Society, Hennepin County, and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, for decades to properly preserve the Upper Post. The MN DNR has worked hard to stabilize the over two dozen historic structures present at the site.

Without a reuse, however, the buildings will continue to deteriorate and could follow the fate of the Quartermaster's Shops, which collapsed in 2006. Because of these structures' prominent role in our state and nation's history, they can and should be preserved to continue to enrich the lives of future generations of Minnesotans.

The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency is to be commended for the commitment you made in your 2016-2019 Strategic Plan to be "innovative problem solvers" and to "emphasize housing strategies that are linked to...broader outcomes." Rather than just providing the highest number of units at the lowest possible cost, this philosophy acknowledges that affordable housing can and does serve other aspects of public good. The Upper Post presents such an opportunity. The project would reinvigorate one of Minnesota's oldest communities and revitalize this unincorporated part of Hennepin County with appropriate economic development.

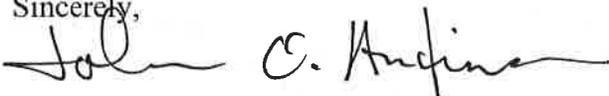
The preservation of historic buildings, while sometimes resulting in higher per-unit costs than new construction on greenfield sites, retains the high quality durable materials and craftsmanship of the past that are often unmatched by the means and methods of today. Reusing existing structures is also sustainable, yielding benefits for building owners, residents, and the environment. No one has more experience capitalizing on the embodied energy of historic structures than the U.S. General Services Administration, the manager of federal buildings and the largest landlord in the country. In their 2008 publication, *Sustainability Matters*, GSA writes that "adaptive reuse strategies make it possible for existing facilities to meet modern...needs while eliminating the huge environmental burden of building anew." They conclude, "Preservation of our existing building stock is the greenest alternative of all."

When the MN DNR accepted proposals for the reuse of the buildings in 2015, the proposal by Dominion represented the brightest prospect yet for preserving and repurposing all 26 buildings in a compatible and cohesive way. The project could provide affordable housing to 176 families in a central location within the metropolitan area. The project will offer priority to Minnesota's veterans at place they have a deep connection to.

My fear is that if the current project falls through, we will lose the Upper Post. We have seen many proposals come and go, but the one before you is the most solid and promising. Losing the Upper Post would be to lose one of Minnesota's most important historic sites, one of the most important places that connects all Minnesotans to our shared history and to the country's history.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at john_anfinson@nps.gov or 651-293-8432.

Sincerely,



John O. Anfinson, Ph.D.
Superintendent

cc: MHFA Board of Directors
Governor Mark Dayton



Fort Snelling, Upper Post Flats

Proposal by Dominion, LLC

Minnesota Housing Finance Agency Board Meeting

March 24, 2017

Fort Snelling Neighborhood



13th Provisional Training Regiment - 1913



Building 67- Post Administration



Officer's Row Housing



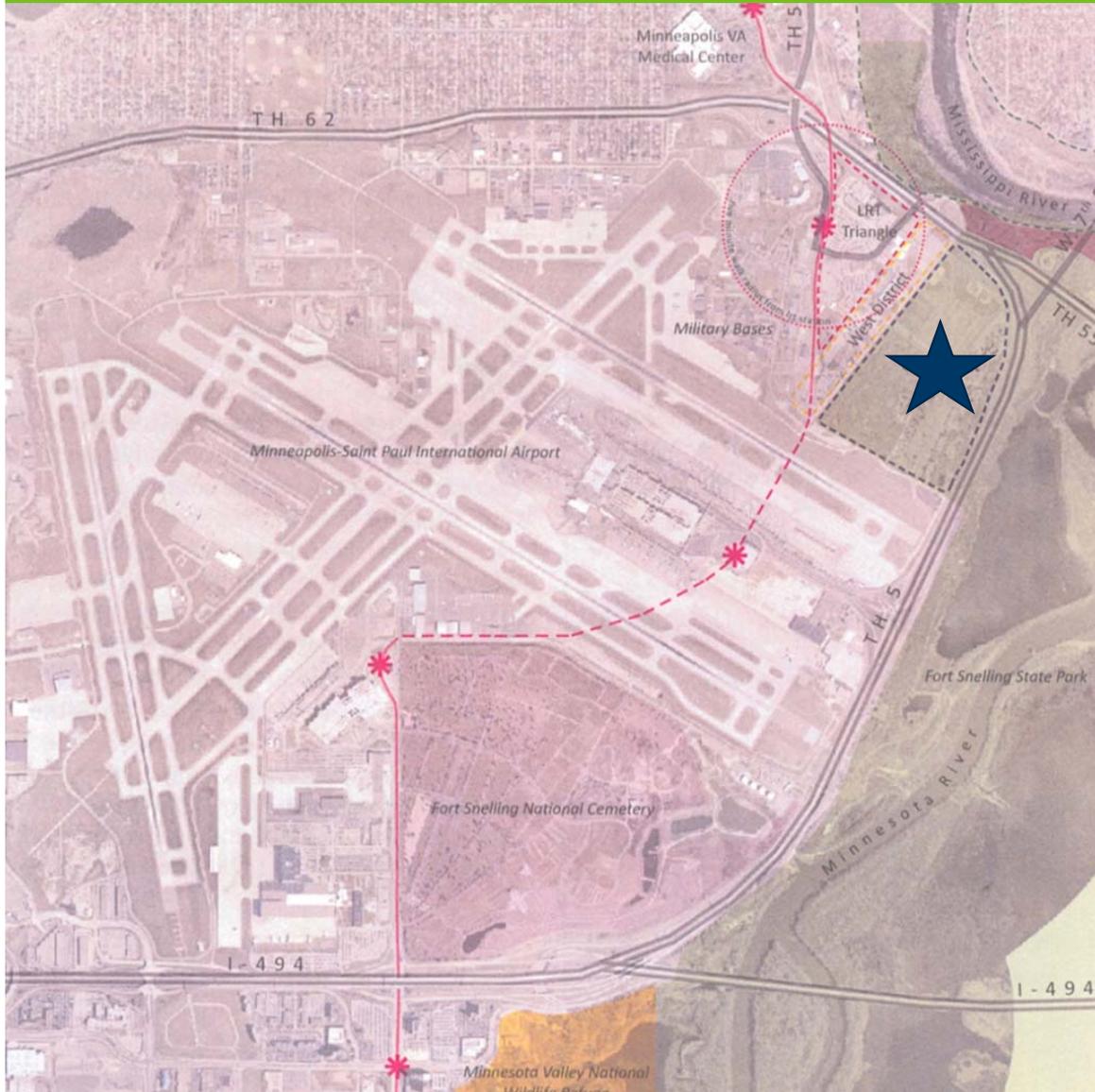
Quartermaster Shops



Redevelopment Design – Post Barracks Buildings



Fort Snelling Upper Post Connectivity & Amenities



- Blue Line LRT Station
- Mall of America
- MSP Airport
- Direct freeway access
- Recreational trails
- State and regional parks

Fort Snelling Upper Post Redevelopment Announcement, July 2015

