

SMITH FARM 2010 WARRANT



WHY PURCHASE THE 29-ACRE SMITH FARM THAT HAS A 27-ACRE CONSERVATION EASEMENT?

The Smith Farm property located at 148 Main Street, built in 1850, is one of the oldest existing farm houses in Plaistow. The historic value to the Town, the State of New Hampshire, and the Nation is significant. By acquiring this property, the Town would help ensure the protection of a significant historical, architectural, cultural, conservation, and recreational resource. This property has a meaningful history and powerfully reflects the traditions of Plaistow and New Hampshire communities. Additionally:

- The purchase price of the property when it sold last year was \$450,000; the Town has an opportunity to purchase this property at \$325,760 (Under the terms of the proposal, the Town would abate (waive) \$20,368 in unpaid taxes along with paying the closing costs associated with the sale). Given existing low real estate market conditions, it is an opportune time for the Town to purchase the property, as the property value is likely to go back up again.
- At this point there is nothing protecting the historical significance of the farm house and barn; however, if the Town were to purchase the property, the Town could establish preservation-related standards for the historic farm house and barn.
- Purchase would help the Town honor the wishes of Mrs. Smith who set up the 27-acre easement in 1995 for the public to enjoy Plaistow's conservation land and natural resources.
- Property within walking distance of the Pollard School—providing a wonderful opportunity to develop unique educational programs.
- In addition to these economic benefits, preserving additional open space and farmland also provides clear environmental benefits.
- As the Little River runs through the back of the Smith Property, by owning the property, the Town would be in a great position to help ensure the environmental protection of the watershed.
- Excellent trail possibilities, or botanical gardens for all to enjoy safely—right in the center of Plaistow's Historic Village District.
- The property is directly adjacent to the Town-owned 7.55 acre Penn Box site that could be used as parking or other beneficial uses.
- A unique opportunity – will take some time to develop a use plan where all interested parties participate – town boards, commissions, committees, Historical Society, as well as members of the public.
- Acquiring the property will allow for more “Non-Commercial Recreation” initiatives and programs on the Easement.
- The Town has NO long term debt, and BOS/Budget Committee are recommending a reduction in the 2010 Operating budget of (-\$84,455)
- Purchasing this property will help ensure that a legacy of clean water, natural wildlife areas and a historic local farm can be left to our children and grandchildren—an incalculable value!

WHY PURCHASE THE PROPERTY IF IT ALREADY HAS A CONSERVATION EASEMENT?

The property consists of 29 acres, 1.1 acres is zoned residential and 27.8 acres was established as a Conservation Easement in 1995. Since 1995, there has been very little public use of the Conservation Easement. If the Town were to purchase this property, the Town would be in a much stronger position to fully implement the planning and management of the property to ensure that Plaistow's citizens have maximum enjoyment of the property. If the Town were to own the property, potential uses could:

- Establish an Apple Orchard; Christmas Tree Farm; Blueberry/Strawberry Patches; or
- Establish a Farmers Market or Creative Arts Market Place.
- Create a “Community Life Center” through using the Barn and House as a function hall or additional meeting space for community groups.

CAN THE TOWN SUBDIVIDE THE FARMHOUSE AND BARN AND SELL THE BUILDINGS AND JUST KEEP THE 27 ACRES OF CONSERVATION LAND

- Yes. If no acceptable, use can be found for the building, then the Town could sell the 1.7-acre parcel with the house and barn separately and potentially recover a large portion (if not all) of any funds used to purchase the entire property.

THE ACQUISITION OF THIS PROPERTY WILL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOALS ESTABLISHED IN THE TOWN OF PLAISTOW'S MASTER PLAN TO:

(A) Establish a Village Center District; (B) Preserve the natural and cultural features such as streams, rivers, prime agricultural land, valuable woodlands, quality views, wetlands, county roads, stone walls, and other valuable open areas; (C) Encourage public and private partnerships designed to improve and upgrade the physical attractiveness of downtown; (D) Encourage educational programs that use a variety of community resources including conservation lands, historic resources, community facilities, local facilities and local businesses; and (E) Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive natural resource areas in order to maintain their ecological integrity and/or to promote public health and safety.

THE AVERAGE ESTIMATED ONE-TIME COST TO PLAISTOW TAXPAYERS:

- On a \$150,000 property: \$55.00
- On a \$200,000 property: \$75.00
- On a \$300,000 property: \$112.00