



Town of Moultonborough

Request for Proposals for the Purchase
Rehabilitation and Redevelopment of the
French-Taylor House
970 Whittier Highway (Route 25)



June 15, 2019
Proposals due on September 13, 2019

Invitation to Submit Proposals

The Town of Moultonborough, New Hampshire invites qualified individuals and developers to submit formal proposals for the purchase, rehabilitation, and redevelopment of the French-Taylor House (house with attached barns, approximately 4000 square feet) situated on approximately 5 acres of municipally-owned property located at 970 Whittier Highway (Route 25) in Moultonborough (Commercial Zone C, The Village). The French-Taylor House (tax map 52, lot 14) is suitable for office, retail, residential, and mixed uses as per the Town's Village Center Overlay District (VCOD). The minimum purchase price for the House with approximately 1.5 acres of land surrounding the building is \$62,700.

Goal of the Proposal

The Town seeks proposals for the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the French-Taylor House to a use that will best take advantage of the opportunities that this site 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. Because this landmark building contributes to the identity and streetscape of Moultonborough Village, any redevelopment should retain the principal structure and building facades seen from Whittier Highway (Route 25), and if desired, incorporate compatible additions of similar massing and scale. 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. It is the Town's intention to retain the majority of the remaining 5 acres not dedicated to the re-use project for development of a Town common or as community "green" space.

Background

The Town acquired the 5-acre former Taylor property with existing house and barn (approximately 4000 square feet) in March 2014. This property is situated at the center of Moultonborough Village on Whittier Highway, the town's historic Main Street (Route 25). Prior to its purchase, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was completed in June 2013 (Calex Environmental, LLC), which showed no unexpected deficiencies. While the Town presently plans to retain acreage adjacent to the House for municipal purposes, 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.

Architectural Historian James L. Garvin established the historical and architectural significance of the house in June 2017 (see *Garvin Report on the French-Taylor House*). Through its Heritage Commission, the Town successfully applied for a Historic Building Condition Assessment funded by the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance (NHPA) and the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) in 2017, resulting in the SMP Architecture *Historic Building Condition Assessment Report* completed in early 2018, which includes a structural evaluation and detailed floor plans.

Available Reports on the French-Taylor House

Garvin Report 2017:

https://www.moultonboroughnh.gov/sites/moultonboroughnh/files/uploads/french-taylor_house_garvin_report_2017.pdf

SMP Architecture Report 2018:

https://www.moultonboroughnh.gov/sites/moultonboroughnh/files/uploads/french-taylor_house_smp_report_2018.pdf

SMP Architecture Plans:

https://www.moultonboroughnh.gov/sites/moultonboroughnh/files/uploads/french-taylor_house_smp_plans.pdf

Team Engineering Consultation 2017:

https://www.moultonboroughnh.gov/sites/moultonboroughnh/files/uploads/taylor_house_general_conditions_0.pdf

NH State Register of Historic Places

The French-Taylor House is on the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places, which offers specific advantages for the property's redevelopment. There are no restrictions or requirements associated with this listing. In addition to honorary recognition as a significant property, such listing results in these benefits for historic properties:

- **Consideration in the planning of local and state-funded or otherwise state-assisted projects:** Both state and federal historic preservation regulations seek to protect identified historic resources during activities such as governmental land sales and transportation projects.
- **Qualification for state financial assistance for preservation projects:** Historic preservation grants and funding from sources such as LCHIP) and Conservation License Plate funds (Moose Plate) use eligibility for or listing on the State Register, among other criteria, as a qualifying requirement.
- **Special consideration or relief in the application of access, building and safety codes:** Historic properties, including those listed on the State Register, are offered special consideration in the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act, building, energy, and fire codes, the state lead poisoning prevention law and administrative rules, and the state floodplain ordinance. Historic properties are not exempt from these code regulatory processes. However, during the review and approval process, historic property owners, with NH Division of Historical Resources (NH DHR) assistance if desired, can work with regulatory agencies to develop plans that meet preservation, access, building, and safety needs.

Historic Buildings and Code Compliance: <https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/code.htm>

Opportunities Associated with the French-Taylor House

The property's size, location, and frontage on Whittier Highway (Route 25) in Commercial Zone C: The Village and in the VCOD affords both incentives and opportunities:

- **RSA 79-E:** The Town adopted RSA 79-E (the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive Program) in March 2009, which is intended to encourage investment in the village zone with the rehabilitation and active re-use of historic buildings. Property owners who wish to substantially rehabilitate a qualifying historic building may apply for a period of temporary tax relief. Applicants must demonstrate a public benefit (downtown economic vitality, improvement of a culturally or historically important structure, promotion of downtown development, increase of downtown housing). This program can 'freeze' the property's assessment for a period of 5 to 13 years (additional years are given if the project results in new residential units or provides affordable housing).

https://www.moultonboroughnh.gov/sites/moultonboroughnh/files/uploads/rsa_79e_application_form_complete.pdf

- **VCOD – Village Center Overlay District:** The Town established a non-linear VCOD in March 2017, with stated purpose "to encourage the development of the Moultonborough Village Center in a manner consistent with its historic pattern, including the size and spacing of structures and open spaces." To date, there have been two approved redevelopment projects in the VCOD, resulting in new businesses in the village: The Lamprey-Porter House (1003 and 1009 Whittier Highway), a rehabilitation of historic buildings with a Conditional Use Permit for mixed use within the VCOD (retail and residential); and the Berry Pond Corner, which opened in June 2018 (1040 Whittier Highway), a four-unit retail building with a bakery/cafe in a 4300 square foot 'barn' structure, and yoga studio, art gallery, and event planning business in the three additional (700 sf) units.

https://www.moultonboroughnh.gov/sites/moultonboroughnh/files/uploads/zoning_ordinance_2017_final_adopted_03-14-17_0.pdf (see pages 40-44, with VCOD map page 41)

Recent Town planning efforts have focused on village revitalization and community development in Moultonborough Village and the recently established VCOD. In July 2018, a visiting Plan NH team for the Moultonborough Design Charrette reviewed the *Village Vision Report* endorsed at Town Meeting in March 2015, and team recommendations focused on how the existing community-defined vision for the Village could be achieved. Since then, Town Land Use board and committee members are working toward gateway treatments to better define the Village area, pedestrian trails for Village connectivity, traffic calming measures and shared parking, and community and business partnerships in the Village.

<https://www.moultonboroughnh.gov/sites/moultonboroughnh/files/uploads/villagevisionreport2015.pdf> (see pages 6-8, with references to 'Adele Taylor House')

Prime Location of the French-Taylor House

The property's location and frontage on Whittier Highway (Route 25) in Commercial Zone C: The Village and in the VCOD offers additional benefits in terms of visibility and access (see tax card: <http://gis.vgsi.com/moultonboroughnh/Parcel.aspx?Pid=815>):

- Frontage on heavily trafficked Whittier Highway (Route 25) at the center of Moultonborough Village (Commercial Zone C/Village Center Overlay District), between the towns of Center Harbor and Sandwich
- Easy Access within the Region: 11, 534 vehicles per day pass the site (2017 AADT as per NH DOT) – Route 25 is the major roadway/corridor between the Lakes Region and the White Mountains (North Conway and beyond), heavily trafficked year round; proximity to both Route 93 (20 miles) and Route 16 (15 miles)
- Easy Access beyond the Region: Concord Trailways bus line offers service to Concord, Boston, Logan Airport, and New York City; Manchester-Boston Regional Airport is 75 miles away (1 ½ H); Boston MA is 120 miles away (2 H); Portland ME is 70 miles away (1 ½ H); Portsmouth/NH Seacoast is 70 miles away (1 ½ H).
- Proximity to Scenic Beauty and Outdoor Recreation: residents and visitors alike choose Moultonborough for its scenic beauty (mountains, lakes, rural character and cultural landscape) and all-season recreational activities. Moultonborough is rich with historical and cultural destinations and conservation organizations with public trails and programs (Lakes Region Conservation Trust; Squam Lakes Conservation Society; Loon Preservation Center; Castle in the Clouds, The Old Country Store).

Description and Status of the French-Taylor House

Located at the center of Moultonborough Village, the French-Taylor House (c. 1840) is an important community landmark, significant both for its architecture and for its history. It stands directly across from the Moultonborough Grange Hall (c. 1810) on what was once Main Street (now busy Route 25). The property, with just over five acres in the center of the village, features an open field, trees, mature plantings, a stone well, and stonewalls. The attached barn likely functioned as a combined stable and carriage house. 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 figure James E. French, who resided at the property from 1871 until his death in 1919. In his June 2017 report, James L. Garvin notes how "Evidence within the house indicates...(it) was enlarged by lifting the roof structure and by adding a new second story to both the main house and to the wing;" this change can be seen in historic photographs (and in Garvin's illustration of the altered frame c. 1900).

The Taylor House, as it is locally known, retains integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association for the period of its enlargement c. 1900 to the present. The house has been vacant since 2006, and was purchased by the Town in 2014.

The house retains numerous character-defining and significant features on both its exterior (wide corner boards, paired eaves brackets, screened side porch, amber glass lightning rods) and interior (woodwork and hardware, original lighting fixtures). These period features are described in Garvin's *Report on the French-Taylor House* of 2017, and in SMP Architecture's *Report* of 2018. Such character-defining features should be protected and preserved in the course of any future work on the building. Garvin notes, "The house also retains and displays significant structural and stylistic attributes from the period of its original construction, making it a valuable example in the study of broad-gabled houses in New Hampshire and of the range of expression of the Greek Revival style in the state."

The Taylor House was added to the NH Preservation Alliance's statewide 'Seven to Save' list in 2017, which recognizes significant community landmarks under threat by neglect, lack of planning, and development pressures. The Taylor House stands directly across Route 25 from the Moultonborough Grange Hall, owned by the Moultonborough Historical Society and listed to 'Seven to Save' in 2012. Loss of either or both of these buildings on 'Main Street' at the center of the historic village would severely impact Moultonborough's rural character, streetscape, and sense of place. 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 have been successfully transformed into vibrant community assets, with local examples including the Pickering House (2015) and Brewster Memorial Hall (2009) in nearby Wolfeboro.

In July 2018, a Plan NH professional team focused specific attention on the 'Seven to Save' properties in Moultonborough Village, outlining best practices for the adaptive re-use and redevelopment of these historic buildings. The Moultonborough Design Charrette Report (November 2018) notes: "The French-Taylor house is eligible for the NH State Register of Historic Places. It is significant for its architecture and its associations with local political figure and community leader James E. French...the house is deceptively larger than it appears from the street. It is a structurally solid structure that suffers from deferred maintenance and cosmetic issues. 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 town's expectation for the building's preservation could be reflected in the sale/lease and related conditions."

Plan NH Charrette Report (2018):

<https://www.moultonboroughnh.gov/sites/moultonboroughnh/files/uploads/moultonborough%20charrette%20book%201.pdf> (see pages 4, 11, 14)

The NH Division of Historical Resources assists with the State Register program and with the Federal Tax Incentives Program for rehabilitation projects (603-271-3483). The NH Preservation Alliance (603-224-2281) can assist with the additional programs available for re-use of historic buildings (USDA, NH Housing, CDFA). The Moultonborough Heritage Commission can provide additional information on the French-Taylor House, including a Historic Barn Assessment Report (Ian Blackman LLC, Preservation & Restoration, 2019).

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals to include the following:

1. Purchase proposal, suggested terms, purchase price, duration and timing;
2. Plans showing the proposed reuse of the property, highlighting in color those portions of the existing structure(s) that will be retained;
3. Any phasing plans or possible future expansion on the site;
4. Potential collaborative and partnership opportunities with the Town.

Property Inspections

Staff will be available to provide access to the building by appointment. All questions, correspondence and requests should be submitted to the Town Administrator's Office. The Town Administrator will make every effort to coordinate site walks.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals in response to this RFP are to be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked "French-Taylor House Reuse Proposal" and be received by 2:00 PM on September 13th, 2019 to be eligible for consideration.

Mail proposals to: Office of the Town Administrator ATTN: Walter Johnson
PO Box 139/6 Holland Street, Moultonborough, NH 03245

REVISIONS TO THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Questions regarding this request for proposals to be submitted in writing by mail or e-mail to Walter Johnson at: wjohnson@moultonboroughnh.gov no later than August 30th, 2019. If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP or respond to written questions, an addendum will be posted to the Town's website at: www.moultonboroughnh.gov (Request for Proposals).

LIMITATIONS OF LIABILITY

The Town of Moultonborough assumes no responsibility or liability for costs incurred by respondents to this RFP, whether during the initial response period or in responding to any request for interviews, additional data, etc.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Respondents are asked to be concise and to follow the outline below. Proposals that do not follow the outline or do not contain the required information may be considered as unresponsive. Additional detailed information may be annexed to the proposal.

FORMAT FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals to include, in order, the following:

- A. Letter of Transmittal
- B. Executive Summary
- C. Brief organizational profile, including background and experience of the respondent
- D. Previous project summaries, including reference contact information, that are similar in scope to the project described herein which demonstrate pertinent corporate and key personnel experience; listing of the pertinent projects may be included (The Town reserves the right to contact any references provided herein or otherwise obtained)
- E. Concept plans for the building improvements and a conceptual site plan
- F. Evidence of the respondent's financial ability to complete the project.
- G. A detailed schedule of proposed interior and exterior improvements to the building and site which includes the dollar value of each of the improvements. These values will be used as a guide to create a Restoration Pledge Agreement and bond amount between the buyer and the Town to ensure performance to complete the project.

SIGNATURE

The proposal shall be signed by an official authorized to bind the offer and shall contain a statement to the effect that the proposal is a firm offer for a one hundred-twenty (120) day period from opening. The proposal shall also provide the following information: name, title, address and telephone number of the individual(s) with authority to contractually bind the entity and also who may be contacted during the period of proposal evaluation for the purpose of clarifying submitted information.

NATURE OF PROPOSAL AND ELIGIBILITY

The determination of whether a proposal may be withdrawn is solely at the discretion of the Town Administrator. However, in no event shall a proposal be withdrawn unless the request for withdrawal is filed within five (5) days of the date of the opening and the proposal respondent establishes that the proposal contains a material mistake that occurred despite the exercise of reasonable care.

RIGHT TO REJECT PROPOSALS AND WAIVE INFORMALITIES

The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals for any reason, to waive any nonmaterial irregularities or information in any RFP, and to accept or reject any item or combination of items.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The Town will evaluate each proposal based on the documentation requested herein, using criteria that include, but is not necessarily limited to or in the order of, the following:

- A. The proposal's responsiveness to the RFP (format, capabilities, approach, clarity, etc.)
- B. How well the proposal matches the needs and values of the community
- C. The qualifications and experience of personnel committed to the project
- D. Purchase price and proposed terms
- E. The financial ability of the respondent to complete the project.

Once the more attractive proposals have been identified, Town staff will contact and schedule interviews with selected candidates. Ultimately the Town Administrator may make a recommendation to the Town Select Board regarding the highest-ranking candidates for selection for outright purchase of the property.

The Town reserves the right to hold additional interviews with candidates to discuss the purchase price and terms and to negotiate the price and terms with prospective candidates prior to making a final determination.

Contact Information:

Walter Johnson, Town Administrator, wjohnson@moultonboroughnh.gov

Office Telephone: 603-476-2347. Office Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm.