

The Country Store in Petersham



Conserving the land, Preserving our heritage

Serving the central Massachusetts towns of Barre, Hardwick, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Oakham, Petersham, Ware, and West Brookfield

P.O. Box 5, 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick, MA 01037 | 413.477.8229 | www.eqlt.org

Public Meeting June 11, 2013

The Country Store has long been at the heart of Petersham, serving as its main store and gathering place located at the center of the community, catering to residents and visitors alike. Now, we have the opportunity to ensure the future of The Country Store.

Join us as community residents and the East Quabbin Land Trust unite to purchase the building and contract with vibrant, experienced and well-known proprietors to reopen The Country Store. But we need your help to make this all possible.

By the end of June, the East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT), a non-profit organization, will purchase the Country Store from POLUS. A Purchase and Sale Agreement was signed by both parties on June 7, 2013. EQLT is a local land trust that serves the towns of Petersham, Oakham, the Brookfields, Hardwick, New Braintree and Barre. In recent years EQLT has preserved several properties in Petersham including the Gould Woodlot, Landworks Farm, St. Mary & St. Scholastica Priory and is working with the Town of Petersham on the conservation of the King Farm on South St. Restoring the Store to operation is consistent with the EQLT mission of promoting local agriculture through providing a distribution point for locally grown vegetables, cheeses and meats.

1. Who will own the Store? EQLT for now. A new community non-profit is being considered for transfer within the next two years.

2. Who will operate The Country Store? Ari and Jeanneane Pugliese will operate the Store through a multi-year lease arrangement with EQLT. The Store will be their business and decisions at the Store are theirs to make. They will continue to operate their restaurant, Picasso, in Barre.

3. How will EQLT operate the facility? As the building owner, EQLT will focus on issues related to the structure. Volunteers will be needed to staff several committees focused on the building refurbishment and maintenance, establishing a Store membership base, administration and finance issues, and special programs to be offered in conjunction with the Puglieses at the Store. A specific listing of committees and ways in which people can participate is available.

4. What will be offered in the Store and why do you think it will succeed? Removing the capital needed to acquire or pay a mortgage on the building provides a solid opportunity to run a country store business by the lessees. The Puglieses have completed a business plan and their

past experience successfully managing The Country Store demonstrates the knowledge, skills and dedication to making this business venture a success. Bringing back townspeople to use the Store is crucial, as is establishing the Store as a destination site for visitors. A "village market" concept displaying a diverse selection of grocery items with an emphasis on local goods with a vibrant cafe, deli, gift/antiques, catering services & ice cream are all included in the scope of anticipated offerings.

5. When will The Country Store reopen? The repairs and renovations necessary to reopen The Country Store are expected to take several months to plan and execute. All modifications to the building will be consistent with maintaining its historic character. The reopening will be in the fall with a target date of October 1.

6. What about taxes and permits? EQLT and the Puglieses will secure all necessary permits to operate the Store. Real estate taxes on the property will be paid by EQLT. The Puglieses will pay all business related taxes.

7. How much did EQLT pay for the Store? The building, the lot, antique furnishings and equipment was purchased for \$320,000. It is expected that another \$75,000 will be needed to improve the facility as a store, café and gathering place. We need your help raising the additional funding for, or direct help with, renovations. Planning for a community fundraising event this summer is underway and we encourage your ideas and participation in this event.

8. Where did the funding come from to purchase the Store? A group of local citizens donated the purchase price amount to EQLT, which has negotiated and will execute the purchase. The contributors wish to remain anonymous.

9. How will you keep us informed? Email chains, periodic community meetings with reports from working committees, and a newsletter will be used to maintain communication. If you wish to be more actively involved, please contact either Mick Huppert at 978-724-3368 or Cynthia Henshaw, Executive Director of the East Quabbin Land Trust at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@EQLT.org.

EQLT Mission: The East Quabbin Land Trust works to foster the sustainable use of our natural and historic resources for the benefit of all generations through the conservation and stewardship of farmlands, woodlands and waters in our region of Massachusetts.