



Town of Westford
35 Town Farm Road Task Force
55 Main Street
Westford, MA 01886

Westford Town Farm: A Timeline

- 1818-1824 Read family owns about 170 acres of land.
- 1824 Westford buys Read Farm for \$2500.
- 1837 Town Farm built on the site.
- 1898 Town appropriates \$2,000 to build an ell to the Town Farm, with lockup (p.51 year end. 1899).
- 1900 Noted architect [H. M. Francis](#) is paid \$93.75 for plans and specifications for the ell at alms house. By March of that year, a new ell for the Almshouse is finished. A woodshed and ice house had been built, mainly from lumber from the old ell. Running water is added.
- 1901 A steam heating apparatus is added.
- 1903 Wood-framed additions and shed roofs are added to the original structure. A fire escape is added.
- 1907 There is an expense of \$20.12 for a telephone.
- 1913 A new silo is built to hold the farm's large crop of corn.
- 1917 Fire on the Town Farm roof; sparks from train or trains cited as cause.
- 1919 Town Meeting changes name from Town Farm to Westford Home. A new boiler is installed.
- 1920 Dec. 6. Barn at Town Farm, built in 1893, burns. Total loss. Value, \$6,000. Insurance, \$1,900. Value, contents, \$4,300. "Fire was undoubtedly set." (Westford Town Report, year ending Dec 31, 1920: Fire report, p. 50)
- 1922 Voters approve \$3,000 for a new barn, built in 1923.
- 1952 "On November 16, 1952, fire damaged part of the house. This will be renovated during the coming year." (Westford Town Report, year ending Dec 31, 1952, p. 63)
- April 1959 The last patient at the Westford Infirmary is transferred to Tewksbury Hospital and the home is officially closed.
- March 1960 Annual Town Meeting authorizes a committee to determine best use or demise of Town Infirmary/Farm building, with the closing of the Welfare Department.
- June 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.

Westford Town Farm: A Timeline (cont'd)

- 1965 The North Middle School opens on land that had been part of the original Town Farm parcel. In 1980 it was renamed the Norman E. Day School.
- 1965 The Council on Aging in Westford files their first report as part of the Westford Annual Report. The Westford Infirmary does not file a report this year.
- 1966 Board of Selectmen appoints a three-member Town Infirmary Committee to investigate the disposition of the Town Farm land and buildings and to report their findings to the board.
- 1970 The Water Department receives a parcel from the Town Farm/Town Infirmary land (Annual Town Meeting, March 7, 1970, Art. 51).
- 1970 School Department administration moves into the Town Farm building, its third move within a year: from the then Westford Academy (now Abbot School) to a house at 54 Main Street, then to the Roudenbush School (now the Roudenbush Community Center), and finally to the Town Farm.
- 1971 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). 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). A plan created by Richard McGlinchey in 1967 is cited.
- 2003 School Department administration vacates the Town Farm building, moving to the Millennium building, located behind the Abbot School.
- 2007 Parks & Recreation Department moves from the old Graniteville Fire Station into the Town Farm building, using it for offices and program space.
- 2008 Town Farm building is placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 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).
- 2014 Town Farm buildings are assessed for funding purposes as part of a town-wide facility study.
- 2015 Town Farm Task Force #1 conducts a study in order to find the best use of the property. Its recommendations to the Board of Selectmen include moving the Parks, Recreation & Cemetery 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 Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Department moves out of the Town Farm building to temporary space in the Rogers Fire Station. Shortly afterward, they lease space at 22 Town Farm Road (in the Mill Works, on land that had formerly been part of the Town Farm), then in January 2019 they move into the third floor of the Roudenbush Community Center.
- 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

Westford Town Farm: A Timeline (cont'd)

- accept a historical preservation restriction on the building (Annual Town Meeting, April 2, 2016, Art. 9).
- 2016-2017 Town issues two Requests For Proposals to seek possible buyer and uses for the “surplus” Town Farm building. Responses are not accepted.
- March 2019 Board of Selectmen discusses possible demolition of the Town Farm building.
- April 2019 Board of Selectmen appoints 35 Town Farm Road Task Force, charging it with “Establishing the best use for the 1837 building at 35 Town Farm Road” and “Identifying an individual or corporation who can present a plan to implement this use while preserving the buildings historic and architectural features.”
- April 2019 Council on Aging writes to the 35 Town Farm Road Task Force expressing their interest in Town Farm “to determine if this location could be used for needed low income housing and space for the Westford Food Pantry.”
- May 2019 35 Town Farm Road Task Force meets for the first time.
- Nov. 2019 35 Town Farm Road Task Force submits its recommendations for the future use of the Town Farm to the Board of Selectmen:
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.
 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

Westford Town Farm: A Timeline (cont'd)

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.

The complete report is on the Task Force's webpage [here](#).

Board of Selectmen revises Task Force's charge "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."

June 2020

Board of Selectmen accepts 35 Town Farm Road Task Force's recommendations in its June 11, 2020 Status Report, with an amendment to place a historic preservation restriction request in the RFP:

1. Construction of a new Fire Training Facility at 60 Forge Village Road, parcel # 020 0043 0000
2. Approve Memo of Understanding between the Fire Department and the Board of Water Commissioners
3. Approve demolishing the School Department barn and the Fire Department shed at 35 Town Farm Road
4. Accept the lot map to extend the boundaries at 35 Town Farm Road from 0.68 to 1.68 acres +/-
5. Approve establishing a historic preservation restriction on the Town Farm building
6. Support the creation of an RFP for affordable senior housing and a new home for the Westford Food Pantry at 35 Town Farm Road

The complete report is on the Task Force's webpage [here](#).

July 2020

The Fire Department, the Board of Water Commissioners and the Board of Selectmen sign a Memorandum of Agreement to install a Fire Training Facility on Water Department land at 60 Forge Village Road. The MOA is [here](#).

Nov. 2020

Town issues a Request For Proposal for the purchase and redevelopment of the former Town Farm for affordable rental units for qualifying seniors and a new home for the Westford Food Pantry. The RFP also requires preserving many of the building's historic features and maintaining access to the Rogers Fire Station by means of a paved easement. One bid is received in response.

Jan. 2021

Select Board votes unanimously, on the unanimous recommendation of the 35 Town Farm Road Task Force, to award the solicitation process to CHOICE, SCG, and ICON Architecture for the disposition of 35 Town Farm Road and to authorize the Town Manager, with assistance from members of the 35 Town Farm Road Task Force, to begin purchase and sales negotiations with the proposer.

April 2021

Lawyers for the town and the buyers review purchase and sales agreement.

For more info, visit: westfordma.gov/1229/35TownFarmRoadTaskForce