



Will Bauer's Farm play active role in 1812 celebration?

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Historic site may not be part of bicentennial

by Sara Blumberg

Despite being one of the only free-standing buildings to exist during the Battle of North Point in the War of 1812, the Bauer's Farm house will not play an active role in the bicentennial celebration of the war unless the property is purchased by the state.

According to a master plan put together by the Baltimore County War of 1812 Bicentennial Advisory Committee, the committee is exploring options to have the property moved to another location.

The main reason the committee is not including the house is because the property is privately owned, according to committee member Francis Taylor.

Currently, the 160-acre property, located off Bauer's Farm Road, is owned by developer Mark C. Sapperstein, who is currently building the Lakes at Stansbury Shores project.

Taylor said there has been discussion about the farm and its importance, but said until the state takes steps to purchase the site, there isn't much the committee can do to incorporate it into the celebration.

"I know the property is on the states radar," Taylor said. "I just don't see it being ready in time for the celebration."

In February, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) decided against purchasing the whole farm from Sapperstein due to budget limitations.

"We didn't back off completely; we are still in negotiations for buying portions of property," said Kristin Saunders-Evans, DNR assistant secretary for land development.



Bauer's Farm has fallen into disrepair. photo by Sara Blumberg

Evans said they had to work with a limited state budget and assess what was important to the department.

She added that the DNR is still in active negotiations to buy portions of the property, which include the land around the Bauer's Farm house.

"We are currently having the land appraised," she said. "Once that is completed, we are going to resume talks with the developer."

The other land the state is also interested in purchasing is the waterfront property, which the state hopes to use for boat ramps, Evans added.

For years the white two-story house has been left abandoned and has fallen into disrepair.

Evans said the state has identified the site as an important landmark in Maryland history.

"We've made an effort to preserve and protect historical landmarks, this place has an important role in the story of 1812," Evans said.

Interest groups like the Baltimore Historic Trust, a nonprofit group that works to save historic landmarks, have also offered to help to preserve the structure.

In 2009, the organization put Bauer's Farm on its "endangered" list of landmarks in the state that were close to disappearing.

According to Trish Bentz, president of the organization, they have reached out to the state and offered support to help restore the home.

"We have kept in regular contact with the owner," Bentz said. "Our role is to give the property exposure to the kind of help it needs."

Since 2008, plans to celebrate the War of 1812 have been in development. Taylor says the committee meets once every six weeks to discuss plans for the celebration.

Until the property issues are settled, Bauer's Farm will take a back seat to the ongoing planning process for the bicentennial.

Evans said the DNR does plan to include Bauer's Farm in the Star-Spangled Banner trail.

The trail plan will include a map of all significant places associated with the War of 1812.

"From our interpretative work, this farm is significant," she said.

Evans said appraisals to the house are under way and should be completed by the end of the month.