

## **Press Release - Milton Library Trustees seek approval of Town Meeting to sell Kidder Branch property**

After several years of discussion and investigation, the Trustees of the Milton Public Library are seeking approval at Town Meeting to sell the Kidder Branch property. In recent weeks, the Trustees have met with the Warrant Committee and Select Board to highlight the Trustees' process and to explain the reasons for this decision. The key reasons are it does not support the Long Term Strategic Plan nor advance the Mission of the Library and it is a drain on both the financial and staffing resources of the Library and other Town Departments. The Kidder Branch closed as a Library in 1996, and has been used for different purposes since that time.

The Trustees maintain fiduciary responsibility for the Kidder and decided in late 2014 they should begin work on a Strategic Vision for the property that supports the intentions of the gift, i.e. 'for the benefit of the library'. The board created a timeline and communicated this to the current Tenant of the Kidder (Discovery Schoolhouse) in February 2015 and to the Select Board in March 2015. The Trustees sought out town leaders, town departments, community groups and the public to engage in discussions on potential uses for the property. Some of these groups include the Select Board, Planning Board, Parks Department, Affordable Housing Committee, Town Planner and the School Committee. In addition, they engaged community groups - Milton Food Pantry, Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, MATV, Milton Hospital to discuss uses such as a Teen Center, Food Pantry, or office space. The Library also hosted numerous tours and many public forums to solicit input and to keep the community apprised of the progress.

After all of this research, the Trustees voted to sell the Kidder Branch property. The Trustees came to the conclusion that the property does not support Library services in Milton, nor the mission of the Library. The income from the property can only be used for building maintenance and not other Library services. The income does not fully make up for expenses incurred to maintain the building and for staff time used for some maintenance projects. As agreed by the Select Board and Town Administrator, the property does not fit the needs of any town departments. Selling the property will allow the Library Trustees and Library Director to focus their efforts on the Main Library, which is still understaffed and free up Consolidated Facilities to focus more on other town property.

The sale of the property requires a vote of Town Meeting. This vote will authorize the Trustees to sell the property. According to the deed of Nathaniel Kidder, who donated the property, the Trustees are the only entity that can sell the property and the proceeds from the sale must support library services for the residents of Milton.

The Trustees are working with Town Counsel to draft an RFP for the sale of the property. They have obtained a formal appraisal and market analysis confirming the Town's assessment of approximately \$1.2 million dollars. According to State regulations, the RFP will be made public and the Trustees will appoint a committee to review the applications and to recommend finalists to the full Board of Trustees. The Trustees are still discussing the use of proceeds from the

possible sale, but anticipate that funds will go towards the continued maintenance of the renovated Main Library and towards increasing funding for Library print and digital collections.

**Discovery Schoolhouse Information:**

- Kidder property was rented to Discovery Schoolhouse in 2009 to operate a Pre-school program
- Discovery Schoolhouse was the only respondent to the RFP sent out by the Trustees
  - Discovery is licensed to serve 29 students; current enrollment is 20 which includes students from Milton and surrounding towns
- Current lease was recently extended to August 31, 2019 for a rent of \$1883.70/month (a 5% increase from Nov. 2018)
- Typical annual maintenance varies from \$6500 - \$14,000
  - Larger maintenance projects completed since 2012 total \$48,460. Repairs in 2017 were \$33,170 (front steps, ramp repair and fence replacement)

**What if the Town wished to rent all or a portion of the building? Following the terms of the will and state regulations, the Board of Library Trustees will**

- determine the fair rental value of the property
- draft an RFP to solicit proposals for the rental of the property
- advertise inviting submission of proposals
- review proposals and submit up to 3 respondents to full Board for decision
  - submit the name of the entity selected as party to a real property transaction, and the amount of the transaction to the State secretary for publication in the Central Register

**Judicial Court Decree dated June 4, 1928 provides the property is to be held in trust for the purposes below:**

- “to be held by said Town in perpetuity, in trust, with full power to use said property or any part thereof in connection with the public library in said Town, as a branch library or reading rooms, and for other proper public library purposes, for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Town of Milton, and with full power from time to time to sell, assign, convey and transfer the whole or any part of the property of which said trust

shall consist at the time of transfer as aforesaid, and to invest the proceeds thereof and hold the same in trust, with power from time to time to change investments, and to sell, assign, convey and transfer any real or personal property in which the same may be at any time invested, and give proper deeds and transfers thereof, and to apply the income therefrom from time to time, under the control and direction of the Trustees of the Public Library of said Inhabitants of Milton or their successors, to the establishment or maintenance of a public library, or branch libraries, or reading rooms, and for other proper public library purposes, in such manner as the Trustees of said Public Library for the time being shall deem for the benefit of the Inhabitants of the Town of Milton.”