



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham, Slater and Scorrano Announce State Funding for Restoration of Landmark Elephant Hotel

PETE HARCKHAM March 31, 2025

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(l-r) Somers Historical Society Co-Chair, Grace Zimmerman; Assemblyman Matt Slater; Senator Pete Harckham; Somers Town Supervisor Robert Scarrano; Somers Town Historian Doris Jane Smith; Somers Town maintenance mechanic Marty Stole; and Somers Historical

More than \$280K for 200-year-old structure, now the Somers Town Hall

Somers, NY - Senator Pete Harckham, Assemblyman Matt Slater and Somers Town Supervisor Robert Scorrano announced today that a \$281,500 state grant will fund important restoration and weather proofing improvements designed to preserve the town's landmark Elephant

Hotel, which is celebrating its 200th anniversary.

“The Elephant Hotel holds a significant place, not only in the history of Somers and New York, but also in American history,” Harckham said. “This important investment in the preservation and restoration of the cherished national landmark is vital so it can continue to serve the community as a town hall, home of the Somers Historical Society and as an archive for vital historical records. The improvements will help to preserve this structure for another 200 years as a testament to the rich history and heritage it represents.”

“The Elephant Hotel is an iconic piece of Somers history, and I am proud to work alongside our partners in government to support critical funding to preserve it,” Slater said. “The Hudson Valley is full of historic landmarks like the Elephant Hotel, and it is our responsibility to ensure future generations can see, experience and learn from them. Congratulations to Supervisor Scorrano and the great town of Somers!”

“This year marks the 200th anniversary of the historic Elephant Hotel, a treasured landmark listed on both the New York State and National Register of Historic Places,” Scorrano said. “This grant will support critical repairs to preserve not only the building itself but also the invaluable historic artifacts, cultural exhibits, municipal offices, and essential town documents housed within. I am proud to support a state capital plan that makes key investments like this. This funding ensures that the Elephant Hotel remains a cornerstone of our community for generations to come.”

The funding will enable the town to repair, restore, rehabilitate and weatherproof the building, so that it will remain a National Historic Landmark and continue to provide a space for town offices, document storage, the Museum of Early American Circus, the Historical Society, and community events. The goal is to prevent further damage to the site.

Constructed between 1820 and 1825, the Elephant Hotel was named in honor of a particular pachyderm named “Old Bet,” which was owned by circus entrepreneur Hachaliah Bailey. The structure is noted by architectural historians as being representative of a rare, distinctive example of Federal period domestic architecture and a rural turnpike hotel from its era.

The work is part of an ongoing restoration project of the structure, which was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2005. Most recently, some of the outdoor lighting was upgraded. In 2024, the deteriorating “Old Bet” statue, which stood in front of the building, was replaced by a new bronze sculpture created by local artist Luigi Badia and funded by the Wittmann family.

The grant was funded through the state Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) and sourced from the state’s from the Environmental Protection Fund.