

A History Of The Hamp House

By Bonny Morris
AASP

As the 10-year lease of the Andover After School Program (AASP) with the school district expires June 30, 2009 and the future use of the Hamp House is discussed, we may look to the history of the Hamp House. The AASP wants to work with the school district and negotiate a new lease to benefit the community.

1937 – The Hamp House, in which the AASP and the Andover Five Alive Program (AFAP) are held, was built by Mr. Harlow in 1937, when he came to Andover to be Headmaster at Proctor Academy. Mr. Harlow later taught math at the new high school in Andover (now AE/MS).

1944 – Mr. Hamp bought the house in 1944 when he began the sale of cars where Pizza Chef is now located.

1988 – When the Hamp House was put on the market, the Town and the School Board collaborated to purchase the \$204,000 property. As the March 7, 1989 School District Report States in Article 1, “The school board needs land; the town needs office space. The house shall be used for public purposes and remain on the property.”

1990 – In the 1989 Andover Town Report, the school district says, “In accordance with our promise to the town when we recommended buying the property, we have thus informed the selectmen that they may consider town uses for the house.”

In the same annual report it says, “We intend to create the town’s first police office on the Hamp House annex next to Town Hall.” Elsewhere it says, “Hamp House: last year’s acquisition of this unique land, needed to meet state educational standards and for future town growth, left the disposition of the structure on it to future developments, the school board has agreed to give town hall the use of the house.” Meanwhile, the Hamp House is rented to families to recoup some of the investment.

1992 – The 1992 addition to AE/MS (the present middle school wing) required the use of only a small strip of Hamp House property for the present playground.

1993-1994 – A Hamp House committee report in the 1994 school district meeting offered two pages of possible plans for the future use of the Hamp property, with no agreement among committee members. Meanwhile, the Town Report lists rent from the Hamp House for 1993-1994 as \$7,266.85 and for 1994-1995 as \$5,250.

1995 – Sheree Miller, AASP founder, announces relocation of AASP to its new location at the Hamp House.

1996 – The October 1996 *Beacon* reports, “There is a need apparently for more space for town officers and boards to properly function. There has been some thought in the past that the
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Engineers Study Hamp House Safety

By Chelsea Conaboy
Concord Monitor staff

Reprinted from the October 18 Monitor

The Andover After School Program may have to find a new home this winter if the [Andover School Board] determines that the building it leases from the [Andover School District] is unsafe.

A wing of the middle school had to be vacated for about three weeks last winter because heavy snow caused roof trusses to bow. The district did a structural analysis of all its buildings this year.

The after school program has leased Hamp House, a former private residence next door to the school, for nearly 10 years. In a June structural review conducted for the district, engineer Peter Steffensen said the building is generally in “good condition” but the roof’s load capacities “do not meet code requirements.”

One section has a live load capacity of about 24 pounds per square foot, while code “recommends” 48 pounds per square foot, Steffensen wrote.

[Andover After School] Program chairwoman Bonny Morris said it wasn’t until an October 7 meeting that the school board began talking about the roof as an urgent problem and sug-

gesting that the program might need to find a new location. Morris sent a letter to parents notifying them of the problem and asked another engineer to evaluate it this week for a second opinion.

The fire inspector and town health inspector looked over the building last month for the program’s re-licensing and did not cite any problems, Morris said. Nothing about Hamp House has changed since the lease, which expires in June, was signed 10 years ago, she said.

The program runs half-day kindergarten and after school services. It serves about 30 percent of all Andover students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The facility’s proximity to the school is key, officials say.

“The location is ideal,” Morris said. “Children can go from Boy Scouts, which ends at 4 PM, and come over to our program, which ends at 6 PM, or they can do knitting club or LEGO club.”

Morris is dismayed at the idea of moving the program, but she hopes the group can work with the school board to come up with a solution, she said.

Board chairman Doug Boisvert declined to comment, referring all calls to Superintendent Michael Martin.

“I know that some folks are pretty upset,” Martin said. “The number one issue is safety. I can’t express this strongly enough.”

Martin said the board is still “fact-finding” about whether the roof is unsafe.

“I think right now, people are being cautious,” he said. “They want to make sure the building is okay.”

Board member Kent Armstrong said he wants to see what the program’s engineering consultant has to say.

“Is there a safety issue? We’ve got to quantify that,” Armstrong said. “If there’s a safety issue, we’ve got to get a contingency plan working with both groups to determine how best to deal with that issue.”

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