|  |
| --- |
| **The Country Store to reopen Oct. 1** |
|  |
|

|  |
| --- |
|  |

http://atholdailynews.com/images/cleardot.gif

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **KATE FULTON****Athol Daily News Correspondent** |

 Posted Wednesday June 12, 2013PETERSHAM -- It will be a place where town folks may gather for a morning cup of coffee and discuss events of the day with neighbors as they make their way to work, but it will also be an inviting destination for people looking to enjoy a drive in the country during the beautiful autumn season or after a fresh snow fall. The Country Store on the Common is expected to reopen on Oct. 1.Mick Huppert and Cynthia Henshaw of the East Quabbin Land Trust were enthusiastic in their introduction of plans to reopen The Country Store. On June 7 the land trust signed a purchase and sales agreement with the Polus Center for Social and Economic Development, a non-profit group that designs and implements community based programs. The land trust will own the property but the able team of Ari and Jeanneane Pugliese will operate the store through a multi-year lease. They are a proven team of managers who presently own and operate the successful Picasso restaurant in Barre.They are also familiar with the Country Store as Ari Pugliese managed the store for three years from 2003 to 2005 under the ownership by Polus. He holds a master's degree in outpatient rehabilitation and is knowledgeable about nutrition stating that where and how the food is raised is very important. Preparation is also vital to maintaining and supplying nutrients to found in what we eat.It was stated that 70 percent of all goods sold at the store will come from within a 70 mile radius of the store. There will be groceries available as well as a delicatessen, café and some catering. Ari Pugliese noted that his young son, Jackson, will be in charge of ice cream, pretzels and pickles, just a few of his favorite foods.In addition, gifts will be offered as well as some antiques, childrens needs and wants will be considered and while it is a small store, quality and variety will be the order of the day. The Pugliese's will offer sauces, pesto and other condiment under their own label.The building was purchased for $320,000 that includes the lot, antique furnishings and equipment. Funding came from local citizens who donated the funds and wish to remain anonymous. It is expected that another $75,000 will be needed to complete improvements to the property with the taxes and permits required to be paid for by the trust. It is hoped that without a mortgage to consider, the Pugliese's will be able to concentrate on providing a business that serves the community above all.It was emphasized that fund raising needs to be done and that committees need to be formed with sign-up sheets being passed through the audience. There is obviously a great deal of interest in the project as the lower level of the town hall was filled to capacity. Information will be disseminated through a website that is in development and local media.The store was originally built in 1840 by Wetherell and Hamilton and passed through the hands of several owners until in 1985 it became the property of Chuck Berube who was in attendance at the meeting and an enthusiastic supporter of the venture.Polus purchased the store in 2003 but attempted to close it in 2009; however, through the efforts of a community group the store was saved and Rick Wilkins of Phillipston was able to lease the store for a year but by Aug. 2010 the store had closed. In the spring of 2012 the store was leased by Dan Martone but once more closed by the end of that year.It is hoped that with this new endeavor, that the wish by the people of Petersham in their master plan "to have the town remain in its present neighborhood character and social structures where there are reduced impacts on the natural environment and historic resources" a step forward in meeting that goal will be taken. |