



# CITY OF SOUTH BEND AND ST. JOSEPH COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION



October 21, 2025

South Bend Common Council  
215 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Suite 300  
South Bend, IN 46601

**Subject:** Transmission of Resolution No. 04-2025 – Naragon Barn at Potato Creek State Park, Near North Liberty, Indiana

Dear Members of the South Bend Common Council,

On behalf of the Historic Preservation Commission of South Bend and St. Joseph County, please find enclosed Resolution No. 04-2025, adopted unanimously by all members present at the Commissioner's regularly scheduled meeting on October 20, 2025.

The Commission adopted this resolution to formally recommend that the Indiana Department of Natural Resources pause demolition plans for Naragon Barn to allow time for organizations such as Indiana Landmarks and the Indiana Barn Foundation to coordinate a qualified architect to document the structure's rehabilitation needs and for these organizations to explore potential private funding sources for its restoration and possible relocation.

Constructed in 1908 by the Naragon family, the Naragon Barn represents a surviving example of traditional rural architecture in the area and stands as a testament to the families that lived and worked on the land before it became Potato Creek State Park. The barn is an irreplaceable, tangible connection to the land's history prior to the park's establishment.

Through this action, the Commission respectfully encourages inter-agency communication and the consideration of preservation alternatives that align with the community's preservation goals. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Indiana Landmarks, and the Indiana Barn Foundation in exploring responsible stewardship of this resource.

Please accept this letter and the enclosed resolution for your information and records. Should you wish to discuss the Commission's recommendation further, please feel free to contact staff.

Thank you for your commitment to the preservation of St. Joseph County's historic and cultural resources.

SARAH ANDREWS  
PRESIDENT

A CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ROSS VAN OVERBERGHE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR

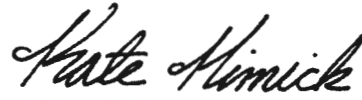
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Sincerely,



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Historic Preservation Commission  
215 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Suite 400  
South Bend, IN 46601

## **RESOLUTION NO. 04-2025**

### **A RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF SOUTH BEND AND ST. JOSEPH COUNTY, INDIANA RECOMMENDING THE PAUSE OF DEMOLITION PLANS FOR NARAGON BARN “RED BARN” AT POTATO CREEK STATE PARK, NEAR NORTH LIBERTY, INDIANA, SO THAT AN ARCHITECT EXPERIENCED IN BARN PRESERVATION CAN DOCUMENT THE BARN’S REHABILITATION NEEDS AND PRIVATE FUNDING OPTIONS CAN BE EXPLORED**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission of South Bend and St. Joseph County, Indiana (the “Commission”) operates pursuant to Article 13 of Chapter 21 of the South Bend Municipal Code, as may be amended from time to time, Title XV, Chapter 154, § 154.245-154.263 of the St. Joseph County Code of Ordinances, as may be amended from time to time, (hereinafter, collectively, the “Ordinances”), and the terms of the Interlocal Agreement between the City of South Bend (hereinafter the “City”) and St. Joseph County (hereinafter the “County”) dated December 12, 2017, as the same may be amended from time to time; and

WHEREAS, per the Ordinances, the Commission’s purpose is to preserve buildings, other structures, and sites of historical, architectural, engineering, and cultural significance within the City and the County; and

WHEREAS, the Commission fulfills its purpose, in part, by identifying historic structures, advocating for preservation best practices, and promoting projects that accomplish those objectives; and

WHEREAS, the Commission members have identified, through thoughtful consideration, that Naragon Barn — built in 1908 for the Naragon family and acquired along with surrounding farmland by the State of Indiana in the 1970s for the creation of Potato Creek State Park — meets the criteria for preservation in such that it is a surviving example of traditional rural architecture in the region and that it is a remaining testament to the families that lived and worked on the land prior to it becoming Potato Creek State Park; and

WHEREAS, Historic Preservation advocacy organizations, including Indiana Landmarks and the Indiana Barn Foundation, have identified Naragon Barn as a surviving example of traditional rural architecture in the region and are urging the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to pause any demolition plans and explore alternative options, such as allowing the aforementioned groups to coordinate a *pro bono* study by an architect experienced in barn preservation and providing reasonable time to explore private funding options for renovation; and

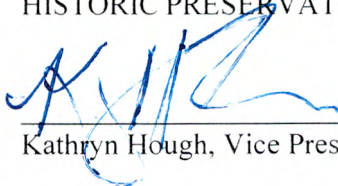
WHEREAS, under IN Code § 36-1-3-8 (2024), a unit such as the Commission does not have “the power to impose duties on another political subdivision [i.e., the State of Indiana], except as expressly granted by statute;” and therefore, the Commission does not have the authority to impose interim protection on Naragon Barn nor does the St. Joseph County Council have the authority to begin Local Landmark proceedings without the express interest and permission of the State.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF SOUTH BEND AND ST. JOSEPH COUNTY THAT:

1. The Commission has identified Naragon Barn as an important and irreplaceable historic and cultural artifact that is evidence of Indiana's rural architectural history and the cultural history of the Potato Creek area.
2. The Commission expresses its strongest support for the preservation of Naragon Barn (*Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Survey No. 141-339-90001, Rating: Contributing*), which is now threatened by plans for a new lodge and conference center.
3. The Commission advocates for policies and practices that facilitate and explore the rehabilitation or relocation of threatened historic structures, rather than their demolition.
4. The Commission advocates for the Department of Natural Resources to allow Indiana Landmarks and/or the Indiana Barn Foundation to coordinate a *pro bono* study by an architect experienced in barn preservation to document the historic barn's rehabilitation needs and to allow for time for these organizations to explore private funding options toward renovation.
5. The Commission directs its Staff to present this Resolution to the Owners of Record specifically identified for the property listed above; all appointing bodies of the Commission (specifically, the Mayor of South Bend, the Common Council of the City of South Bend, the St. Joseph County Council, and the Board of Commissioners of St. Joseph County), specific departments within the City of South Bend, including the Department of Community Investment; the St. Joseph County Building Department; and Indiana Landmarks and the Indiana Barn Foundation.
6. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the Commission.

ADOPTED at a meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission of South Bend and St. Joseph County, Indiana, held on October 20, 2025, on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor of the County-City Building, 227 W. Jefferson Blvd., South Bend, Indiana 46601.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF SOUTH BEND AND ST. JOSEPH COUNTY



Kathryn Hough, Vice President and Acting President

ATTEST:

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Sarah Andrews, President



Andrew Fowler, Commissioner

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Andrew Jones, Commissioner



Michael Skaggs, Commissioner



Peter DeKever, Commissioner