

OLIVE BRANCH SCHOOL PRESERVATION SOCIETY  
ANNUAL MEETING REPORT  
OCTOBER 12, 2015

In accordance with the OBSPS bylaws, the chairperson is providing an annual written report to all Trustees of the Society, to be made available to the general membership, which summarizes the activities, decisions and such other information deemed as important to the operations of the OBSPS.

Progress continues to be slow, especially as it relates to fund raising, but I am pleased to report that a major accomplishment has been achieved this past year through the cooperation and support of the TLS Board of Education. In July 2014, we had requested that the Tecumseh Board of Education enhance the appearance of the Olive Branch Building and grounds by removing building materials left over from the construction of the new district school buildings and conducting a general clean-up of the grounds. Further, we respectfully requested that attention be given to replacing the roof on the Olive Branch building to eliminate water leaking into the interior of the structure which was threatening supplies warehoused inside the building as well as the integrity of the structure itself. This was also important to ensure the preservation of the historical significance of the building.

Our recommendations were accepted and have successfully been accomplished, with the completion this fall of structural repairs and the new roof installation by the Board. On behalf of the Trustees, I sincerely thank the Board of Education and Assistant Superintendent Ms. Paula Crew for their positive response to addressing our concerns. It is my opinion that this necessary maintenance was in the best interest of the School District and community, and will ultimately assist us as we continue our mission "to promote and fund the preservation of Olive Branch School and local history, and to further the legacy and cooperation between the schools and community through public engagement."

For the second year in a row, we received approval from the Della Selsor Trust for a grant in the amount of \$750, which is to help us defray the cost of renewing a Standard Mail Nonprofit Mailing Permit, along with continuing our efforts to update, reprint and distribute information to potential contributors. We have once again made application to the Della Selsor Trust for their continued support in 2016.

The Olive Branch School Building was listed again, for the second year in a row, on Preservation Ohio's Most Endangered Historic Sites List for 2015. By our being nominated to the list, we are highlighting the importance of the "Little Round School House" as a piece of Ohio History that could be facing an uncertain future. We believe that such recognition could very well make a difference between property saved, or gone forever, by drawing attention to its future statewide. It deserves the attention or focus of all Ohioans as an important remnant of the past that merits preservation. The Endangered List receives wide circulation and media attention, including coverage in all Ohio's major newspapers, as well as magazines, lifestyle publications and social media. Our hope is that attention may be drawn to our site by Foundations, Preservation groups or others who are interested in preservation, who might be willing to assist us in accomplishing our mission of restoring the Olive Branch School.

We have conducted discussions with C & N Contractors of Springfield and others this past year in an attempt to arrive at some cost estimate for the restoration of Olive Branch. We have been instructed that giving "ball park" estimates is premature and what we really need to do is conduct a feasibility study built around the designs we envision or have in mind for a finished product. This would then provide us with a more realistic budget figure directed toward fund raising. The cost for such a study, depending upon our expectation/requirements, could cost anywhere from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

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We were further advised that before embarking on any major fund raising endeavor and/or feasibility study, a decision as to how the building will ultimately be utilized must be determined. The following are a few of the suggestions offered as to how the building could be used: A museum and archival center (combination of both); or a community center open for group meetings and other type events and/or activities. We will need to be more specific in our feasibility plan for usage of the building before any attempt at fund raising could be undertaken.

In closing, I want to thank all members of the OBSPS Board of Trustees, the Tecumseh Local Board of Education, and Ms. Paula Crew, Assistant Superintendent, for their continued service, dedication, and perseverance in the cause of saving and working diligently toward the restoration of this historic gem that means so much to our community. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge all those in the general membership, and other interested citizens throughout the greater community who have donated time and money toward the Olive Branch School project. Your continued efforts and support are very important and meaningful to the Board of Trustees, Board of Education and to the community, and are truly appreciated. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,  
William Berry, Chairperson