

No. R-168. House concurrent resolution congratulating the Housing Trust of Rutland County on its conversion of the former Watkins School in Rutland City to affordable senior housing.

(H.C.R.125)

Offered by: Representative Russell of Rutland City

Whereas, the Watkins School in Rutland City was built in 1897 and, for many decades, was the place where neighborhood youngsters mastered reading, writing, and arithmetic, and

Whereas, once this venerable scholastic structure closed its doors to students, the building served briefly as a maintenance garage, and

Whereas, the long-term future of the Watkins School became a matter of much local discussion, and

Whereas, the Rutland City School District first proposed to demolish this historic building and then sell the property, and

Whereas, however, before the Rutland City School Board had the chance to implement the plan, the Rutland City Board of Aldermen convened a meeting to gather more information, and a state legislator expressed opposition to the proposal, and

Whereas, in a June 29, 2011, editorial commentary, Elisabeth Kulas, the Executive Director of the Housing Trust of Rutland County, wrote of her dismay that the wrecker's ball might soon knock the building to the ground, and

Whereas, having acknowledged the complaints regarding the Watkins School demolition, in 2001, the Rutland City School Board decided to place the building on the real estate market, and

Whereas, fortunately, the Housing Trust of Rutland County was able to secure the necessary funding for purchasing the building and ensuring that this historic structure remained standing with a new purpose, and

Whereas, in order to convert the Watkins School into the preferred new use as senior citizen housing, it was financially necessary to construct a carriage house on the property to create additional housing units, and

Whereas, the superb restoration of the school resulted in six modern one-bedroom apartments, and the building retained many features from its past, including blackboards, and

Whereas, the new carriage house provides eight similarly attractive apartments, and by March 31, 2015, all the apartments were leased and occupied, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates the Housing Trust of Rutland County on its conversion of the former Watkins School in Rutland City to affordable senior housing, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Housing Trust of Rutland County.