

SEM - OCTOBER 21, 1996

ARTICLE 13: DREW FARMS

It was voted unanimously that the Town rescind the unused bonding authority of THREE HUNDRED FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND (\$355,000.00) DOLLARS granted to the Treasurer under Article 24 of the Warrant of the Annual Town Meeting, held at an adjourned session thereof on May 11, 1987.

(Finance Committee Approved)
(Board of Selectmen Approved)

ARTICLE 14: SLIFER LAND CONSERVATION

It was voted unanimously that the Town rescind the unused bonding authority of TWENTY THOUSAND (\$20,000.00) DOLLARS granted to the Treasurer under Article 23 of the Warrant of the Annual Town Meeting, held at an adjourned session thereof on May 11, 1987.

(Finance Committee Approved)
(Board of Selectmen Approved)

ARTICLE 15: BLANCHARD MIDDLE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

It was voted, 536 YES - 1 NO, that the Town rescind the unused bonding authority of SEVEN HUNDRED TWENTY-FOUR THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED FIFTY (\$724,250.00) DOLLARS granted to the Treasurer under Article 1 of the Warrant of the Special Town Meeting, held on October 26, 1989.

(Finance Committee Approved)
(Board of Selectmen Approved)

ARTICLE 16: CAPITAL ITEMS/TOWN MANAGER

It was voted that the Town raise and appropriate or appropriate from any available funds, such as free cash, the sum of SEVENTY-TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED (\$72,500.00) DOLLARS for various capital requests.

a. One Ton Dump Trucks for Highway Department	\$33,000.00
b. Refrigeration chiller units for various schools	\$15,000.00
c. Lavatory partition replacement/Robinson School	\$12,000.00
d. Various school plumbing repairs	\$7,500.00
e. Computers for Fire Department	\$5,000.00
TOTAL	\$72,500.00

(Finance Committee Approved)
(Board of Selectmen Approved)

DREW PARCEL NEGOTIATION COMMITTEE

The mission of the Drew Parcel Negotiation Committee was to preserve the visual assets and unique character of the Drew Farms property. The committee also hoped to preserve the use of the parcel as outlet for local products to the greatest extent possible. The Committee, appointed by the Board of Selectmen in January 1996, worked with the Drew Farm owners and presented a plan to the October 1996 Special Town Meeting. The Special Town Meeting unanimously appropriated funds which allowed Westford to successfully accomplish this mission.

The Drew Farms property consists of two pieces of land on the east side of Boston Road just north of Interstate 495. One is a 7-acre working orchard and the other is 2 acres on which sits a farm stand. Both parcels are owned by Keith and Nanci Bohne, who operate the orchard and farm stand. The parcels are zoned residential, with the farm stand operating under several zoning variances. In December 1995, the Bohnes notified the Town that they were interested in selling the parcels and wanted to work with the Town on the best approach to maintain the character of the parcels. They put the parcels on the market at a price of \$850,000 and gave the Town a 30-day right of first refusal.

Given the location of the parcels, the importance of this property was recognized by the Selectmen as well as by the Master Plan Implementation Committee. The orchard is one of the few remaining working orchards in Westford and the farm stand is strategically located near the Westford exits from Interstate 495. The existence of the orchard is a main feature of Westford's character, reminiscent of the many orchards for which Westford was known. The parcels are contiguous with Town-owned land, most of which was purchased by an earlier Drew Development Committee in response to direction from the 1987 Town Meeting. This Town-owned land is also contiguous with land having conservation restrictions. On the west side of Boston Road, just opposite Drew Farms, is a small orchard on Town-owned land which had not been worked for about ten years.

The Committee was fortunate to be able to draw on the experience of Town Counsel, the law firm of Brackett & Lucas, who had assisted the Town of Bolton in protecting a similar piece of property, the Nashoba Valley Winery. With advice from Town Counsel, the Committee investigated several approaches including obtaining grants from the State.

After reviewing options and discussing them with the Bohnes, the Committee recommended to the Selectmen and to the Finance Committee that the Town purchase the development rights to both parcels with the agreement that the Bohnes continue to work the orchard and, at their own expense, re-establish and work the smaller orchard on Town-owned land. The Bohnes will also continue to operate the farm stand. A price of \$525,000 was negotiated. To minimize the impact on Town finances, the price will be paid in three annual payments. An agricultural preservation restriction will be placed on the parcels which allows only orchard and farm stand uses on the individual parcels, respectively. Should the Bohnes decide to sell the land sometime in the future, the Town has the right of first refusal.

This recommendation was unanimously approved by the Special Town Meeting on October 21, 1996. Ten days later, on Halloween, the annual Drew Farms pumpkin-carving was more festive than usual as both the families of Westford and the Bohnes celebrated the continued vitality and presence of the orchard and farm stand.

Respectfully Submitted,

Drew Parcel Negotiating Committee
Elizabeth Michaud, Chairperson
Peter Cooke
Bill Harman
Ron Sandholm
Emily Teller
Jack Wrobel

ARTICLE 32:

It was voted unanimously that the Town will vote to declare: 2certain real property, consisting of two parcels totaling 8.97 acres located on Boston Road known as Drew Farms and including a farm stand and an apple orchard, to be of unique value to the Town because of its qualities and location; and that advertising pursuant to Mass. General Laws Ch. 30B will not benefit the Town.

ARTICLE 33:

It was voted that the Town authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a lease of a parcel of town-owned land located on the south side of Boston Road in the vicinity of and across from the present Drew Farm stand and store, consisting of between 1 and 2 acres of land, containing an apple orchard; the lease to provide that the lessee will renovate and farm the orchard and have the use of all produce from the orchard; and further that the Board of Selectmen shall determine the value of said lease and if required shall issue a Request for Proposals from parties interested pursuant to Mass. Gen. Laws c.30B.

ARTICLE 34:

It was voted to dismiss this article.

It was voted to adjourn the Annual Town Meeting at 10:15 PM until Wednesday, October 23, 1996 at 7:30 PM at the Abbot School.

A True Record: ATTEST

Elaine V. McKenna
Town Clerk

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ARTICLE 20: STREET ACCEPTANCE/PLANNING BOARD

It was voted unanimously that the Town accept, as and for a Town Way, Pleasant Street from Prescott Street to Oak Street.
(Board of Selectmen Approved)

ARTICLE 21: STREET ACCEPTANCE/PLANNING BOARD

It was voted that the Town accept, as and for a Town Way, Hayrick Lane as laid out and recommended by the Board of Selectmen, as shown by their reports and plans duly filed with the Town Clerk.
(Board of Selectmen Approved)

ARTICLE 22: BY PETITION

It was voted to dismiss this article.

ARTICLE 23:

The Moderator introduced Elizabeth Michaud, as spokesperson for the Drew Farms Committee to explain the agreement which was negotiated and is now being presented for a vote.

Elizabeth: "The financing - we were able to negotiate \$175,000 each year for a period of three years so we are going to ask you to vote on the total amount of \$525,000 tonight. However, only \$175,000 worth of that will be bonded the first year, \$175,000 will be bonded the 2nd year and \$175,000 the third year." Her comments were further outlined in a handout labeled as "Drew Farms Proposal".

It was voted unanimously that the Town raise and appropriate the sum of FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND (\$525,000.00) DOLLARS for the purpose of acquiring the development rights to, an agricultural preservation restriction on, and a right of first refusal (regarding the remaining agricultural rights) in certain real property consisting of two parcels totaling 8.97 acres located on Boston Road, known as Drew Farms and including a farmstand and an apple orchard, and to determine that said sums will be raised by taxation, by borrowing, or both. (2/3 vote required; c.40, s.14)

(Board of Selectmen Approved)
(Finance Committee Disapproved)

ARTICLE 24:

It was voted to dismiss this article.

ARTICLE 25:

It was voted to dismiss this article.

ARTICLE 26:

It was voted to dismiss this article.

ARTICLE 27:

It was voted unanimously that the Town authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire over a period of three fiscal years

the development rights to, an agricultural preservation restriction on, and an option to purchase agricultural rights in certain real property consisting of two parcels totaling 8.97 acres located on Boston Road Known as Brew Farms,

and to enter into an agreement with the owners for the purchase and sale of one-third of the area in Fiscal Year 1997, one-third of the area in the Fiscal Year 1998 and one-third of the area in the Fiscal Year 1999. The remaining terms to be negotiated by the Board of Selectmen.

ARTICLE 28:

It was voted to dismiss this article.

ARTICLE 29:

It was voted to dismiss this article.

ARTICLE 30:

It was voted to dismiss this article.

ARTICLE 31:

It was voted to dismiss this article.