



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 13, 2022

For more information, please contact:

John Zody, Housing and Neighborhood Development Director

john.zody@bloomington.in.gov or 812-349-3594

Andrew Krebbs, Communications Director, Office of the Mayor

andrew.krebbs@bloomington.in.gov or 812-349-3406

City Deems Historic Johnson Creamery Smokestack Unsafe

Bloomington, Ind.—The City of Bloomington Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Department has issued an “Unsafe Building Order to Repair” to the owners of the property at 400 W. 7th St. The order was issued specifically for the 140-foot-tall Johnson Creamery smokestack located on the property, pursuant to Bloomington Municipal Code Chapter 17.16 and Indiana Code Chapter 36-7-9.

An inspection on December 14, 2021, determined the smokestack to be potentially dangerous, and on December 21, 2021 HAND ordered it to be repaired within 60 days. The property owners, Peerless Capital of Chicago, Illinois, have been notified of their responsibility to repair.

As a precaution to protect public safety, the B-Line Trail in the area immediately adjacent to the smokestack will be closed until the repairs to the smokestack are completed. B-Line Trail traffic

will be routed around the closure area. The property owners have cordoned off a portion of their parking lot for the Johnson Creamery with caution tape.

Housing and Neighborhood Development Director John Zody explained, "The property containing the smokestack was purchased by a Peerless Capital in 2019. The City itself conducted due diligence on the property in 2017 when reviewing a potential purchase, and learned of significant future maintenance that would be needed to maintain the structural integrity of the smokestack."

In 2021, the property owners approached the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) about smokestack restoration. After several months of communication with the property owner, City staff delivered the unsafe order to assure appropriate action. Plans for restoration, which must be submitted in response to the Unsafe Order, are required by statute to be reviewed by the HPC. The property owners may appeal the Order to Repair to the Board of Public Works.

The original Johnson Creamery building was completed in 1914, with the smokestack added in 1949. The creamery and its iconic smokestack were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. Closed as a creamery in 1987, the facility was restored and remodeled in 1995 to become the Johnson Creamery Business Center.