



P.O. Box 2603, Vashon, WA 98070

February 15, 2017

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive  
401 Fifth Ave., Ste. 800  
Seattle, WA 98104

Joe McDermott  
Chair, King County Council  
516 Third Ave., Ste. 1200  
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: King Co. purchase of the Mukai Fruit Barreling Plant

Dear Executive Constantine and Council Chair McDermott:

Our organization, Friends of Mukai, fully supports King County's purchase of the historic Mukai Fruit Barreling Plant on Vashon Island.

Friends of Mukai, a state non-profit, owns and operates the historic Mukai House and Garden on Vashon. The Fruit Barreling Plant is adjacent to our site. Both parcels were purchased by Japanese immigrant B.D. Mukai in 1927, as part of his 40-acre strawberry growing and packing business. The Mukai family built the Fruit Barreling Plant in 1928, their home in 1929, and a surrounding Japanese garden in the early 1930's. The two parcels, together, tell the story of this enterprising family, the successes and struggles of the Japanese community in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the effects of WWII and internment, and the important role of agriculture on Vashon and the region back then.

For over five years, our goal has been to reunite the two landmarked parcels, restore the structures and the Japanese garden, and operate the site as a vibrant educational and cultural center that preserves our historic heritage—for the enjoyment of all.

With an eye towards the purchase of the Fruit Barreling Plant, in 2015 we partnered with Senator Sharon Nelson and the state Department of Archeology and Preservation to secure \$350,000 from the state legislature in Capital Budget funding. All of this money will be used by King County to purchase the Fruit Barreling Plant from its owner. We are pleased that these funds will be used for this purpose.

The purchase of the Barreling Plant also involves the sale of a County owned parcel to the current owner, Frank Zellerhoff. Given that we are invested, both financially and operationally in the County's acquisition of the Barreling Plant, we ask that the County direct any excess proceeds from the sale of the County parcel to us. This money would be used to begin renovation of the Barreling Plant; current cost restoration estimates range from \$750,000 to over \$1,000,000.

Once the County acquires the Fruit Barreling Plant, we look forward to negotiating a long-term lease that will allow us to reunite the two properties after decades of separation; restore the structures and garden as set out in our Historic Preservation Plan; and operate the site with engaging historical and cultural programming that will be enjoyed by visitors in many ways. We have committed community and regional support in this effort.

For these reasons, we are extremely pleased to support King County's purchase of the Fruit Barreling Plant; historic preservation is increasingly important as development accelerates.

We look forward to a continued partnership with the County on the Mukai site—a treasured cultural and historic site that will enrich visitors from near and far.

Sincerely,

*Lynn Greiner*

Lynn Greiner  
Board President  
Friends of Mukai