

# Town Forum - The Hamp House

By Vicky Mishcon

*Vicky was part of the founding of the Andover After School Program. She has served on the Andover School Board in the past, and today is a member of the Andover Board of Selectmen.*

I'm sure that in 1937, the builders of what has come to be known as the Hamp House could never have imagined that the sturdy hip-roofed house would become the focal point of so much controversy. How did the house come to belong to the community, and what value does it hold today?

**1989:** The Andover School District purchased the residence of Mrs. Lillian Hamp to create more space for the expansion of the school, to accommodate school-related activities, and to satisfy minimum State standards for acreage. The value of the house *and* the two acres of prime village property it stood on at that time was \$205,000.

**1993:** A committee was organized to study alternatives regarding future utilization of the house and property. One option that was looked at was destruction of the house by either tearing or burning it down. The preliminary report of the committee stated that this option "did not serve the best interests of the Town or School District" and would "eliminate a valuable asset with no return for previous dollars spent."

Other options included moving the house to another site or selling the house with the stipulation that it be moved off site. In the end, it was decided that the Hamp House be left where it is until the property was needed for expansion.

**1998:** I became a member of the first Board of Directors of the Andover After School Program (AASP). Our task was to form an agreement with the Andover School District to lease the Hamp House for use as an after school program and to obtain the necessary licensing.

**1999:** In March a warrant article passed 67-37 to give AASP a 10-year lease. The idea was to put the house to good use in the community until the property was needed by the District for expansion.

In fact, the lease states that "the Lessor [the District] retains the right to give the Lessee [AASP] a one-year notice to vacate the premises at any time during the lease. Such notice to vacate can only be made due to the Lessor's need for the land upon which the property lies."

**2009:** Avitar recently assessed the house alone at \$204,700 [not including any land] and described the quality as A1, or above average in quality and construction. All recent inspections show that the AASP continues to meet licensing requirements as long as the program follows through on an agreed

repair and maintenance plan, which the AASP intends to pay for out of its own funding.

Although the building doesn't meet requirements to house District programs or administration, the community has been well served by the Hamp House. In addition to AASP and the Andover Five Alive Program for kindergarteners, the building has been used by the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts for meeting space, and by the District and the Andover Recreation Committee for storage. Other organizations may use the space at the discretion of the AASP.

Does the School District need the land for expansion in the very near future? Does the house continue to hold value for the community? Are there any new options that can be explored? Please consider these questions before you vote on March 2.

By Bonny Morris  
AASP/AFAP Board

The Andover After School Program (AASP) has resided at the Hamp House next door to the Andover Elementary/Middle School since 1995. The Andover Five Alive Program was established at the Hamp House in 2001. We are grateful to the community for allowing our vital programs to operate at the Hamp House.

As our current 10-year lease with the Andover School District expires, we are seeking a new lease via a warrant article. The Andover School Board voted at their December meeting to not renew the lease, citing concerns over the condition of the Hamp House and current code requirements. (The Hamp House is grandfathered.) But the board of AASP and AFAP are confident that the Hamp House is an ideal home for our programs and meets the rigid New Hampshire State Childcare Licensing requirements.

In the last year and a half at the Hamp House there have been:

- A thorough inspection by the School District's building inspector
  - An electrical review by a licensed electrician
  - Two independent engineering reports, one by the HL Turner Group and the other by Steffensen Engineering Associates.
- For re-licensing, the Hamp House has also had:
- Two visits by New Hampshire state licensing inspectors
  - Two visits by the Andover health inspector
  - Two inspections by the Andover fire chief

The School District's building inspector stated, "I did not find anything structural that needs to be addressed directly," and "The building appears to be solid." Many improvements were

addressed based on his report.

Steffesen Engineering states, "The roof framing has a live load of capacity of approximately 24 pounds per square foot," and "Generally the building is in good condition but with marginal load capacity not quite meeting residential occupancy standards."

The HL Turner Group's structural report on the roof framing states:

"The overall framing of the roof was noted to be very good."

"The roof rafters have an allowable live load of 28 pounds per square foot."

"It is our opinion that the roof framing is in good condition, and based on the following recommendations the building should be usable for many years to come."

"Although the existing roof structure is not in compliance with current code requirements, it has withstood many New Hampshire winters without incident and poses little risk to the tenants in the building."

Both engineering reports recommend removing snow in excess of 12 inches, and a snow removal plan has been in place all winter. A long-term solution would be a structural upgrade to the roof timbers or installation of a standing seam metal roof. An upgrade design has been provided at no cost by the HL Turner Group, and an insured contractor is ready to do the labor at no cost. Bids are being sought for a metal roof as well.

The Andover After School and Andover Five Alive Programs have spent over \$5,500 in improvements in the past year and a half. The windows have been re-rope, the exte-

rior trim has been painted, newer appliances and plumbing fixtures have been installed, radiators have been removed, the interior window trim has been repainted, and a fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, and carbon monoxide detectors were installed. These are just some of the many improvements.

Most recently a fire inspector from the State Fire Marshal's office did an unannounced visit at the request of the SAU, and no major violations were cited. The recommendations were addressed during the visit or have since been corrected. A final report is yet to be received.

## Warrant Article

As AASP/AFAP's current lease with the Andover School District expires on June 30, we have submitted a warrant article by petition for the School District Meeting on Monday, March 2 at 7 PM at AE/MS. [See Warrant Article 6 on the School Warrant on page 18.]

A new lease would have no impact on the tax rate and would help us continue to provide a vital service to the children and their families in our community.

A new lease will allow us to immediately replace the roof covering, make repairs to increase snowload capacity, and make some additional cosmetic interior improvements such as new sun-room windows, carpeting and flooring, and interior paint.

Most importantly, it will allow us to keep our children safe on school days after school while their parents are at work.

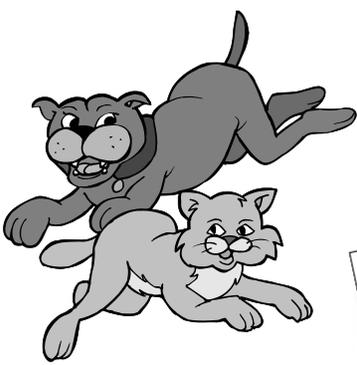
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