

“... while scholars have written about the almshouse as an institution, they have not recognized it as a significant historical and architectural resource. I hope that by identifying and analyzing almshouses, they will be appreciated as cultural artifacts, just as lighthouses and train stations are.”

Heli Meltsner  
*The Poorhouses of Massachusetts:  
A Cultural and Architectural History (2012)*



1903



2019

Photo by Alan L. Chaffee

## 35 TOWN FARM ROAD TASK FORCE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE USE

OF THE TOWN FARM

November 12, 2019

See our webpage on the Town website, [www.westfordma.gov/1229/35-Town-Farm-Road-Task-Force](http://www.westfordma.gov/1229/35-Town-Farm-Road-Task-Force), for an extensive narrative and timeline of the Town Farm's history.

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The 35 Town Farm Road Task Force is pleased to present the following unanimous recommendations for the preservation and re-use of the historic Town Farm building.

April 23, 2019, the Board of Selectmen approved the charge for the 35 Town Farm Road Task Force:

*Using the Evaluation Criteria on pages 8 and 9 of the “Request for Proposals (RFP) Sale of 35 Town Farm Road” from May 2017 the Town Farm Task Force is charged with*

- *Establishing the best use for the 1837 building at 35 Town Farm Road*
- *Identifying an individual or corporation who can present a plan to implement this use while preserving the building’s historic and architectural features*

*The Town Farm Task Force will work closely with the*

- *Assistant Town Manager who oversaw the initial Request for Proposals*
- *Westford Fire Department*
- *Historical Commission*
- *Westford Historical Society*
- *Westford Housing Authority*
- *Community Preservation Committee*

*and with preservationists who have previously restored historic buildings in Westford.*

#### **~ Recommendation for best use of the building**

Based on our deliberations, research, and discussions, the Task Force unanimously recommends that the building at 35 Town Farm be re-purposed for 100% truly affordable senior housing, and to provide a home for the Westford Food Pantry through historic preservation of both the original 1837 building and the 1901 ell.

“Truly affordable” is defined by the Director of Elder Services Jennifer Claro as units to be rented to those who live at or below the HUD income level criteria of 50% of AMI (Area Median Income) which is \$37,700 for a one-person household and \$43,050 for a two-person household. (See [Appendix A](#), page 9.)

#### **~ Identification of two corporations who can present plans to implement the recommend uses**

The Task Force received two proposals for re-use of the building.

1. Soon after the Task Force was appointed, Jennifer Claro, Director of Elder Services, and the Westford Council on Aging asked that the Town Farm and associated out buildings (School and Fire Department storage sheds) be considered for affordable housing for seniors and as a new home for the Westford Food Pantry which is currently housed in the Cameron Senior Center basement.
2. Charles Gaudet, principal of Birch Hollow LLC of Wolfeboro NH, met with the Task Force in June to present his concept of “a renovation project and a conversion to 7 residential units... proposing to convert the building into five two- and three-bedroom units and two one-bedroom units dedicated to affordable elderly housing

(these units will be dedicated to affordable through perpetuity) with first-floor handicap accessibility.”

### **Evaluation process for the two proposals**

The Task Force held eight public meetings; did extensive research; met with pertinent town staff members, State Representative Jim Arciero, and with Don Mills, principal with Mills Whitaker Architects; distributed information and had discussions about the Town Farm at the June 13<sup>th</sup> Strategic Planning Retreat; and conducted site walks. Roberta McGuire attended a meeting of the Community Preservation Committee to discuss possible CPA funding for historic preservation and affordable housing and will follow up by attending the CPC public input meeting in December 2019.

In addition, we mailed letters to Town Farm neighbors explaining our charge and intentions and inviting them to our October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting to learn more and to give us their input. Though none attended, through the invitation they were made aware of our work.

1. **Council on Aging proposal** – In May, Task Force members Roberta McGuire, Nancy Cook and Scott Hazelton and advisory member Diane Hendriks met with the Council on Aging and members from the Westford Food Pantry, Inc. It was learned that the Council on Aging has a wait list of 541 Westford seniors seeking affordable housing in the town and that the Food Pantry is outgrowing their current space at the Cameron Senior Center. The information learned at that meeting is summarized in detail in a memo presented to the Task Force. (See [Appendix B](#), page 10.)

Jennifer Claro and Tim Baker, Westford Food Pantry board president, toured 35 Town Farm Road, attended Task Force meetings and provided the Task Force with written answers to our questions.

Task Force and Council on Aging member Nancy Cook then reached out to David Hedison, executive director of the Chelmsford Housing Authority and its non-profit arm CHOICE (Chelmsford Housing Opportunities for Intergenerational and Community Endeavors). CHOICE has partnered with Westford on affordable housing at the Village at Mystery Spring at 67 Tadmuck Road, the veterans housing at 173 Carlisle Road and the proposed Helena Crocker housing to be built at 60 Littleton Road. In July, Task Force members Nancy Cook, Bob Waskiewicz and Ellen Harde met with David who expressed great interest in developing affordable senior housing at 35 Town Farm Road.

In August, David attended the meeting of the full Task Force. His vision of the project would utilize both the 1837 building and the 1901 ell and preserve the historic integrity of the building. The proposal also envisions an addition on the rear of the existing building for up to eighteen units, similar to the Helena Crocker project. As with its previous projects, CHOICE would seek funding from state housing funds and a private financial partner. This funding would include money for relocating the Fire Department training area and the new septic system required for housing.

Engineers from CHOICE have looked at the parcel and feel that the land would accommodate their proposal if the existing 29,400- square-foot parcel is increased to include the present Fire Department training square footage and the land where the

Fire Department storage shed now (barely) stands. Increasing the parcel size is discussed in more detail below.

- 2. Birch Hollow proposal** – Charlie Gaudet, principal of Birch Hollow, attended two meetings of the Task Force. No written proposal was asked for or received, but in conversations Charlie asked if additional dormers would be acceptable given the Town’s historic preservation requirements (Task Force member Dave Gutbrod took the question to the Historic Commission which he chairs), whether the Fire Department training area would be moved (see below), and about the future of both the School Department and Fire Department storage sheds (see below).

**~ Recommendations for preserving the building’s historic and architectural features**

The Task Force unanimously recommends that the 1837 and 1901 Town Farm buildings be preserved, and that the Selectmen take no action to either demolish these buildings or allow them to be lost by neglect.

The Task Force voted unanimously to have an historic preservation restriction placed on the property as soon as possible. The amended Town Meeting motion authorizing the Selectmen to sell the Town Farm requires that a historic preservation restriction be placed on the property before it is sold (see [Appendix C](#), page 18), but the Task Force sees no reason to wait. Don Mills of Mills Whitaker also supports an historic preservation restriction at this time. Task Force members David Gutbrod, Bob Waskiewicz and Dan Britko are working to establish what should be included in the restriction using the recent historic preservation restriction placed on the 1794 Westford Academy building at 2 Boston Road as a template.

The 2017 RFP for 35 Town Farm Road included a list of historic architectural elements that must be preserved when the building is re-purposed and our Task Force was directed to include these in our work. The Task Force would like to expand the list. To assist in the Task Force in identifying all the features to be preserved, Alan Chaffee, a Westford resident and photographer, volunteered his time to take over 200 detailed photographs of the interior and exterior which Marilyn Day has compiled into a document. Alan did a similar photographic documentation before the Abbot Mill was converted to apartments. Copies of this photographic documentation will be used by all those working on the preservation of the Town Farm and will be given to the Westford Historical Society and the J. V. Fletcher Library for posterity.

## **Complete list of Task Force recommendations, all voted unanimously**

1. Preserving historic elements and integrity, re-purpose both the original 1837 Town Farm building and the 1901 ell as 100% truly affordable senior housing and as a home for the Westford Food Pantry.
2. The Selectmen take no action to either demolish the original 1837 Town Farm building and the 1901 ell or allow these buildings to be lost by neglect.
3. In 2019, issue an RFP seeking an individual or corporation to carry out the Task Force recommendation to re-purpose Town Farm for senior housing and the food pantry.
4. Make the transformation of the Town Farm to affordable senior housing and the food pantry a top priority for Town officials and staff, supported and moved forward on an expedited permitting track by the Selectmen, the Land Use and Permitting Offices, the Board of Health, the Facilities Manager, the Fire Department, and the Housing Authority.
5. On the north side of the property, include a common driveway for access to the Rogers Fire Station meeting room parking area and for the new senior housing.
6. Initiate the process to increase the size of the Town Farm parcel from the current 29,400 square feet.
7. Maintain the existing septic system until the restoration begins.
8. Demolish the Fire Department storage shed.
9. Work with the Director of Facilities to complete clearing out the buildings, then work with the Economic Development Committee to identify individuals or companies who will rent as-is office space in the building until restoration of the Town Farm begins. (See [Appendix D](#), page 23.)
10. Revise the charge to the 35 Town Farm Task Force to allow the members to continue their work with stakeholders through both the RFP process and the renovations to transform the Town Farm to affordable senior housing and a new home for the food pantry. The stakeholders will include but are not limited to the Council on Aging, Westford Food Pantry, Affordable Housing Committee, the Fire Department, Historical Commission, Historical Society, and the Economic Development Committee.

## **Constraints and limitations of the site**

Being aware of several issues that may have limited response to the 2017 RFP issued by the Town, the Task Force established subcommittees to find solutions to each of these issues.

Fire Department Training Site – Task Force member and Deputy Fire Chief Dan Britko was invaluable in helping the Task Force understand his department’s training needs and to find a new location. Lt. Mike Denehy provided the information that the current burn tower, constructed when the Rogers Fire Station was built in 2001, was not constructed with the proper concrete and therefore is not used. It would not be necessary to replicate this burn tower on a new site.

Working with the Deputy Chief, George Murray and Marilyn Day, GIS Coordinator Chris Coutu identified over 50 town-owned parcels that could meet Fire Department training needs. The Task Force subcommittee chose four. Two of these, land abutting and/or part of the 12 acres at 30 Beacon Street and 15 vacant acres at the Highway Garage, appear to be the most viable. Richie Crocker, School Department Maintenance head, is willing to consider sharing the existing School Maintenance property (the former Highway Garage) with the Fire Department. In George Murray’s report, Highway Superintendent Chip Barrett is “desirous of using [the Highway Garage] parcel for materials storage....There may be enough useable land on this 15-acre site to accommodate both operations.” (See [Appendix E](#), page 24.)

The CHOICE housing concept includes an offer to secure funding to replicate the current fire training area. In discussions with Mr. Gaudet, funding was not discussed.

School Department and Fire Department storage sheds – The one developer who responded to the last RFP and both the present potential developers of housing at 35 Town Farm Road have cited these buildings as both visual and practical impediments to their plans. The Task Force agrees. A decision to demolish the Fire Department storage shed was previously made, Demolition Delay Bylaw approval and a bid for tearing down the building received. However, the demolition was put on hold during the RFP review process but should be revived. The School Department storage shed is newer and currently houses surplus furniture and desks. This could remain and access to the back of the property and to the back entrance of the Rogers fire station would still be possible even with housing and the Westford Food Pantry in the Town Farm and an addition, as proposed by CHOICE, in the back.

Size of the lot – In 1971 the 7+ acre Town Farm parcel was subdivided leaving only 29,400 square feet with the Town Farm building. (See Alan Engineering survey on page A.01 of the Mills Whitaker report, which was emailed to the Board of Selectmen on October 30, 2019.) Care and custody of the Town Farm building was then transferred to the School Department for their administrative offices. The Task Force recommends that the Town Farm lot be enlarged to extend the northerly boundary to include the Fire Department storage shed (which is under the care and custody of the Board of Selectmen), and to move the southerly boundary all the way back until it intersects with the northerly edge of the railroad right of way. (See [Appendix F](#), page 26.)

Structural integrity of the building – With the Selectmen’s support, Don Mills of Mills Whitaker was contracted to survey the building and site and provide “a general review of

existing conditions and comments about the issues related to an appropriate rehabilitation that will require building code upgrades, life safety improvements, and accessibility provisions while preserving historical features.” Having received and read previous studies and evaluations of the Town Farm and having visited the building, Don attended the September 30th meeting of the Task Force to discuss his findings. Both the 1837 Town Farm and the 1901 ell have “good bones” and these two-story buildings are appropriate for “adaptive reuse.” (See the complete Mills Whitaker report.)

Septic system – Roberta McGuire contacted Rae Dick, Director of Environmental Services, about the Town Farm septic system. The system, which is a cesspool, has not failed but Rae suggests, “My recommendation would be to request a complete Title 5 report on all the systems at the property.” During further discussion, Rae suggested that the system be pumped since Board of Health records show this was last done in 2007. (See notes and email [Appendix G](#), page 28). This information has been forwarded to Paul Fox, Director of Facilities.

Other issues – The Task Force looked at other issues affecting reusing the site–wetlands, zoning, funding–as well other matters. Reports on those investigations are in appendices H-L, starting on page 30.

## **Conclusion**

The Town built the brick portion of the Town Farm in 1837 to serve as a “poor-house” for Westford’s most needy residents. By re-purposing the building as the Task Force recommends, Westford will return the building to its original intent. In 2019, truly affordable senior housing will serve one of Westford’s greatest needs. It will also help the Town meet goals set out in the Housing Production Plan, adopted by the Selectmen in November 2016, and in the Comprehensive Master Plan. In addition, the Town will preserve a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008 as one of the last remaining town-owned poor farms in Massachusetts.

Much work has been done by the Task Force. For the sake of brevity, not all that we learned is included in this report. The Appendices are more detailed as is the Mills Whitaker report.

The Task Force members will be present at your November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting to answer questions and provide any additional information needed to allow the Board of Selectmen to give their unwavering support to this exciting undertaking.

Respectfully submitted,

Deputy Fire Chief Dan Britko	Ellen Harde
Lynn Cohen	Scott Hazelton
Nancy Cook	Roberta McGuire
David Gutbrod	George Murray
Wanda Hall (resigned Sept 2019)	Bob Waskiewicz

Advisory Members: Marilyn Day, Diane Hendriks, Pat Louch, Juliette Mount

## Appendix A

### Truly affordable, defined

**From:** Jennifer Claro <[jclaro@westfordma.gov](mailto:jclaro@westfordma.gov)>

**Subject:** Town Farm

**Date:** September 19, 2019 at 10:08:45 AM EDT

**To:** "'[Dhenmar@comcast.net](mailto:Dhenmar@comcast.net)'" <[Dhenmar@comcast.net](mailto:Dhenmar@comcast.net)>

Diane,

Thank you for reaching out to me regarding what income level would be best served for additional low-income housing. After speaking with my colleague, Alison Christopher, Town Social Worker, Lisa Larrabee, Westford Housing Authority and our COA Chair, Nancy Cook I would recommend that we target those that live at or below 50% of AMI. The HUD income level criteria for those living at 50% of AMI is as follows:

1-person household - \$37,700

2-person household- \$43,050

Please let me know if you have any more questions and thanks for letting us be a part of this exciting conversation,

Jennifer Claro  
Director of Elder Services  
20 Pleasant Street  
Westford MA 01886

## **Appendix B**

### **Needs Assessments & Meetings with Interested Parties**

Report: Meeting with Council on Aging & Westford Food Pantry

Updated: September 30, 2019 and again on October 22, 2019

Report: Meeting with Council on Aging – Affordable Housing – May 17, 2019

Town Farm Potential Usage – Low / Very Low Income Affordable Senior Housing

Who attended: Jennifer Claro, Alison Christopher, Patti Mason, Bob Tierney, Ken Hyle and others, Nancy Cook, Scott Hazelton, Diane Hendriks, Roberta McGuire. Also present was Helena Crocker.

Areas of Interest:

- I. Low Income / Very Low Income Senior Housing, and
- II. New Home for the Westford Food Pantry

Statements of Need

#### I. Low/Very Low Income Senior Housing

- clients would be older adults, who are living at or below 50% of Area Median Income (AMI)
- Westford Senior Housing wait list is 150 as of 5/20/19
- non age restricted/include other towns/cities
- waitlist for 2BR apt; 319
- waitlist for 3BR apt: 164
- (as of 10/22/2019, the total waitlist is 1237)

Data Trends (from Town Clerk - Feb. 2018)

- 390 Westford residents turned 60 in 2018
- 433 residents will turn 60 in 2019
- 408 residents will turn 60 in 2020

Westford's poverty level has increased from 2.5% to 3% - Community Teamwork, Inc. 2019

#### II. Food Pantry

- scope of service has expanded from Westford residents only to also include the community at large - surrounding towns
- serves over 210 families
- In the past year:
  - 2400 store visits & about 5000 bags groceries distributed
- currently about 180 sq ft. space
- limits variety of food offered
- 40 volunteers help with the food pantry
- anticipate needing about 1200 sq ft. of space to accommodate Westford's planned growth
- very excited about the possibility of the Town Farm's potential to house the Food Pantry

Due to privacy concerns and personal pride, or a sense that others are more deserving, many who need housing and/or food assistance don't ask for help. These numbers may be higher.

Additionally, on September 16, 2019, the Westford Food Pantry provided the Task Force with following details:

Site requirements:

- 1st floor / single floor
- wheelchair accessible
- double door access for loading
- water and sewage
- heat and air conditioning

Building specifications: **(It is recommended that the developer work with the Westford Food Pantry to satisfy their current and future needs).**

- storefront 600 sq ft.
- warehouse 1000 sq. ft
- admin 900 sq ft (office, conference room, kitchen, waiting area, bathroom
- total square footage - 2500 sq ft.

(Refer to attached correspondence for details) [pp. 12-16]

Documents referenced to prepare report:

1. 4/18/19 email forwarded from Jodi Ross to Ellen Harde re: CoA's interest in Town Farm;
2. 4/30/10 memo from Council on Aging to Ellen Harde regarding background on Town Farm, continued interest in Town Farm, and statement of need from the Westford food Pantry;
3. 5/17/19 email from R. McGuire, detailing meeting held at Cameron Senior Center to further discuss the needs of Council on Aging and the Westford food pantry, as well as additional information to define the types of affordable housing that are of a higher need at the moment.
4. 9/17/19, email forwarded from Ellen Harde to the Task Force, an email from Tim Baker, Westford Food Pantry President, describing in more detail what the physical requirements are of the space they desire in order to expand their operations.
5. **Westford 2017-2021 Housing Production Plan** pp. 14, 15 & more  
[www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/12/xu/westford\\_0.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/12/xu/westford_0.pdf)
6. **Westford's 2018 Open Space & Recreation Plan (DRAFT)**  
[www.westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6721/2018-Open-Space-and-Recreation-Plan---DRAFT](http://www.westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6721/2018-Open-Space-and-Recreation-Plan---DRAFT)
7. Council on Aging Meeting Minutes, April 10, 2019

8/26/2019

Jennifer Carlo email.eml

**Subject:** FW: Town Farm  
**From:** Jodi Ross <jross@westfordma.gov>  
**To:** Ellen Harde <EHarde@westfordma.gov>, <39mainstreet@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Thu Apr 18 2019 16:58:30 GMT-0400 (Eastern Daylight Time)  
**Filename:** Jennifer Carlo email.eml

FYI

---

**From:** Jennifer Claro  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 18, 2019 4:53 PM  
**To:** Jodi Ross <jross@westfordma.gov>  
**Cc:** Nancy Cook <noakescook01886@yahoo.com>  
**Subject:** Town Farm

Jodi,

As you know our COA Board has an interest in trying to provide affordable housing for those whose incomes fall between 30 to 50 percent of the area median income. Currently, there are no developments that are targeting this income level and need in Westford. To this point we would like to ask if you could please share our interest in Town Farm with the committee that will be determining next steps for this site. We look forward to exploring if this one-time housing for poor farm workers could again fill a critical need for Westford's very low-income older adults.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Claro  
Director of Elder Services  
20 Pleasant Street  
Westford MA 01886  
(O) 978 399 2323  
(F) 978 392 4992  
[jclaro@westfordma.gov](mailto:jclaro@westfordma.gov)

All email messages and attached content sent from and to this email account are public records unless qualified as an exemption under the Massachusetts Public Records Law  
See <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/preidx.htm>.



**Westford Council on Aging**  
 Cameron Senior Center  
 20 Pleasant Street, P.O. Box 2223  
 Westford, MA 01886-5323

(978) 692-5523  
 Fax: (978) 392-4992

April 30, 2019

Ms. Ellen Harde  
 39 Main Street  
 Westford, MA. 01886

Dear Ellen,

I would like to outline the Council on Aging Boards interest in Town Farm, steps our COA has taken relating to this property and potential exploratory next steps to determine if this location could be used for needed low income housing and space for the Westford Food Pantry.

COA's points of interest in Town Farm:

- "Construct affordable senior housing units and, in particular, those that support "aging in place,". The Westford Housing Authority stated in April 2016 that there was a 5+ year wait time for the elderly and a 10 + year wait time for families for existing very low income (subsidized) rental housing managed by the authority, (reference 2017 Westford Housing Production Plan, page 56 item B found under Expand Housing Opportunities)
- Westford' population is aging, residents aged 60-74 and 75+ are projected to increase by 26.9% and 116.5% respectively from 2020-40 states 2017 Housing Production Plan ( pg., VI., section: Comprehensive Needs Assessment-Population and Households)
- Westford Housing Production Plan states, "The current median rent in Westford is unaffordable for 48.1% of the rental households in Town." (reference pg.32 under Affordability Gap)

***Below is a memo from the Land Use Management Office***

*Hi Jennifer:*

Attached please find a partial summary of high-density development projects in town. As you can see from the column labeled as "Units Restricted as Affordable", there are at least 3 projects within the last 10 years that have provided affordable units restricted to at or below 50% of the Area Median Income:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Number of Affordable Units</u>	<u>Status</u>
2017	Hanover Westford Hills	36 rental units at 50% AMI	Still under construction
2015	Abbot Mill Phase II	5 rental units at 50% AMI	Still under construction
2013	Princeton Properties	40 rental units at 50% AMI	Fully constructed and occupied

(Note: Abbot Mill Phase I is fully constructed and provides 6 units at 50% AMI)

While there are other units listed as affordable on the attached partial summary, some of the AMI information is not readily available.)

As our COA continues to advocate for the need for "low income housing" it has been difficult to find the exact number of units that serve those households that incomes fall below 50% of the area median income as noted in above email. Also, I am not sure who in Town can document which housing properties listed on the Partial Summary of High-Density Residential Development Projects in the Town of Westford (found in Attachment C) provide low income housing (below 50% of AMI) although the property such as Princeton Properties states they provide 40 units at or below 50%AMI.

For many of these reasons cited above our COA wants to ensure the "affordable" housing for low to very low income decreases out of pockets costs that are economic disenfranchised simply cannot afford to make ends meet. Empowering seniors to remain healthy and economically secure in their own housing and community reduces needed spending on costlier social/health related supported programs and equally important increases their vitality in everyday living.

Steps our COA has taken in learning more about Town Farm as a potential low-income housing community and increased space for the Westford Food Pantry:

- COA Board voted to move forward on learning of potential use of Town Farm for a small-scale low-income senior housing community and asked COA Director to write a memo to Town Manager expressing our interest and share with newly appointed Town Farm Committee. (see Attachment A)
- Mickey Crocker reached out to Chris Yule to set up a meeting between COA Board members and Director and Westford Food Pantry President to learn more about this property as a developer of successful housing projects. Meeting is on hold currently due to vacation plans for Mr. Yule and possible joint meeting with newly appointed Town Farm Committee.
- Discussed this possible venture with David Hedison, Director of the Chelmsford Housing Authority to see if they would advise on some preliminary next steps response was positive and supportive.
- Established some newer relationships around our COA's interest in providing more needed affordable housing in Westford and some of those entities include the following: Westford Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, Community Teamwork, Scott Clark, Developer and Affordable Housing Trust, etc...

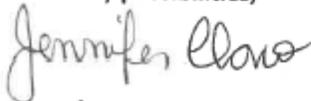
**Next Steps:**

Learn and work with newly formed Town Farm Committee on usage for this property before moving to next funder step described below.

Identify and meet with potential funders of low-income housing projects such as CHOICE Housing Community Housing designation grant(s), Community Development Block Grant Westford and Chelmsford Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity (in-kind volunteer labor), Westford Affordable Housing Trust, Cummings Foundation, etc.

Lastly, I did not discuss the Westford Food Pantry needs because I believe you will find the letter written by Ken Hyle, Westford Food Pantry President marked as "Attachment B" very helpful in understanding their need for increased space. However, as the COA Director and a board member of the Westford Food Pantry finding adequate space is needed because of confidentiality, opportunity to increase healthier food options as well as perishable foods. Also, it could offer multiple support services for those in varying hardships so pantry and/or social service clients would not to have to go from one place to another.

So many possibilities,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Claro".

Jennifer Claro



# The Westford Food Pantry

April 26, 2019

Re: Food Pantry Space

To: Jennifer Claro, Director of Elder Services

Helena "Mickey" Crocker, in the early 1980's, was instrumental in establishing the Pantry and having it located at the Cameron Senior Center.

Initially, the Pantry primarily distributed canned and dry goods to those in need in our community. Since then, we have increased the products we offer to include not only the canned and dry goods, but a variety of frozen foods as well as several refrigerated items such as eggs, cheese, butter, etc. We also now offer much needed personal care and household cleaning products.

Today, we not only serve people in our community, but we also provide assistance to those in need that live in many of the surrounding towns. Currently, there are over 210 families registered that use our facility. In the last 12 months, we had over 2,400 visits to our store and distributed about 5,000 bags of groceries, etc. As Westford continues to grow, there are going to be more people that will need our assistance.

The Pantry room itself is approximately 180 square feet and this limited space prevents us from offering other nutritional items such as fresh vegetables, fruits, milk, etc. It also requires us to be open 17 times a month for about 50 hours. We do this with the help of our 40 volunteers.

We could not do what we do without the strong support of the Council on Aging and the Cameron Senior Center. However, the Officers and Board of the food pantry now feel that the time is coming when we will need more space and as such we will begin the process of looking for an alternative location. Our search will include exploring the use of town owned properties, which is our preference, as well as other properties that are available in town.

Again, we thank you for all your support and please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Ken Hyle  
President

## Appendix C

### Historic Preservation

Annual Town Meeting, April 2, 2016, Art. 9: Town Meeting votes to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sell the Town Farm building and adjacent property, requiring as a condition of sale that the board accept a historical preservation restriction on the building

#### Last RFP Historical Criteria

In 2017, an RFP was issued that had the following *historical criteria* associated with it (pages 8-9).

#### 6. EVALUATION CRITERIA)

**Minimum Evaluation Criteria.** All responsive proposals must meet the following minimum threshold criteria:

- Complete conformance to submission requirements set forth in Section 5 “Submission Requirements”.

**Comparative Evaluation Criteria.** Projects meeting the minimum threshold criteria will also be ranked on the following comparative evaluation criteria:...

#### (2) Preservation of Historic Features

- A Highly Advantageous rating will be given to a proposal that, in the judgment of the evaluators, presents a plan in which the proposer demonstrates the most ability to preserve the historic and architectural features of the Premises. This includes ensuring that all or most of the following attributes are preserved:

##### **Exterior Features:**

1. Brick fenestration (exterior walls) of the original building
2. 15 pane window design and appearance with rough openings measuring 30 1/4” x 59 1/4”
  - a. Front of building = 12 windows
  - b. South side of building = 10 windows
  - c. North side of building = 5 windows
  - d. Back of building = 8 windows
3. All granite window lintels and sills on original building
4. Front door with rough opening measuring 39 1/4” x 94 1/4”
5. West side entry door with rough opening measuring 68” x 84 1/4”
6. Chimney brickwork

##### **Interior Features:**

1. 15 pane window design and appearance with rough openings measuring 30 1/4” x 59 1/4”
    - a. Interior of building where addition was added = 5 windows with granite lintels and sills
  2. Fireplaces and associated brickwork
  3. Jail cells
  4. Original staircase
- An Advantageous rating will be given to a proposal that, in the judgment of the evaluators, presents a plan that addresses three (3) to five (5) of the elements set forth in the first paragraph of this Subsection 6.B.2.

- A Less Advantageous rating will be given to a proposal that, in the judgment of the evaluators, presents a plan that address one (1) to two (2) of the elements set forth in the first paragraph of this Section of 6.2.

The complete RFP, which included additional selection criteria, is here:

[westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8101/Request-For-Proposals-sale-of-Town-Farm-6217](http://westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8101/Request-For-Proposals-sale-of-Town-Farm-6217).

**A Sampling of Photographs of the Westford Town Farm  
Taken by Alan L. Chaffee  
26 September 2019**

In 2019, the 35 Town Farm Road Task Force set about to save from demolition one of the few remaining town-owned poor farms in Massachusetts, Westford's own Town Farm located at 35 Town Farm Road. The following is a sampling of the 245 photographs taken on 26 September 2019 by local resident and photographer Alan L. Chaffee<sup>1</sup>



Facing west. The front of 35 Town Farm Road showing the wooden fire escapes and porches, the now-sealed front door, and the six-over-nine-pane windows with their granite lintels and sills.



Corbelled hood over entrance into the 1901 ell.

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<sup>1</sup> Alan L. Chaffee used his Canon EOS Rebel T5i with Canon Zoom Lens EF-S 18-135mm 1 : 3.5-5.6 ISSTM



(photo M. Day)  
Side sash window lock.



Close up of the fire escape latch.



A white porcelain doorknob and escutcheon.



Hand-wrought interior door handle.



One of several Victorian brass doorknobs found in the ell.



One of four closed-up fireplaces in the 1837 building.



The granite base that supports the central chimney and fireplaces consists of two short walls of granite topped by a large granite slab.



Wallpaper remnants in attic hallway of 1837 main building.



Newel post in first floor ell.



An 80-gallon cistern located in the attic of the ell, showing a fill pipe and overflow pipe. Outside dimensions: 28" x 44.25" x 26" high.



Sink in ell cellar.



Openings to the two prison cells in the ell.

## **Appendix D**

### **Email from Director of Facilities**

Subject: Town Farm Rd Update  
Date: Fri, 18 Oct 2019 00:59:36 +0000  
From: Paul Fox <[pfox@westfordma.gov](mailto:pfox@westfordma.gov)>  
To: '[39MainStreet@gmail.com](mailto:39MainStreet@gmail.com)' <[39MainStreet@gmail.com](mailto:39MainStreet@gmail.com)>

Hello Ellen,

I wanted to let you know that the building is in the process of being winterized. I am still try to reuse the materials throughout the town that are left in the building, but there is time to do this.

Thank you for your help cleaning and recycling that materials that you have.

I have looked into the septic concern, but I know it is larger than just getting an inspection. We will be defaulting the septic issues to whatever is to come of that building.

Please let me know if there is anything that you want to discuss or if I can be of any assistance for you.

Respectfully,

Paul Fox Jr.

Director of Facilities

Town of Westford and Public Schools

23 Depot St, Westford, MA 01886

978-399-2435

## Appendix E

### Fire Department Training Facility

In the effort to repurpose the Town Farm property, the presence of the Fire Department training facility in close proximity to the building is a problem. In our Town Farm Task Force meetings, we learned that the Fire Department would be willing to build a new facility elsewhere, especially since the current facility does not meet current codes.

Rebuilding the Training Facility would likely be an expensive proposition, given the updated code requirements for its construction. The Task Force is exploring whether the cost of relocation could be rolled into the overall cost of the repurposing of Town Farm, or whether it would have to survive the competition for other high-priority capital projects in the town's budgeting process.

The Fire Department, through Deputy Chief Dan Britko, was asked to provide a set of criteria that a location for a new facility would need to satisfy. On August 26<sup>th</sup>, Dan identified the criteria as:

- minimum of 1 acre in size
- relatively flat
- outside of any Conservation Limits or boundaries
- minimal neighbors
- served by municipal water
- depending upon the site, a completely fenced in perimeter
- A separate storage shed
- Access to the site should be 20ft in width at a minimum with no overhead obstructions

We began the search with a listing of 324 town-owned properties, identified by Chris Coutu from the GIS database. From this list, we identified 52 parcels under the custody of the Board of Selectmen. (Later, Chris sent me a list of 32 parcels meeting the minimum 1-acre criterion.) We decided to exclude from our search, properties under the care and custody of other town departments, such as the Water Department, Conservation Commission, School Department, Highway Department, and Parks and Recreation.

Land parcels were removed from the list if they were located close to residential areas, or if they were wetlands. Through discussion with the Fire Department, we also determined that we should prioritize locations that permit quick access to main roads – training attendees are on call for incoming alarms, and need to be able to respond quickly. For the same reason, we disqualified sites that were located at the extreme boundaries of town.

Four possibilities have been identified:

1. The combination of two parcels beyond the access road between Drew Farms and the Realty office on Boston Road, almost directly opposite the Fire Department Headquarters. (parcel 022 0177 0001 and 0002."Drew Boston Road Land.") There are wetlands nearby, but an acre of land outside the wetlands restrictions could probably be sited.

In a brief discussion with Chip Barrett while I was at the Highway Department, he indicated that that area might be required for a detention basis in order to feasibly proceed with the Boston Road widening project.

2. There is another parcel abutting the Highway Department garage, if enough reasonably flat space could be identified. (035 0101 0000 "Allie Lane Parcel.") Chip identified in our conversation that he was desirous of using that parcel for materials storage, and possibly a roads material recycling operation. There may be enough useable land on this 15-acre site to accommodate both operations, although the lack of a water supply would be a problem.
3. The previous location of the Highway Department (030 0045 0000 "Old Highway Garage.") This site is close to wetlands, and close to the Water Department well-site off Beacon Street, but there is a substantial flat area on the 5-acre site. The environmental impact of a training facility would be much lower than the parcel's previous use.
4. "Old Landfill/New Meadow," (025 0015 0000) This may not be a feasible location because of its previous use as a landfill, and its proximity to residential areas.

We've learned from this effort that parcels of land of an acre in size are extremely difficult to find in town, and it will require the deliberation of the Board of Selectmen to weigh all of the competing needs. Final selection would be dependent on competing uses for the land, and more complete engineering assessments of cost and feasibility.

## Appendix F

### Lot Size & Configuration/Access

Task force members did much research by looking at current drawings and maps, older maps, and very old maps. We also looked at changes in ownership as described in Town Meeting Minutes. We also looked way back in time to the original deed, conveying the land from John Read to the Town of Westford. We also reviewed a map drawn during the very early 1900s which described the individual parcels that made up the Town Farm land. From all of this, we also learned more about the outbuildings, where they were situated, and what care and custody they each were in. One thing was consistent: with each land transfer, the lot size was reduced.

From the Town Farm Timeline that was created by the Task Force:

1824 – John Read to Town of Westford. 170 acres. \$2500.00

1903 – Symmes & Balch create a Plan of the Westford Town Farm. It is subdivided into 5 parcels:

Flowed Land – 11 acres 50 rods

Railroad Lot – 12 acres 33 rods

Road Lot – 4 acres 76 rods

House Lot – 7 acres 88 rods (also contains the Alms House, shed, barn, hen house, ice house)

Hill Lot – 122 acres – 80 rods

For a total of 158 acres.

1961 –Town Meeting transfers a portion of the Town Farm land (northwesterly side of Prescott Street) from the Board of Public Welfare to the School Committee for the site of a proposed new middle school.

1966 - Selectmen appoint a three-member Town Infirmary Committee to investigate the disposition of the Town Farm land and buildings and to report their findings to the Selectmen.

1970 - The Water Department receives a parcel from the Town Farm/Town Infirmary land; the Fire Department receives care, custody, and control of a Town Farm parcel from the Town Infirmary land (Special Town Meeting, June 29, 1971, Art. 7); and the School Department receives care, custody, and control of a Town Farm parcel from the Town Infirmary land (Annual Town Meeting, March 6, 1971, Art. 36). A plan created by Richard McGlinchey in 1967 is cited.

The School Department only received 29,400 square feet of the land.

2008 - Town Meeting votes unanimously to transfer care, custody and control of the Town Farm land and building from the School Committee to the Board of Selectmen (Annual Town Meeting, May 10, 2008, Art. 35).

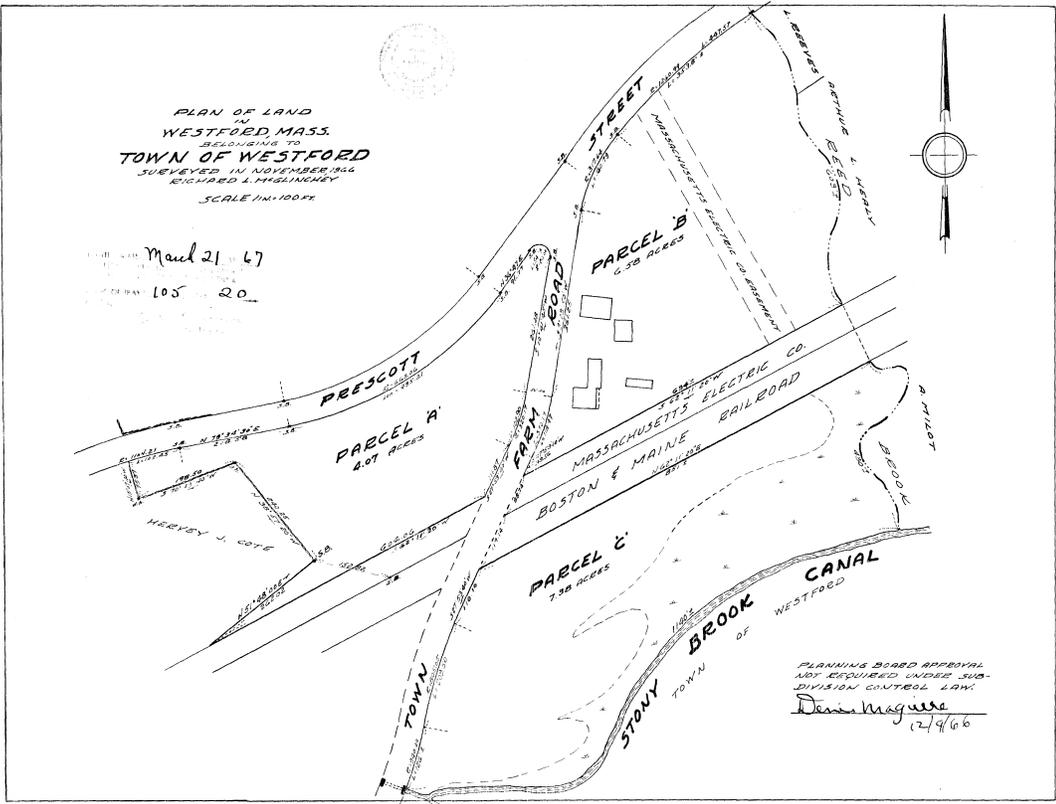
2015 - Town Farm Task Force #1 conducts a study in order to find the best use of the property. Its recommendations to the Selectmen include moving the Recreation Department out of the building “as soon as possible,” razing the fire storage barn, rehabilitating the former school storage space, and selling the parcel containing the Town Farm building to a private party with a historic deed restriction placed on the building.

2016 - Town Meeting votes to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sell the Town Farm building and adjacent property, requiring as a condition of sale that the board accept a historical preservation restriction on the building (Annual Town Meeting, April 2, 2016, Art. 9).

There are inconsistencies in the reporting of the lot size – 0.9 acres vs. 0.675 acres.

PLAN OF LAND  
IN  
WESTFORD, MASS.  
RELATING TO  
TOWN OF WESTFORD  
SURVEYED IN NOVEMBER, 1966  
RICHARD L. HIGLINCHEY  
SCALE 1/4" = 100 FT.

MAILED MAIL 21 1967  
NO. OF MAP 105 20



PLANNING BOARD APPROVAL  
NOT REQUIRED UNDER SUB-  
DIVISION CONTROL LAW.  
Dennis Maguire  
12/9/66

## **Appendix G**

### **Septic Issues**

#### **Conversations and emails with the Board of Health**

**Sept. 25 thru Sept. 30, 2019**

Interviews with Rae Dick, from the Board of Health

#### **Here was the common theme of this interview:**

Rae Dick from the Board of Health stated that a Title V report will be required, including testing the soil and assessing the land and siting. Incoming water source is Town water, so that was a plus. She stated that per current codes, 10,000 sq ft land required per 1BR.

The Town Farm has been using a 1000 gal. cesspool for many years and has been pumped out from time to time as needed.

Rae stated that it was feasible for the cesspool to be pumped. She also stated that it would be possible for the cesspool to continue to service the building provided that the usage remains light office. Any change in use, ownership, or water flow would trigger a current Title V inspection report to be undertaken. At that time, if the system were to demonstrate failure, the law allows two years to repair the system.

#### **Reviewing and approving bodies:**

Board of Health, Building Commissioner

#### **Related reference documents, next page:**

1. Letter from Board of health, providing a statement of the current state of the system



TOWN OF WESTFORD  
**HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

TOWN HALL  
55 Main Street  
WESTFORD, MA 01886  
(978) 692-5509 FAX (978) 399-2558

35 Town Farm Road  
Septic System Information

- There is very limited septic file information regarding this property.
- There is a 1,000-gallon cesspool in the back-right side of the property, and a separate leach pit underneath the parking lot in the front of the building. There is a second bathroom in the building on the left side of the building and we do not know where the effluent goes or if there is a structure for this set of plumbing on the property.
- There are no physical plans on these structures and the last pumping record on file is for 2007.
- My recommendation would be to request a complete Title 5 report on all the systems at the property.
- The current structures do not meet Title 5 regulations for a future home or office.

## Appendix H

### Wetlands

The task force concluded, after reviewing the following correspondence and reviewing some maps provided by Dan Britko, that the current access path to the Training Tower would need to remain.

**From:** Carol Gumbart  
**Sent:** Friday, June 14, 2019 9:58 AM  
**To:** Dan Britko <[dbritko@westfordma.gov](mailto:dbritko@westfordma.gov)>  
**Subject:** Town Farm Old Cart Road

Hi Dan,

I looked for any indication there was an old cart road leading to the Town Farm property off West Street (across from the Day School) and from the parking lot behind the fire station and did not see anything that was obvious. To create the road in the same location as shown on the plan you provided me would require approval of the Conservation Commission as it goes through a wetland resource area (Riverfront) and a buffer zone to a vegetated wetland. Your map/plan didn't show it but the town's GIS shows that area as floodplain as well. When the Conservation Commission reviews work in the riverfront in particular they must request an alternative analysis to determine if there are alternatives that would have less impact to the wetland resource areas and their associated functions. Please share this information with the task force.

Carol

---

Carol A. Gumbart  
Conservation Resource Planner  
55 Main Street  
Westford, MA 01886  
(978)692-5524

## **Appendix I**

### **Zoning**

#### **Meetings and talks with Town Hall employees**

##### **Sept. 19 through Sept. 26, 2019**

Interviews with Jeff Morrissette (Land Use Director), Matthew Hakala (Building Commissioner), Steve Cronin (Water Commissioner), Rae Dick (Board of Health), Dan Britko (Deputy Fire Chief), among others.

The land at 35 Town Farm Road has many physical challenges that make it difficult to develop a project on the land as is, without variances and special permits.

##### **Here was the common theme of these interviews:**

Because of the size of the lot, its close proximity to wetlands, and insufficient space for a traditional code-compliant septic system design, it will require zoning relief through special permits and variances in order to accomplish many projects. Zoning is currently RA - this would remain. For a multifamily project, a variance will be required to change the land use from single family to a multi-family use (even if the use was multi-family in the past). Planning Board Site Plan Review will be required. Title V report will be required. Special permits will be needed and defined by the specific project being presented. It was recommended that those who are interested meet with Land Use Management Team at Town Hall to discuss plans and highlight points needing special attention.

##### **Development Considerations:**

For residential development of this property, the *7.2 Flexible Development* portions of the *2017 Westford Zoning Bylaws* is an interesting option because it provides guidance and incentives for the preservation of historic structures and for the provision of low, moderate and median income level affordable housing. There is also an overlay specifically for senior housing projects. This would require a town meeting vote to implement. Discuss with Land Use Management for the best solution.

##### **Reviewing and approving bodies:**

Land Use Management, Planning, Building Dept., Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Town Engineering, Water Dept., Fire Dept., Historical Commission, Affordable Housing Committee, Community Preservation Committee (if seeking local funding), Board of Selectmen

## **Appendix J**

### **Funding**

#### **CPA Funds**

Below is information collected by seeking information from Jess Beyer, CPC Administrator, and by attending the July 2019 CPC meeting. Contacts: Jesse Meyer, Toody Healy, CPC Chair, Marilyn Frank, CPC Vice-chair.

Questions that were posed to the CPC committee in May and July 2019:

Are the \$216,825 Historic Preservation funds that were approved at the 2011 Town Meeting still available?

Answer: No. Although they had been approved, the PTBC held off on releasing the funds until the future purpose of the Town Farm had been determined. The funds were closed out in FY17 by the CPC. Jesse periodically checks with applicants on the status of projects and if they expect the project to move forward. Projects that have had no activity are questioned every year by the auditors, so a detailed action plan is usually required for projects older than 3-4 years.

Are there any Historic Preservation CPC funds or from the Undesignated pool that might be available to the 35 Town Farm Task Force should it apply, for expenses, such as for an architect fees or related fees in order to assess the current building's needs or assessments to determine building's feasibility for a specific use? This might be in the order of \$10K.

Answer: There is currently around \$234K in Historic Fund Balance, reserved for Historic Projects.

Is there a restriction on timing for when CPC applications can be submitted?

Answer: Applications are usually submitted twice per year (for STM and ATM). Usually applications that are "urgent" only are heard in the Fall. Urgent would be to save a structure, obtain a matching state grant (such was the case with the Helena Crocker senior housing project). That application for STM cycle is usually in the fall. Applications for ATM are usually submitted in early January, with a general needs assessment meeting being held in December.

At the July 16, 2019 CPC meeting, I had questions about whether all the funds had to be available prior to approving a project. Answer: The funding for some projects can be bonded in order to obtain the funds, funds can be used from the Undesignated category, as long as the funds for the specific category have been exhausted first.

In a nutshell, there were three main points:

1. Submit an application when ready, and let that CPC group determine the best way to fund it internally - whether to fund outright or to bond it.
2. Because the affordable component had been accruing for a while there was a substantial balance. They were able to fund \$1,035,000 (including the anticipated new FY20 10% of \$241K) from the affordable housing portion and the balance from the Undesignated portion. If there aren't many applications for a given time, it allows the balance to grow. Also, the 10% value is based on the prior year's total balance.
3. The maximum amount of CPA funds can be saved when the contribution level remains at 3%.

#### **Other Possible Funding Sources**

In addition to the local funds provided by the Community Preservation Fund, there are state and federal programs that are worth reviewing. This is a subset of what could be available.

The funding sources tapped into will depend on the type project being developed. In the case of an affordable housing project using an historical building, using green building techniques, below is a possible list of funds or agencies to investigate. It is by no means a complete list, but it is something to get started with.

**Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)**

[www.mass.gov/orgs/housing-and-community-development](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/housing-and-community-development)

**Grants to Restore Historic Buildings**

[bizfluent.com/grants-restore-historic-buildings-6651.html](http://bizfluent.com/grants-restore-historic-buildings-6651.html)

**LIHTC Section 42 program**

[westmontadvisors.com/tax-credit-advisory/lihtc-9-credits-vs-4-credits/](http://westmontadvisors.com/tax-credit-advisory/lihtc-9-credits-vs-4-credits/)

**Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program**

[www.preservationdirectory.com/PreservationGeneralResources/GrantsFundingSources.asp](http://www.preservationdirectory.com/PreservationGeneralResources/GrantsFundingSources.asp)

[X](#)

**US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

<https://www.hud.gov/states/massachusetts>

**Massachusetts Preservation Grants**

[www.preservationmass.org/](http://www.preservationmass.org/)

[massachusetts.grantwatch.com/cat/27/preservation-grants.html](http://massachusetts.grantwatch.com/cat/27/preservation-grants.html)

[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcmppf/mppfidx.htm](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcmppf/mppfidx.htm)

[mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/lsta-grants/opportunities.php](http://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/lsta-grants/opportunities.php)

[www.historicnewengland.org/helpful-links/awards-programs/community-preservation-grants/](http://www.historicnewengland.org/helpful-links/awards-programs/community-preservation-grants/)

**Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund**

[www.grant-applications.org/massachusetts-grants/preservation-projects-fund](http://www.grant-applications.org/massachusetts-grants/preservation-projects-fund)

**Green Building grants**

[archive.epa.gov/greenbuilding/web/html/funding.html](http://archive.epa.gov/greenbuilding/web/html/funding.html)

[www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/affordable\\_housing.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/affordable_housing.pdf)

**Potential Funding Sources for Historic Preservation**

[ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=22174](http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=22174)

**National Trust for Historic Preservation**

[savingplaces.org/grants#.Xbo7j1VKiUk](http://savingplaces.org/grants#.Xbo7j1VKiUk)

## **Appendix K**

### **Remaining Work to be Done**

#### **Historic preservation considerations**

##### **Documenting the current state of the buildings for posterity.**

Alan Chaffee carefully photographed many details both inside and outside. They were compiled by Marilyn Day into a document, which will be housed at the Westford Museum and the J. V. Fletcher Library.

#### **Historic preservation considerations, preservation restrictions**

##### **Guidelines**

David Gutbrod, Chair of the Westford Historical Commission, has told us that the preservation guidelines will, to a point, be dictated by the proposed use of the building. In the short term, it is proposed that it remain as light office space. In the future, it is proposed that it be a building repurposed for affordable senior housing.

##### **Historic Preservation Restrictions**

David Gutbrod, Chair of the Westford Historical Commission has provided the following information as it related to preserving historic buildings and creating preservation restrictions. The Community Preservation Coalition has done a lot of work in this area and cites Nantucket as a good model to follow when starting from scratch. The task force members have been reviewing the Museum's PR for potential use as a template.

Please refer to the following information: (text provided below)

[www.communitypreservation.org/historic-restrictions](http://www.communitypreservation.org/historic-restrictions)

##### **Placing Preservation Restrictions on Historic Resources**

*This article sourced from the Cape Cod Commission Round Table Fact Sheet*

**Feb. 2007:** A Preservation Restriction (PR) is a voluntary legal agreement that protects a significant historic, archaeological, or cultural resource. It provides assurance that an historic or culturally significant property's intrinsic values will be preserved through subsequent ownership by restricting the demolition or alteration of its significant historic features. A Preservation Restriction is filed at the Registry of Deeds and runs with the land. It usually focuses on exterior architectural features, but can also address significant interior spaces. Though a Preservation Restriction does not necessarily require public access, it may include provisions for annual open houses or similar public events if deemed appropriate.

The heart of a Preservation Restriction is in the Grantor's Covenants, where the owner of the property agrees to maintain the building exterior in good repair consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (further described below). The Grantor's Covenants spell out prohibited activities such as demolition of the building, and describe the review process required if any exterior alterations are considered on the property. Another important part of the Preservation Restriction is the Baseline Documentation, which illustrates the property's historic significance and existing conditions through architectural drawings, photographs, historical records, and reports.

##### **Are Preservation Restrictions required by CPA?**

The Community Preservation Act specifically calls for perpetual Preservation Restrictions, established under Chapter 184 of Mass General Laws, whenever CPA funds are used to purchase a real property interest. Therefore, when purchasing or buying an interest in an

historic property, a Preservation Restriction is required. The Act is not specific as to whether a Preservation Restriction is required when CPA money is expended on an historic preservation project. Many towns have chosen to require a Preservation Restriction when any amount of CPA funds are awarded for rehabilitation or restoration of an historic property. This protects the town's investment should the property change hands or become subject to additional development pressures. Cape Cod Commission staff recommend that a Preservation Restriction be required whenever CPA funds are used to rehabilitate or restore historic properties, regardless of the property ownership.

In some cases, other means of protecting the public interest can be considered. The city of Newton has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the CPA committee requiring Newton Historical Commission review and approval of any changes proposed to a town property that has received CPA funding. Other communities are considering a threshold amount of CPA funding above which a Preservation Restriction would be required, while projects receiving less money would require a shorter-term restriction.

### **Who can hold a Preservation Restriction?**

A Preservation Restriction may be held by any governmental body or charitable corporation or trust capable of acquiring interests in land and whose purposes include historic preservation. Local Historical Commissions are empowered to hold preservation restrictions under the state's Historic District Act (M.G.L. Chapter 40C), but they cannot hold a preservation restriction on a town-owned property. Non-Profit historical organizations such as town Historical Societies, the Trustees of Reservations, and Historic New England may also hold preservation restrictions.

### **Is there a model Preservation Restriction?**

Cape Cod Commission staff suggests using the Preservation Restriction on the Nantucket Athenaeum (or the Massachusetts Historical Commission long form template) as a working model, copying its general format and legal language, and making changes to tailor the restriction to the particular property in question. All CPA committees are urged to use the same Preservation Restriction as a model to maintain consistency among restrictions on the Cape, and to facilitate their monitoring and administration in the future. The [Nantucket Atheneum Preservation Restriction is available here](#), and the Massachusetts Historical Commission's long form is available in its Guidebook on Preservation Restrictions, available by calling Michael Steinitz at 617-727-8470.

### **How should we draft a Preservation Restriction?**

The owners of the subject property, the intended holders of the Preservation Restriction, and the town counsel should be involved in drafting a preservation restriction. Some towns have chosen to arrange an initial meeting between these parties to discuss the content of the restriction, then have asked the owners' attorneys to draft the preservation restriction, using the model cited above as a template. The Local Historical Commission or Historical Society are also often involved because of their access to historical information necessary to establish the Baseline Documentation required in a Preservation Restriction. Note that CPA committees can allocate CPA administrative funds or grant monies for drafting a Preservation Restriction.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) must approve a Preservation Restriction for it to be consistent with M.G.L. Chapter 184. If the restriction will be held by a charitable corporation or trust, the town must also approve the Preservation Restriction. A draft Preservation Restriction should be submitted to Michael Steinitz at MHC to determine if it adequately protects the features that make the historic property significant. Once MHC approves the content of the Preservation Restriction, it can be signed/executed by the owners

and the Selectmen or Town Council, then resubmitted to MHC for their signature. Finally, the Preservation Restriction should be recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

### **How should we monitor a Preservation Restriction to ensure its effectiveness?**

To protect both the property owner and the restriction-holder, it is important that there be a clear set of procedures and policies to guide the administration and monitoring of a Preservation Restriction. The key to avoiding problems and court costs is catching problems before changes are made to the property. To that end, the following steps are recommended:

**Designate a Preservation Restriction administrator.** The organization holding the restriction should designate an administrator (perhaps the Secretary or President of the organization, or an employee) who is the primary contact person if a property owner has questions about the restriction. Communication is essential if there is a transfer of ownership, so administrators may want to initiate contact with new property owners. Ideally, administrators should be knowledgeable about historic architectural and building technology in order to ensure that they can identify unapproved work or areas of concern for repair. Cape Cod Commission staff may also be contacted to assist with these issues.

**Arrange annual on-site meetings.** The administrator should be responsible for arranging annual on-site meetings with the property owner to assess the current condition of the property, to discuss the terms of the restriction, and to answer any questions the owner may have.

**Maintain annual status reports on the property.** The administrator should follow up annual on-site meetings with a written status report on the property, citing the owner's compliance with the restrictions and the general condition of the property.

**Alert town departments and agencies.** Work with town permitting departments and assessors to put a red flag on properties with a Preservation Restriction, and ask the town to notify the restriction holder (Local Historical Commission or other entity) any time a development permit is sought for one of these properties.

### **What are the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties?**

The Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation are federal standards that define appropriate treatment of historic properties. The standards were developed by the Secretary of the Interior to guide work on properties listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The CPA requires rehabilitation work on historic properties to comply with the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The primary goal of the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation is preservation of the historic materials and features that make a property significant. The 10 standards focus on things such as repair rather than replacement of historic features, and designing additions without removing significant historic features. To help people interpret the standards and to provide more detailed recommendations for treatment of specific building elements, the Secretary also publishes Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

### **Affordable Housing Restrictions**

As a result of her research, Roberta McGuire found that an Affordable Housing Restriction (AHR) is very important to incorporate into the RFP for affordable senior housing at 35 Town Farm Road. An AHR will define the parameters of affordability and the term of affordability (or in perpetuity), as well as any other terms and conditions. In writing the RFP, Selectmen should consult Town Counsel and include wording that an AHR on the property will be written and recorded with the Middlesex North Registry of Deeds.

## Appendix L

### References

In addition to the countless individuals that we interviewed, there were many resources that we poured through in order to retrieve information for this report. Here are just a few:

**Westford 2017-2021 Housing Production Plan pp. 14, 15 & more**

[www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/12/xu/westford\\_0.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/12/xu/westford_0.pdf)

**Westford's 2018 Open Space & Recreation Plan (DRAFT)**

[www.westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6721/2018-Open-Space-and-Recreation-Plan---DRAFT](http://www.westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6721/2018-Open-Space-and-Recreation-Plan---DRAFT)

**2017 Westford Zoning Bylaws**

[www.westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6964/2017-Zoning-Bylaws](http://www.westfordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6964/2017-Zoning-Bylaws)

**J. V. Fletcher Library – Town of Westford Annual Reports**

**The Westford Museum** – artifacts, photos, maps

**35 Town Farm Task Force website**

Related documents, building and land evaluations surveys,  
Town Farm History, Town Farm timeline:

[www.westfordma.gov/1229/35-Town-Farm-Road-Task-Force](http://www.westfordma.gov/1229/35-Town-Farm-Road-Task-Force)

**Community Preservation topics on Historic Restrictions**

[www.communitypreservation.org/historic-restrictions](http://www.communitypreservation.org/historic-restrictions)

**Westford Days**

**The Diaries 1862 – 1873 and The Families**

Marilyn Day

***The Westford Gazetteer***

*A History of Westford, Massachusetts In Its Place Names* – Robert W. Oliphant

***The History of Westford, Mass.***

Rev. Edwin R. Hodgman

**Middlesex North Registry of Deeds**

[www.lowelldeeds.com](http://www.lowelldeeds.com)

**Massachusetts Historical Commission**

[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/)

**The Secretary of the Interior's Standards**

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are common sense historic preservation principles in non-technical language. They promote historic preservation best practices that will help to protect our nation's irreplaceable cultural resources.

[www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm)

[www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm)