



September 10, 2021

To whom It May Concern:

I write in support of the Everglades Society for Historic Preservation's efforts to restore the Bank of Everglades Building in Everglades City, Florida.

One of only two Neoclassical style buildings erected in Everglades City in the 1920s by County founder Barron Gift Collier, the Bank of Everglades building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999 and named by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation as one of "Florida's 11 to Save" in 2018. Designed by architect William O. Sparklin, who also designed the Courthouse (now City Hall) and the Model Steam Laundry (now Museum of the Everglades), the building boasts a unique engineering feature in its enormous central ceiling-mounted cooling fan and maintains the physical integrity of its intact original bank vault.

When the building was at its worst, after a hurricane and a flood left it uninhabitable but still salvageable, the Everglades Society for Historic Preservation's leaders invested significant time and energy into stabilizing the building and earning the trust of its former owner—all without the promise of eventual ownership. Their efforts paid off with the gift of the building to them in 2021.

The Society has wasted no time engaging the right professionals to guide the building's restoration and has developed a business model to ensure its continued financial sustainability and the feasibility of continuing community-oriented use.

Everglades City has lost many architectural gems over the years—some to catastrophes like hurricanes and fire, and some to the simple vagaries of neglect or termites. It's not too late for the Bank of Everglades building to stand as a testament to the rural town's unique history for many generations to come. Please join me in supporting the very worthwhile effort of saving this building and in so doing preserving the heritage of a truly American combination: small towns and big dreams.

Sincerely,



Amanda Townsend, Director
Collier County Museums

