

First Federal to construct new building in downtown Waynesburg



By Bob Niedbala February 2, 2016



Bob Niedbala/Observer-Reporter

The Allison Building, which is the original site of the annual Rain Day tradition, was demolished in October 2013. First Federal Savings now plans to construct an office building on the site. [Order a Print](#)

WAYNESBURG – A new building will soon go up on High Street in Waynesburg, the first new construction in the borough’s business district in many years.

First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Greene County has proposed constructing the building adjoining its home office at 25 E. High St. at the site of the former Allison Building.

Plans for the building were presented Monday to the Greene County Planning Commission and were granted preliminary approval. Construction is expected to begin this spring.

The building will be about the same size as the Allison Building, though two stories high instead of three, said Judi Goodwin Tanner, president and chief executive officer of the bank.

The Allison Building, which was demolished in 2013, was said to be one of the oldest buildings in the downtown and had historic significance in that it was considered the birth place of Rain Day.

The new building will be brick, just as the building it is meant to replace, Tanner said.

“We’re going to make it look as similar as we can to the building that was taken down,” she said. “That is what we went off of (in choosing a design). We wanted to make it look very similar.”

Tanner said the bank has outgrown its existing office space on High Street and could use the additional space. The new building will be used for offices. Though it will have an entrance on High Street, its main access will be through the lobby of the existing bank.

The Allison Building was believed to have been constructed in the 1830s by Albert G. Allison. It was his son or grandson, William Allison, who is credited with starting the Rain Day tradition in 1875.

William Allison worked as a clerk in the Allison Building for the J.T. Rogers & Co. Drugstore. According to Rain Day legend, Allison started keeping a record of the weather July 29 after hearing a farmer complain it rained every year on that date, his birthday.

Allison began making friendly wagers with others that it would rain July 29. The tradition eventually evolved into Rain Day, which is celebrated annually and is based on the belief it always rains in Waynesburg on July 29.

The building was purchased by First Federal in June 2013. Engineers who inspected the building found numerous structural deficiencies, including collapsed load-bearing walls, and determined the structure would be too costly to repair. It was demolished in late October of that year.

Sam McVicker of K2 Engineering Inc., the project engineer, told the planning commission he had received a letter from the borough indicating the project was in compliance with the borough's storm water management plan. The 18 parking spaces that will be behind the new building also meet the borough parking requirements, he said.
