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State Historic Preservation Office
735 E. Michigan Ave.
Lansing, MI 48912

January 16, 2024

Dear Historic Preservation Office,

I am writing to express our support for the efforts of the City of Coldwater and the Coldwater Community Center non-profit project to seek a SHPO grant to help support a structural engineering analysis of the historic Beech House at 11 E. Chicago St. in Coldwater.

The Beech House is one of the architectural and historical gems of our community. Not just visible every day across the street from my workplace, the Beech House was originally the birthplace of what is now the Branch District Library, so it has a special place in our hearts and minds. Many in the community were saddened as the building remained vacant during the pandemic, visibly decaying with astonishing rapidity. Age and the elements have certainly taken a toll, and the volunteers of the Coldwater Community Center, along with aid from the City of Coldwater, have engaged in tremendous efforts to rehabilitate their Beech House home. Figuring out what sort of deficiencies remain to be addressed in this building is of great importance.

The City Coldwater has a shortage of meeting and programming space for community groups, and the Coldwater Community Center project has great potential to address this need, while fostering a sense of purpose and togetherness. In a short time, they have shown the ability to cross cultural and economic barriers to help knit our community closer together. It would be a such a shame for the building where this group operates to see any further decline.

The Library is committed to its role as a "third space" in our community—a place where people go that is not home or work—but since we have only limited space available ourselves, an effort like this Community Center at the Beech House is another great way for a community to come together. We urge the SHPO to approve this grant application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John C. Rucker".

John Rucker
Director



BDL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

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