

Haller House campaign receives matching challenge

By Maria Matson

Tuesday, July 31, 2018

Historic Whidbey has a new goal, if they're up for the challenge — a fundraising challenge, that is.

The nonprofit group has just received a \$50,000 fundraising matching challenge from an anonymous donor towards the purchase of the historic Coupeville 1866 Haller House. It's the second time an anonymous donor has stepped up to the plate, with a Seattle benefactor in 2016 offering the same amount to match.

Since 2012, when it was put up for sale, it's been a goal of Historic Whidbey to acquire the Haller House, located at the corner of Front and North Main streets. The group wants to turn it into a territorial heritage center, but was faced with financial and logistical problems in purchasing the \$375,000 property.

After attempts to receive a Washington State Historical Society grant fell through in 2016, Historic Whidbey announced their second campaign in March 2018, this time joined in their efforts by the National Park Service and its contribution of \$110,000.

The group is hoping to raise a total of \$165,000 by Oct. 31. The most recent matching challenge has already inspired \$15,000 in community donations, according to an announcement from Historic Whidbey.

“Our campaign has a been a real roller coaster ride,” Lynn Hyde, president of Historic Whidbey, said. As of now, the group has raised about \$240,000, so this most recent fundraising challenge should provide the final push they need. Hyde said people should know that they won't always be “begging” for money from the public once they finally get their hands on the house.

“We have a business plan that will allow the building to support itself,” she said. There will be an office space rental upstairs and a mercantile store downstairs that will generate revenue.

As for the rest of the house, the educational exhibits will provide a look into Washington state’s territorial period from the 1850s through the 1870s. “It’s going to transform Front Street,” Hyde said.

<http://www.whidbeynewstimes.com/news/haller-house-campaign-receives-matching-challenge/>