

TOWN OF WINCHENDON

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

109 Front Street, Dept. 1, Winchendon, MA 01475-1758

Telephone (978) 297-0085 Fax: (978) 297-1616
jsultzbach@townofwinchendon.com

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Justin Sultzbach, Town Manager

DATE: February 14th, 2022

RE: Discussion of Potential Purchase of 70 Pleasant Street

70 Pleasant Street, otherwise known as the “Old Fletcher Funeral Home”, is currently on the market. The Library Board of Trustees has expressed interest in purchasing this property and renovating the structure to serve as a Children/Teen Library and community space. Given the close proximity of the property to the Beals Library, this could potentially be an advantageous development. There have been plans in place (presently unfunded) to convert the existing Library Basement into a Children’s Library. Preliminary cost estimates have come out to over \$1,750,000 from start to finish.

The property at 70 Pleasant Street is listed at \$185,000, with early projections for renovation coming in well under the proposed \$1,750,000 price tag for the Library Basement renovation. I have walked the property with our Building Commissioner and no serious issues were noted. It is assumed a full mechanical upgrade should be anticipated, as well as a new roof should a significant investment be made to the interior. A full commercial building inspection and appraisal will be conducted by a third party prior to the potential purchase. The Capital Planning Committee expressed tentative support for exploring this option.

Logistically this is a difficult process. A purchase cannot be made without Town Meeting approval – meaning a formal offer could not be made until May, pending Town Meeting authorization. I have been working with the realtor and property owner to discuss a scenario in which they would hold the building off the market until citizens have an opportunity to discuss the potential purchase at Town Meeting. The owner has been agreeable, but has requested the Board of Selectmen discuss the property and if agreeable, vote in support of purchasing the property contingent upon Town Meeting approval.

In addition, they have requested a non-refundable deposit of 20% of the asking price, which is typical for a commercial property. The Town does not have a mechanism to make this commitment, however the Winchendon Redevelopment Authority could make such a vote. I have negotiated the deposit down from 20% to 5% (about \$10,000). The WRA will be meeting on February 28th to discuss this proposal. In the meantime, a vote from the board (if interested) showing an intent to purchase (pending Town Meeting Approval) as well as an authorization for me to continue negotiations would be useful moving forward.

Recommended Motion: Move to express interest in the purchase of 70 Pleasant Street pending Town Meeting Approval, and to authorize the Town Manager to proceed with negotiations in conjunction with the Winchendon Redevelopment Authority.

