

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (December 3, 2018)**

**Investor Sought for Taylor House in Moultonborough: Proposals Due January 10**



The Town of Moultonborough is seeking proposals from qualified parties for the purchase or long-term lease, and for the rehabilitation and redevelopment, of the historic French-Taylor House on Route 25 at the center of Moultonborough Village. The approximately 4000 square foot structure (house with attached barns), locally known as the Taylor House, is suitable for office, retail, residential, and mixed uses as per the Town's recently established Village Center Overlay District (VCOD). Incentives and other opportunities are detailed in the Request for Proposals on the Town website.

The RFP issued on December 3<sup>rd</sup> notes how "The Town aims to be flexible in accommodating the needs of potential partners and investors and welcomes proposals that will best take advantage of the opportunities that this high traffic, high visibility location offers. An attractive project will retain the historic character and defining features of the house while accommodating new functions." Recent Town planning efforts and incentives are focused on village revitalization and promotion of economic development opportunities. Proposals are due on Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

The Town acquired the 5-acre former Taylor property with existing house and barns in March 2014. This property is located at the center of Moultonborough Village at 970 Whittier Highway, directly on the town's historic Main Street (Route 25). While the Town presently plans to retain the majority of the acreage around the Taylor House for the development of a Town Common or as community 'green' space, the Town will also remain flexible with regard to the needs of potential partners and investors interested in redevelopment of the historic structures fronting on Route 25.

The Taylor House was determined eligible for the honorary NH State Register of Historic Places in 2017, the prerequisite for state grant funds for planning and rehabilitation. Architectural Historian James Garvin established the historical and architectural significance of the house with a Report in June 2017. The Town then successfully applied for a Historic Building Condition Assessment funded by the NH Preservation Alliance and the NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), with a detailed Report and plans by SMP Architecture completed in 2018.

The Town's RFP notes a number of incentives and opportunities associated with the property. Aside from the prime location and frontage on Route 25 (Commercial Zone C), the Taylor House qualifies for RSA 79-E, the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive Program, intended to encourage investment in the village zone with the rehabilitation and active reuse of historic buildings. There are also advantages (and no restrictions) to potential listing to the NH State Register of Historic Places, such as special consideration or relief in the application of access, building, and safety codes.

The Taylor House is an important landmark, significant both for its architecture and for its history, and for its defining presence on the Town's main street. An example of a broad-gabled Greek Revival dwelling, the main house was built c. 1840, and expanded and remodeled c. 1900 by the prominent political figure and community leader James E. French, who resided at the property from 1871 until 1919. Adele Blanchard acquired the house in 1923, and the property passed through the women of her family to its last resident, Adele Taylor (also Moultonborough's longest-serving librarian).

In October 2017, the Taylor House was added to the NH Preservation Alliance's statewide 'Seven to Save' properties list. Saving community landmarks and retaining small-town character are seen as essential in statewide efforts to attract investment, draw new residents and visitors, support local businesses, and promote economic vitality and year-round tourism. More than 50% of 'Seven to Save' historic properties around the state have been successfully transformed into vibrant community assets, including the Pickering House ('Seven to Save' list 2015) in nearby Wolfeboro.

In July 2018, a Plan NH professional team outlined best practices for the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of historic village buildings. The Moultonborough Design Charrette Report (November 2018) notes: "The French-Taylor house is deceptively larger than it appears from the street...The building is best suited for continued residential or office space. The town has an interest in retaining the associated acreage of the property, so the property could be subdivided...the building could be sold or leased to a for-profit entity that would rehabilitate it and return it to the tax rolls."

The RFP for the French-Taylor House, with links to the property tax card, reports (Garvin 2017; SMP Architecture and Plans 2018), incentives and zoning information (RSA 79-D; Commercial Zone C: The Village; VCOD), can be viewed on the Town of Moultonborough website ([www.moultonboroughnh.gov](http://www.moultonboroughnh.gov)). Contact: Walter Johnson, Town Administrator, [wjohnson@moultonboroughnh.gov](mailto:wjohnson@moultonboroughnh.gov); (603) 476-2347, Mon-Fri, 9 AM-4 PM). Proposals must be received by 2:00 PM on Thursday, January 10, 2019.