

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 16, JEFFERSONVILLE, VT 05464

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP REGARDING PROPOSED SALE
OF A PORTION OF THE SWEET HOUSE PROPERTY**

Pursuant to Article 12 of the Cambridge Historical Society Bylaws , **notice is hereby given that a Special Meeting will be held on July 1, 2021 at 6:00 pm at the Warner Lodge, on School Street in Jeffersonville.** The meeting will be in person, and will follow COVID guidelines that are in effect as of July 1. The purpose of the Special Meeting is to discuss and vote on whether the CHS Board of Directors may sell a portion of the Sweet house property (house, garage, and generously sized lot). The Special Meeting will be open to all persons. However, per the Bylaws, only “members in good standing” (any member whose annual membership is current as of June 1, 2021) may vote on the proposal.

More Information

The timeline of events leading to this proposal is as follows:

- 1999: CHS purchases the Warner Lodge on School St, where we presently meet and store most of our collection. **CHS has no plans to sell the Warner Lodge.**
- 2008: Arlan Sweet leaves the Sweet House property to CHS in his will, with a reversionary interest granted to Cambridge Elementary School.
- 2010: Sweet House and a portion of the land is rented to operate the Mary Elizabeth Preschool.
- 2019: Cambridge Elementary School conveys its reversionary interest to CHS by Quitclaim Deed after voter approval at Town Meeting, giving CHS marketable title to the property.
- March 2020: COVID epidemic strikes. Schools (including the Mary Elizabeth Preschool) close.
- April-August 2020: CHS waives five months rent so that the Preschool can survive.
- August-September 2020: CHS invests over \$12,000 in repairs and improvements to Sweet House, to properly maintain the structure, and also to help the preschool meet COVID guidelines.
- January 2021: Preschool gives notice that the school will not be operating at the Sweet House after July 1, 2021.
- February 2021: CHS Board of Directors accepts Preschool’s notice to cease rental. CHS Board begins process of deciding what to do with the Sweet House property.

- April 2021: After considering various options, the CHS Board of Directors decides to pursue the option of selling the Sweet House. Four realtors are contacted to obtain market price estimates.
- April-May 2021, Preschool inquires about lease or purchase of Sweet House to continue preschool program there.
- May 2021: CHS Board of Directors decides that the best option is to subdivide the Sweet House lot, selling the house, garage, and a generously sized lot. CHS would retain the barn and a lot at the rear of the property for CHS use, along with land necessary for driveway access and utilities.

The CHS is governed by its Bylaws. Article 6 of the Bylaws states that the business and affairs of the CHS shall be managed by the Board of Directors. However, with respect to the sale of an asset like the Sweet House, Article 12 of the Bylaws requires that there be a vote of the membership at a Special Meeting called for that purpose after 30 days written notice. Approval by 2/3 of the members attending that meeting is required before the asset can be sold.

The Board of Directors would like to proceed to sell a portion of the Sweet House property, (house, garage, and generously sized lot) and has called for the July 1 Special Meeting to seek membership approval for that sale, as required by the Bylaws.

As indicated above, the Board of Directors wants to retain a portion of the property for CHS use. The barn on the retained land is presently used to store large items in our collection, mostly antique farm implements. We do not want to lose that storage! The retained land will provide space for outdoor events. We will also retain a strip of land from Main Street for future driveway and utility access. This parcel could also be sold as a village lot in the future, though there are presently no plans to do so.

As of May 24, 2021, no firm price has been set, a survey is not complete, the property has not been listed for sale, and no specific discussions have occurred with any party. The Board of Directors is in the process of dealing with the many details that must be addressed to prepare for a possible sale. Some of those details will probably be firmed up by July 1.

Crystal Porter has approached the Board of Directors about possibly purchasing the property so she can continue to operate the preschool there. The preschool has operated in the Sweet House for 11 years, and has provided a very valuable service to our community. It has much community support. The Board would like to see the school able to continue in the Sweet House. At the same time the Board's primary responsibility is to the CHS membership and the wellbeing of CHS as an organization. It is too soon to know whether a mutually agreeable arrangement can be worked out with the preschool, but that is being explored.

The CHS Board of Directors is seeking your approval to proceed with sale of a portion of the Sweet House property, understanding that price, buyer, and many other details are yet to be determined. The Board feels confident that it can responsibly decide on the best sales option and handle the details, once your general approval is received. We would appreciate your support, and encourage you to attend the July 1 meeting.

Thank you from the CHS Board of Directors and Officers: Joel Page, Geana Little, Peter Opstrup, Richard Gagne, Diancy Boyden, Shirley Opstrup, Lynn Austin and Rick Fletcher! If you

have any questions or comments prior to July 1, please send them to cambridgehistoricalsociety.vt@gmail.com, and we will try to respond.

May 24, 2021