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State seeks seismic study of Waldwick train station

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BY JODI WEINBERGER

Waldwick Suburban News
Of Suburban News

Waldwick - Could the borough's train station sustain an earthquake?

That's what the state wants the Waldwick Community Alliance to answer, forcing the volunteer community group to spend more money on yet another survey of the deteriorating building it wants to restore to its former glory.

The alliance already has spent thousands of dollars producing studies, including \$17,000 on a historic structure report prepared by McCabe and Associates in 2009 detailing its materials and changes and analyzing its paint.

And although the first phase of restoration only would be to install a new sill plate and roof, the alliance spent a total of \$10,961 on the preparation of a report by architect L+C Design Consultants PA of Secaucus detailing the entire scope of the project, including design fees, consulting fees and



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permit fees to submit to the state.

When asked how much a seismic study might cost, alliance vice president Doug Cowie said, "I won't even entertain that thought."

"They keep coming back to us with more and more issues," Cowie said. "They don't like where we were going to put the benches - things that don't have anything to do with the building."

Cowie said the project comes with additional hurdles because the building is a "functioning state-owned train station."

The alliance became the lessee of the station in 2009 when it signed a 25-year agreement with NJ Transit.

"What's a shame is how much money is wasted on red tape that could go to fixing the building," Cowie said Wednesday, Feb. 9. "If I had a building that was dilapidated and couldn't afford to fix it, and someone said, 'I'll fix it for free,' I would bend over backwards to [help them] and they're doing

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the opposite. We're wasting tens of thousands of dollars for studies that aren't needed."

Cowie said both its architect and historic preservationist are negotiating with the state to forgo the seismic study.

"We just keep spinning our wheels and fighting it and keep wasting time," Cowie said. "I'm a little bit worried about how long the public is going to stay with us."

Restoration of the train station has been the sole focus of the Alliance's fund-raising efforts; it has raised over \$50,000. The Alliance is also seeking \$250,000 in grants from the state's historic preservation trust fund.

The Alliance is holding two fund-raisers this month, as well; a wine tasting and car raffle.

The wine tasting will be held from 7-10 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 26, at St. Luke's R.C. Church, 340 Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus. The event costs \$45 per adult and will feature over 100 wines and craft beers as well as cheeses, hors d'oeuvres, gourmet sandwiches and chocolates. All of the proceeds plus 20 percent of wine sales will go toward the train station project.



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The Alliance will also be holding a drawing in its car raffle at 6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 27, at VFW Post 1049, 7 Hewson Ave. Only 750 tickets are available, at \$100 each, to win a black Mercedes-Benz C300, which Cowie said was donated by Prestige Motors in Paramus and is worth about \$39,000.

"I just hope and pray that the people can realize we're still trying," alliance president Chuck Wanamaker said at a council meeting Tuesday, Feb. 8.

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