

For Immediate Release:

From the Milton Public Library

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 that it is a drain on both the financial and staffing resources of the Library and other Town Departments, and it does not support the Long Term Strategic Plan nor advance the Mission of the Library. 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 January 2015 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 five 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 does not always 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 still understaffed Main Library 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 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 collections, both print and digital.

Background Information: The Kidder building is located at 101 Blue Hill Parkway, the Kidder Branch was built in 1929 to serve as a neighborhood library. The building is approximately 4,000 square feet, and sits on about half an acre of property. The Kidder Branch was in service from 1929 through 1996. During the ensuing years, the building was used by the Milton Public Schools' KEDS program and the Council on Aging. The building was briefly used again by the Library during the construction of our Main Library. Since 2009, the property has been leased by the Discovery Schoolhouse. In 2009, the Trustees worked with Town Counsel to draft an RFP for the leasing of the property, and entered into negotiations with Discovery Schoolhouse after they were the only respondent. The income from the Kidder rent is placed in a Revolving Fund that is restricted to building maintenance and capped on an annual basis.

Please feel free to contact the the Chair of the Trustees (John Folcarelli), the Chair of the Kidder Subcommittee (Kristine Hodlin) or the Library Director (Will Adamczyk) , to answer questions prior to Town Meeting.