

## Deadline extended to raise money to purchase historic Hudson home

### Group wants to buy 19th century house, two other buildings

#### Staff Report

HUDSON — An organization looking to purchase and renovate a historic home now has until after the first of the year to raise money for its project.

The Baldwin-Buss House Foundation is raising more than \$1.5 million to purchase its namesake property, an 1825 Federal-style Baldwin-Buss House located on the southwest quadrant of the city's Village Green. Now vacant, it

was last occupied by legendary Hudson athlete and merchant Rich Merino, who died in Connecticut in 2016.

Almost 1 acre in size, the site includes the historic house built by Lemuel Porter, the former Merino beverage store on First Street and the two-story brick office building on West Streetsboro Street. The property has been for sale for more than a year.

---

"It is the intention of the owner to sell all three of those as one property," said Donovan Husat, co-president of Baldwin-Buss House Foundation (BBHF).

The current owner of the Baldwin-Buss House has extended the deadline for BBHF to raise the funds needed to purchase the home. The previous deadline was Nov. 7, but it has been extended to Jan. 7, according to BBHF leaders.

BBHF also received a \$100,000 grant commitment from the Cynthia Parker Matthews Family Foundation and will benefit for a challenge grant issued by a lead donor.

"We are grateful for these wonderful and generous commitments to our campaign," said Husat. "Both of these major gifts, along with several hundred others received from Hudson residents, businesses and foundations, are getting us closer to our goal. We likewise appreciate the owner's willingness to extend our fundraising deadline before the property is offered for sale to the general real estate market."

**How the buildings would be used** Husat said the Baldwin-Buss House is approximately 5,200 square feet, but BBHF is planning to remove non-original components to restore the building to its original footprint.

This would leave the house at 3,200 square feet, according to Husat.

Potential uses of the house being considered include an art gallery, historic displays from the Hudson Library & Historical Society, lectures and programs, and a community meeting area, according to Husat. He added that the area outside of the building would include gardens and offer a spot where community members could sit and enjoy the view.

In addition to the Baldwin-Buss House, Husat said BBHF would seek to acquire the approximate 5,000 square foot brick office **Cynthia Parker Matthews Foundation providing \$100,000 grant** building that is occupied by a home building company and a beauty shop, and the approximate 2,560 square foot former beverage store that sits unoccupied behind the Baldwin-Buss House. Husat added BBHF would consider selling the office building.

“If we sell that [office] building, the capital gain from that would help us either with the purchase or with the restoration of the house itself,” said Husat.

He noted BBHF would want to “hang on” to the former beverage store “for the foreseeable future,” and have spoken with “several potential interested parties that might want to lease the building.”

The \$100,000 Cynthia Parker Matthews Family Foundation grant provides a big boost and additional momentum in total commitments received, according to BBHF leaders.

“We feel strongly about Main Street and know our mother would want to be a part of this project by the BBHF,” said Marci Matthews, Cynthia Parker Matthews’ daughter and the chairperson of the Cynthia Parker Matthews Family Foundation’s Distribution Committee. “Life in a town with a Main Street is special. We have an opportunity not only to preserve it, but also to enhance its vitality and importance for future generations.”

The Cynthia Parker Matthews Family Foundation, in honor of Cindy, its founder, focuses on five pillars of giving: Generosity, Responsibility, Awareness, Community, and Education to create sustainable impact through invitation only grants. Cynthia Parker Matthews passed away in 2017 at the age of 81.

“This is a wonderful and generous commitment to our campaign,” said Inga Walker, co-president of BBHF. “We fully intend to complete our campaign and properly recognize the Cynthia Parker Matthews Foundation and all who have supported our mission.”

**Challenge grant offered by lead donors** The sponsors of the challenge grant are offering to match \$1 for every \$4 committed from other donors, up to a maximum of \$100,000 until the end of the property acquisition campaign. Both new commitments to the campaign and increases to previous gifts and commitments are eligible for matching funds.

“If we were to receive \$400,000 in donations, then the matching grant would be \$100,000,” said Husat. “If we got more than \$400,000, the grant would not increase further, it would just be capped at \$100,000.”

Walker noted this matching grant will be of substantial help toward buying the historic house.

“We are appreciative not only for this grant, but for the donors’ original commitment and for the advice and counsel they have provided throughout our fundraising process,” Walker said.

Husat noted the sponsors of the challenge grant wish to remain anonymous at this time.

BBHF funds, coupled with creative partnerships that the BBHF is pursuing, enhances the likelihood that the property can be acquired by the new deadline of Jan. 7.

### **More donations needed**

Foundation officials said more funds are needed, and are encouraging the community to donate to help save the historic home.

Only commitments of support are being accepted until the fundraising goal is reached. At that point, all who have made commitments will be asked to provide the funds within 30 days. Tax-exempt contributions, at the designated time, will be payable to the Hudson Community Foundation for the benefit of BBHF.

“Historic preservation has for decades set Hudson apart from other communities settled in the Western Reserve in the early 1800s,” Walker said. “While commercial redevelopment and strip malls have

obliterated hundreds of historic and architecturally significant buildings and homes in the area, most of Hudson's have been preserved, thanks to a community that understands and appreciates their importance.”

Husat noted the newest developments has built “significant momentum” in the effort to acquire the property.

“We hope that this will carry over to others who have considered, but not yet committed to supporting us,” said Husat. “We would encourage local businesses to inquire about sponsorships and naming rights.”

As a 501(c)(3) foundation, donations to the campaign qualify for a charitable tax deduction.

For more information about BBHF and the campaign, visit [www.bbhfoundation.org](http://www.bbhfoundation.org).



**Pictured from left are Baldwin- Buss House Foundation members Kathy Russell, treasurer and secretary, and Donovan Husat and Inga Walker, copresidents. The Foundation is working on raising money to purchase and renovate the 19th century home. The current owner recently agreed to extend the fundraising deadline to Jan. 7.**

Lisa Scalfaro, [MyTownNEO.com](http://MyTownNEO.com)