

# Organizations wish upon a Star Barn

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Capital Times Staff

It looks as if the fate of the Star Barn, located not far from Penn State Harrisburg along Route 283 in Swatara Township, hinges on the outcome of a real estate deal. And, as of Mon., Feb. 3, no agreement had been reached.

Douglas Killian, board member of the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy, said negotiations will continue.

Killian and John Patterson, associate professor of American Studies and chairperson of the "Friends of the Star Barn," a grass-roots organization of concerned citizens, have been working toward an arrangement to purchase the barn, along with some of the surrounding land.

Patterson said the Friends would like to see the Star Barn as part of an agricultural education center available to the school districts.

But first, the owners and the Conservancy must agree on the terms of purchase. The crux of the problem lies in the price. The most recent offer by the Conservancy meets the appraised value, but one of the property's co-owners, Ereno Lewis, Jr. disagrees with the appraisal.

"The numbers are so far out of line, I don't think we can make a deal," Lewis said. Lewis shares ownership with his wife, Diane.

Killian said the price of the land is already high. He attributed the high appraisal price to surrounding land. Another developer has recently built new homes on the land adjacent to the property.



Photo by Elin Marcel

The Star Barn, located near Route 283 in Swatara Township, may be torn down unless the farm property it occupies can be preserved as a historical landmark.

Killian, who declined to give the offering price, said, "Disclosure of the asking price may hinder negotiations at this time."

Over the past few years, people have noticed doors missing and paint worn down to the bare wood in most areas.

This prompted about 200 concerned citizens, the Friends, to gather at Penn State Harrisburg last May to discuss salvaging the 120-year-old barn which represents Carpenter Gothic architecture.

Patterson views this project as "the most fundable that I know of." He cites

strong support from people in the community who want to see the barn saved.

"I've never in my life been so deluged with people who want to show me

See Star Barn, page 14

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