

Taylor House proposal calls for outdoor adventure business

by Erin Plummer

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MOULTONBOROUGH — The board of selectmen has scheduled two public hearings to review a proposed purchase of the Taylor property with plans to turn it into an outdoor adventure center and hostel.

The town received a proposal to renovate and reuse the property on 970 Whittier Highway house for an outdoor adventure business. After vetting and review, the proposal was determined to meet the town's criteria and two required public hearings will be held to review the potential sale of the property, buildings, or both. The hearings will take place on Nov. 5 and 19, both at 7 p.m. at town hall.



The board of selectmen will hold public hearings on a proposal to buy the Taylor property for an outdoor adventure business. (File Photo) (click for larger version)

Because of the ongoing real estate negotiations, the name of the potential buyer is currently confidential. Interim Town Planner Bruce Woodruff said the proposed buyer is experienced in running outdoor adventure businesses.

In the proposal's executive summary, the possible buyer would renovate the building and turn it into an outdoor adventure business with an adventure guide, hostel with farm-to-table, dining, and wellness products.

According to the proposal, the proposed buyer would make it a year-round outdoor adventure business with boating and kayaking, biking, hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing tours on Winnepesaukee, the Ossipee Mountains, and other locations around the Lakes Region.

The new business would cater to people of all ages including adults, children, and families.

The barn would be a retail outfitter for specialty apparel and gear and offering rental equipment like kayaks, skis, e-bikes, and more as well as selling natural and holistic products.

The venture would also use the snowmobile and cross-country trails around the property and also utilize the proposed trails at Berry Pond and the Lee's Mills launch.

The proposed buyer would also work out an agreement with the town that would allow the town to utilize the greenspace on the property for events and activities like the town's Christmas tree, ice skating, and more. They would also continue to encourage the use of the cross-country trails by school teams and trails used by the Moultonborough Snowmobile Club.

According to the proposal, the buyer hopes to start renovation on the house and the barn this fall with the aim of finishing in 2021 and opening the business that year.

"This is a bonafide proposal that I believe will do incredible benefit to the village and Moultonborough as a whole," Woodruff said.

Woodruff said this proposal will bring a few new businesses to the village and will result in the rehabilitation of a vacant historical building.

He said right now there are no other plans to use the building and no other proposals. A number of people have talked about tearing the building down, but he said that would be shortsighted.

"Here we are with a plan and proposal to put the property to use, put it back on the tax rolls, to add a business, and that's a plan that you have in hand," Woodruff said.

Overall Woodruff said this is a really positive thing for the town.

This proposal will also require recommendations from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission. Woodruff said the topic would be discussed at the Oct. 28 Planning Board meeting and the Nov. 2 Conservation Commission meeting, providing feedback ahead of the selectmen's meeting.

Access to town hall will be limited for the public hearings as per the governor's emergency orders, though the meeting will also be streamed on the town website. People can submit comments to board of selectmen chair Kevin Quinlan at kquinlan@moultonboroughnh.gov no later than 3:30 p.m. on the day of the meeting. Residents can also call 476-2347 to comment during the meeting, though lines will be limited, and several attempts might be necessary to get through.