

**Request for Letters of Interest
Adaptive Reuse of the Josiah Smith Tavern and Old Library**

Town of Weston, Massachusetts

November 7, 2011

The Town of Weston is preparing to offer the historic buildings and sites that compose the Josiah Smith Tavern and the Town's Old Library for adaptive reuse by qualified entities. The Town is seeking redevelopment partners who recognize the unique opportunity to bring new life to this rare set of buildings that occupy a highly visible, park-like site along the Boston Post Road at the edge of Weston's village center and its expansive Town Green.

The Town, through its Town Manager, is requesting Letters of Interest from prospective proponents for the reuse and redevelopment of these properties. The Request for Letters of Interest (RLI) precedes the issuance of a subsequent Request for Reuse Proposals (RFP) which will be the basis of selection, negotiation and execution of agreements with the successful proponents. The Town anticipates issuing the RFP after reviewing the Letters of Interest, with responses due early in 2012.

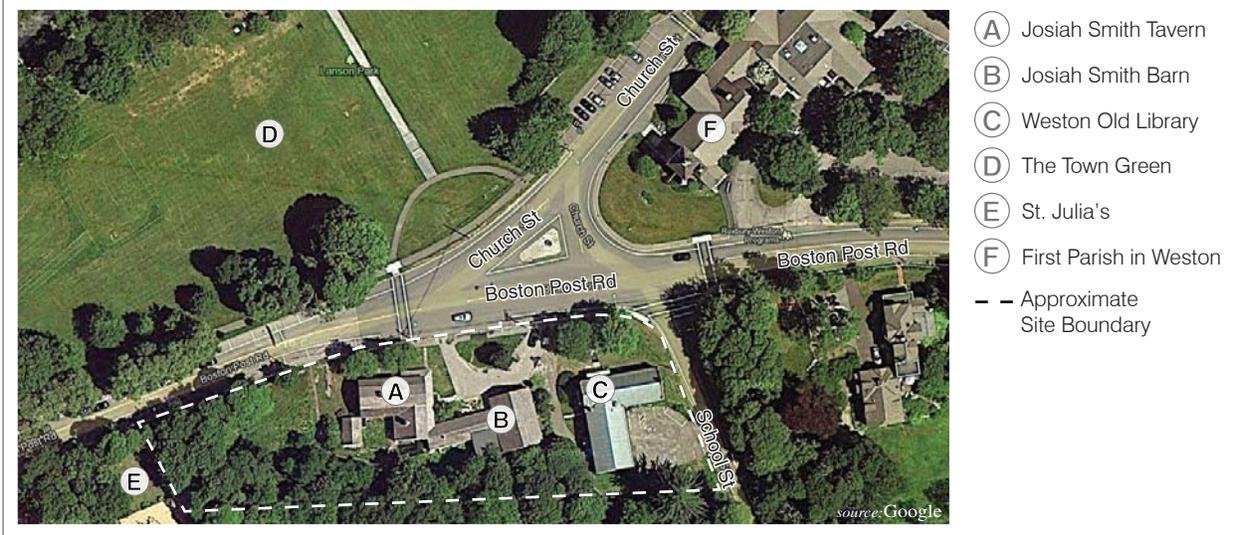
Letters of Interest are being sought to help gauge the type and extent of interest in the reuse of the properties, provide opportunities for redevelopers to identify other entities that may be interested in participating as tenants or co-developers, and to generally inform the preparation and issuance of the final Request for Reuse Proposals.

The Town intends to seek proposals for purchase or long term lease of two components:

- Josiah Smith Tavern – This component includes a rare, original 18th century colonial tavern along with its additions and connected barn. The complex contains approximately 15,000 square feet of floor area. The Town acquired the property to preserve its historic architecture. A contributing structure to the surrounding National Register district, the tavern complex is subject to historic deed restrictions recognizing its genuine character. In recent years, the Town has undertaken exterior restoration of the buildings. The Tavern is unoccupied, and retains many original and distinctive interior features. The barn and connector buildings have been leased by the Town to the non-profit Women's Community League of Weston (WCL), which is currently a tenant-at-will. If the WCL is a successful participant in the RFP process, it could remain as a use within either its existing space or other space on the site.
- Old Library – The original Weston Library, this historic building was constructed in the late 1890's and then expanded in the 1920's. The distinctive masonry structure was designed in the English Revival style by a prominent resident architect. It contains about 8,000 square feet of floor area. The building is a contributing structure of the Historic District, due to its architectural significance. Weston has constructed a large new library and the structure is currently vacant. The Town has already committed nearly \$1 million to complete a substantial restoration and stabilization project which will restore the exterior integrity of the building and address other issues in anticipation of its reuse.

Letters of Interest are requested for submittal by 12:00 noon on December 14, 2011.

The Site and the Properties



The Josiah Smith Tavern Complex
 358 Boston Post Road



View from Boston Post Road



Barn and Connecting Building

Weston Old Library
 356 Boston Post Road



Original Library Building



Library Entrance

Summary of the Offering

The Town of Weston intends to offer both the Josiah Smith Tavern and Weston Old Library for either long-term lease or sale to qualified entities that provide proposals to adaptively reuse these prominent, historic structures. The buildings are adjacent to one another on Town-owned parcels of land. The site is located at the intersection of Boston Post Road, Church Street and School Street, across from the historic Town Green. Framed by open space, the Tavern and Old Library are at the edge of the Town's traditional commercial and civic center which is near Route 20 as it passes through Weston.

The Town intends to lease or sell the buildings and the site in support of their successful reuse so that they become self-sustaining contributors to the character and qualities of the Town Center. The Town has determined that neither the buildings nor their sites are required to serve as municipal facilities. The Town is promoting adaptive reuse to fulfill a range of civic and municipal objectives that have arisen out of an extensive, recent community process. This interactive process, sponsored by the Board of Selectmen, set the stage for offering the properties to those who can most effectively revitalize them within this framework. Studies and discussions considered a wide range of reuse scenarios. The results suggested that a variety or mix of possible uses may emerge which could appropriately meet the Town's objectives.

Draft selection criteria were prepared as part of this recent planning process and express key community goals. These criteria will be refined, included within the RFP, and then used as the basis for selecting preferred proposals through a process that will be structured by the Board of Selectmen. Negotiations will be conducted and final proposals will be prepared in concert with the proponents to be advanced for all Town approvals that may be needed, including Town Meeting approvals.

In seeking acceptable reuse and redevelopment proposals, the Town would prefer a disposition of the entire parcel and buildings upon it to a single entity. However, the Town will also consider separate proposals for the two major components: the Tavern and its attached buildings, and the Old Library. In the event that there are two separate proposals, the two reuse plans must be compatible.

The Tavern Component

The Josiah Smith Tavern has several major parts – the Tavern, a barn, and a connecting structure. The Tavern was built in 1757 and enlarged in 1805 to its current two stories and basement. Interior features include the historic tap room, fireplaces, stairs, and a banquet room. The barn and connector were early- to mid-19th century additions, with a main floor and basement. The interior of these buildings have been adapted to contemporary use.

The Tavern consists of about 6,450 gross square feet – 2,845 square feet on the first floor, 2,425 square feet on the second floor and 1,180 square feet in the basement. The barn and connector building contain a total of about 8,570 gross square feet – 6,460 square feet on the first floor and 2,110 square feet in the basement.

Old Library Component

The Old Library was built in 1899 with an addition in the 1920's. The brick structure has distinctive characteristics associated with the English Revival style of which it is an example. These include masonry window framing, exposed heavy timber details on the interior and exterior, and a steep, slate-covered roof. The interior includes a high, vaulted reading room on the main level connected to the main entry. The building has three levels – a main floor, a mezzanine, and a lower floor. The square footage is 7,960 – 3,800 square feet on the main floor, 200 square feet on the mezzanine and 3,880 square feet on the lower level.

The Site

The site is a portion of two existing Town-owned parcels about 7 acres in area. The majority of the existing parcels consists of protected wetlands that will be retained by the Town. The land being offered for reuse is bounded by Boston Post Road, School Street, a line generally corresponding to the limits of existing designated wetlands, and an abutting parcel belonging to St. Julia's Church. Should the Town accept a proposal and execute an agreement, it will relocate an existing playground from the site.

The Town has determined that an updated on-site septic sewer system will be needed. Engineering studies commissioned by the Town indicate that an updated system can be provided that will accommodate significant reuse of the buildings and also meet applicable permitting regulations. Limited on-site parking is provided today. Additional on-site parking is likely to be required to support reuse. Site planning studies indicate that the existing supply could be expanded through site improvements that would meet existing zoning standards. In the event that the site is disposed of as two separate components, the Town will facilitate potential shared sewer and shared parking solutions.

The site is within the Business District B zone. Rezoning of the site was approved in 2010 in anticipation of the adaptive reuse of the buildings and site.

Town Reinvestment Support

Based on past studies, the Town has determined that acceptable and appropriate reuse of the existing buildings and site are likely to require public financial assistance in order to facilitate feasible redevelopment. A fundamental goal of the disposition of the properties to other entities is to create a financially sustainable future which will require no Town funds for future operating and maintenance expenses, once the lease or sale has been executed. However, additional commitment to capital improvements by the Town may be needed to initiate reuse.

The Town has used municipal Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding in the past to accomplish building stabilization and restoration in anticipation of further reinvestments. In addition to prior expenditures, the Town has recently approved nearly \$1 million in funds to advance exterior restoration of the Old Library in keeping with its historic character and preparing for future adaptive reuse. The stabilization and restoration will be accomplished in advance of disposition or lease of the property.

The Town anticipates the likelihood that some proponents may need and seek additional investment funding through this source as part of their reuse proposals.

Confirmation of CPA funding will be subject to the amount requested and confirmation of need as part of the negotiation process with designated preferred reuse proponents. CPA funding would need to meet legal eligibility standards associated with this source, and subsequent and associated approval of the disposition and use of CPA funds through the Town's Community Preservation Committee and Town Meeting.

Background

The Josiah Smith Tavern and Old Library occupy prominent locations and are valued contributors to the character of Weston's Town Center. Setting the stage for successful adaptive reuse has occupied several years of civic effort and decisions. A useful summary of the process leading to the current offering of the properties is contained in the *Report on Re-use Alternatives, Josiah Smith Tavern and the Old Library Building*, completed in July 2011. This report and many other useful background documents can be accessed through the Town's website at:

http://weston.govoffice.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7b001B0223-F403-4C76-83F5-3AB6B0D86342%7d

Setting the Stage for Reuse

The Town's commitment to the buildings and engagement in the reuse process is represented, in part, by a series of investments, funded studies and zoning revisions:

- Annual Town Meeting, May 2004 – Appropriation of \$350,000 in Community Preservation Act funds for exterior renovation of the Josiah Smith Tavern
- Annual Town Meeting, May 2006 – Appropriation of \$360,000 in Community Preservation Act funds for exterior renovation of the Josiah Smith Tavern
- Annual Town Meeting, May 2007 – Appropriation of funds for a feasibility study for the reuse of the Josiah Smith Tavern and Old Library
- Special Town Meeting, November 2007 – Appropriation of additional funds for the feasibility study and rezoning of both properties to Business District B
- Annual Town Meeting, May 2008 – Appropriation for funding to conduct professional studies to evaluate proposed reuses; Town Meeting votes to approve a site-specific liquor license for the Josiah Smith Tavern and Barn
- Special Town Meeting, November 2009 – Defeat of requested appropriation to use into further Community Preservation Act funding for architectural and engineering studies
- Public Charrette, June 2010 – Public discussion of possibilities for reuse

- Public Workshops, December 2010-May 2011 – As part of the *Reuse Study* process, The Cecil Group held public meetings and workshops to gain public input about acceptable reuse scenarios
- Annual Town Meeting, May 2011 – The Town approved expenditures using CPA funds for building renovation of the Old Library in anticipation of future adaptive reuse.

Historic Resources and Status

The Town's goals for reuse recognize the historic importance of the structures. The buildings are all contributing resources within the Boston Post Road Historic District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Josiah Smith Tavern complex has historic deed restrictions held by Historic New England that protect the interior and exterior of the Tavern. The building is potentially eligible for historic tax credits under certain use scenarios.

The Old Library is also potentially eligible for historic tax credits because of its status as a contributing structure within a National Register Historic District. There are no historic deed restrictions in place for the Old Library. However, any renovation/restoration work undertaken with CPA funds must be conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Current Uses

The Women's Community League of Weston (WCL) leases the barn and connector space at the Josiah Smith Tavern. This non-profit is a tenant-at-will whose lease expires in 2012. If the WCL is a successful participant in the RFP process, it could remain as a use within either its existing space or other space on the site. Portions of the Tavern are used for informal municipal storage and seasonal uses by some civic groups.

The Old Library has been vacant for several years, and was used intermittently for civic purposes in the past.

Submittal Requirements and Process

Letters of Interest will provide the Town with the ability to better understand the type and level of interest in these buildings and will provide interested proponents with an opportunity to provide input to the Town on possible reuse scenarios or considerations. Submittal of a Letter of Interest or participation in this process is not a precondition of participating in the RFP process, however.

Submittal Components

1. Identification – Please identify the responding entity.
2. Contact information – Please provide the contact name, address, telephone number, fax number and email.
3. Basis of interest
 - Please describe the intended use.

- Do you intend to submit a proposal for the entire site and both components (Josiah Smith Tavern and Old Library)?
 - If not, please describe which components of the site will be needed for the proposed use.
 - If possible, please provide an expanded description of the reuse vision, including diagrams or other drawings relating to plans and/or layouts.
 - What are the parking requirements for the use?
4. Financial information – Certain financial information will be helpful to the Town, as described below:
 - Do you anticipate requesting either a long-term lease or a sale of the premises?
 - Please describe how the proposed reuse will cover all associated ongoing operating and maintenance costs.
 - Please describe how the proposed reuse will cover or contribute to any associated capital costs.
 - Do you anticipate a request for CPA funding to support the reuse vision?
 5. Relevant experience – Please furnish information regarding the entity’s experience with adaptive reuse of historic buildings and/or the proposed use(s).
 6. Tenancy – If the entity is not prepared to advance proposals for either component but would wish to be considered as a tenant within another entity’s proposal, please provide information on the space needed within the site, parking needs, and financial information including how the proposed tenant will cover ongoing operating and maintenance costs and contribute to capital costs.
 7. Additional information – The Town of Weston welcomes any additional information or suggestions that the Town should take into account prior to issuing the RFP.

Letters of Interest are due **no later than Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at 12 noon** to:

Donna S. VanderClock
Town Manager
Town of Weston
Town Hall
11 Town House Road
Weston, MA 02493

Phone: (781) 786-5020
Fax: (781) 786-5029
vanderlock.d@westonmass.org

Please provide seven (7) bound or stapled copies and email one (1) electronic copy in PDF format to vanderlock.d@westonmass.org.

Anticipated Schedule and Process

The schedule for the issuance of the RLI is as follows:

RLI Issued	November 7, 2011
Site Visit 1	November 21, 2011 at 10 AM
Site Visit 2	November 28, 2011 at 2 PM
Questions about the RLI due	November 28, 2011, 5PM
Written Responses to Questions posted	November 30, 2011
RLI Responses due	December 14, 2011 at 12 noon

Once received, the submitted Letters of Interest will be made publicly available so that they can serve as a shared resource for the Town as it finalizes the Request for Proposals, and for the benefit of potential respondents. The responses to the RLI will be posted on the Town of Weston website within a month of the final due date.

Site Visits and Information Sessions

Site Visit and Information Session

Two site visits will be held. These sessions will provide an opportunity to view portions of the buildings that may be currently accessible. A brief presentation will be made by The Cecil Group who has been retained to help conduct the RLI process. All questions and responses will be facilitated by the Cecil Group. Although a site visit is not required, interested parties are strongly encouraged to attend.

Questions about the RLI

Interested parties may contact Steven Cecil AIA ASLA at The Cecil Group regarding questions that they may have about the RLI. Please e-mail relevant contact information to scecil@cecilgroup.com to arrange a telephone conversation at a mutually agreeable time. The Cecil Group will attempt to respond to all requests that are received by **November 28, 2011**.

Written questions may be submitted by e-mail at scecil@cecilgroup.com by **November 28, 2011 by 5 PM**. Written responses will be provided and available on the Town's website as of **November 30, 2011**.

The Cecil Group may follow-up with individual proponents or prospective proponents to understand the type and level of interest prior to finalizing the RFP. This will allow an opportunity to respond to questions that interested proponents may have about the

property and the planned RFP and to learn about concerns or suggestions through discussions that prospective proponents may have, so that the preparation of the Request for Proposals anticipates key issues and provides helpful information available to all bidders.

Anticipated RFP Process

The RFP is planned to be issued the first part of 2012; responses would be due within 60-90 days after issuance. The RFP would be distributed to all respondents and would also be available through the Town online.

After the Town has reviewed the proposals, the designation of preferred developer(s) would be made by about June 1, 2012. The subsequent steps would include negotiations, finalization of the proposal, preparation of legal documents, necessary Town and Town Meeting approvals, and execution of documents as may be required.

It should be noted that this Request for Letters of Interest is intended to provide useful information in anticipation of a Request for Proposals as described above. However, the Town is under no obligation to any respondents, and reserves the right at its sole discretion to proceed in a manner that it deems consistent with the Town's best interests.