

VIRGINIA FREE Council Seeks Options to Save Mill

MANASSAS - HISTORICAL SITES

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The Manassas City Council is seeking options to save the 18th century Kinsley Mill granary, now virtually inaccessible at its location on the shores of Lake Manassas, but it appears high cost will prohibit moving the building to another site.

Although located in Prince William County, the building is owned by the city of Manassas as part of its Lake Manassas property.

The original mill structure, constructed about 1794, was removed by Fairfax County in the late 1960s when the lake was built and the materials were used to reconstruct Colvin Run Mill. The mill site is now underwater.

The remaining granary building is just 5-feet from Lake Manassas, and is in danger of being damaged by water, according to Manassas Museum

Curator Doug Harvey.
In a letter to Mayor Edgar Rohr and the council, Harvey reported that the building is accessible only by boat or down a steep, 40-foot incline through private property.
Because of the difficulty in reaching the structure, the cost of removing the building to another site would be about \$200,000, according to Harvey.
The Manassas Historical Committee has recommended four options to save the building, or at least save its materials, which Harvey said are "valuable and much in demand by restoration experts who are constantly in search of materials."
Those options, which will be considered by the council at its regular meeting tonight, include negotiating with developer Robert Trent Jones to use the structure within the planned golf resort at Lake Manassas.
"The developer could perhaps be encouraged to move the building, either intact or dismantled, and put the structure to use within his complex, paying a fee to the city," Harvey reports in his letter to council. "Many developers are now doing this sort of thing, as is seen with Tackett's Mill in Lake Ridge."
The committee also recommends the city could move the structure to another city-owned site for use as a visitors center or similar use.
But Harvey says informal estimates by house movers place the cost of removing the granary at about \$200,000, because of the building's inaccessibility.
"The cost of moving is impractical," he said in a recent interview.
The city could salvage the materials in the building, which include shaped

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stone, heavy beams and other handmade materials, and either use those in a city project or sell them to the highest bidder, the committee also suggests.

"With a good crew and the proper trucks and equipment, the building could be salvaged and removed in perhaps one week," according to Harvey.

With the banks of Lake Manassas just 5-feet from the granary's foundation, the committee asks council to take quick action to save the granary.

According to Assistant City Manager Clyde Wimmer, the city plans to raise the level of Lake Manassas by about 5-feet, bringing the shoreline to the base of the building.

"Mills were part of our heritage in this part of the world," said committee member Randolph Turberville. "Most have since crumbled into nothingness."

Turberville added that the Kinsley Mill granary is "a reminder of that heritage, and it would be nice if it could be preserved. But if it's not possible to preserve it, we should certainly take the resources from the sale of the timbers and stones and use those proceeds (to save) something we do have control over."