The February 25, 2020 Special Meeting of the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen was convened at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Central Meeting Room by First Selectman Beth Heller.
Present: First Selectman Beth Heller; Deputy First Selectman Mica Cardozo (5:08 p.m.); Joseph J. Crisco, Jr.; Joseph S. Dey, III; Dwight Rowland; and Sandra T. Stein.
Present for staff: Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese; Town Counsel Gerald Weiner; and Mrs. Shaw, Clerk.

PRESENTATION BY THE AMITY-WOODBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY – President Alexia Belperron
The slide presentation by Ms. Belperron is attached to these minutes as part of the permanent record.

Long-Term Plan for Preservation and Success at the Thomas Darling House – Mission Statement
"To preserve and promote the history of Woodbridge and Amity Parish. We support this mission through maintaining our museum and collections, creating engaging programs for all ages, and promoting the preservation of historic buildings and sites."

Slides entitled "The Museum" included one depicting an aerial view of the property outlined in ink, photos of the house, grounds and buildings around the house. Also shown as included as the "museum" was the yellow barn at 1910 Litchfield. The Amity Woodbridge Historical Society ("AWHS") proposal was stated as "To strengthen our partnership with the town so that we can work on mutual goals of preservation and access to the Darling Museum." Plans for the museum include: buildings, grounds, collections, exhibits/programs, control of the caretaker cottage and finances. Ms. Belperron presented short and long-term plans which included renovations to all buildings, maintenance and historically accurate plantings on the grounds.

Ms. Belperron explained that an onsite caretaker was considered "best practice" for a House Museum which is different from a traditional museum. She also explained that in order for the AWHS to accept the "Good to Great Grant" which will aid in the planned renovations to the caretaker's cottage - the AWHS must have a commitment from the Town that it controls all elements of the museum for a minimum of 10 years. She said that in signing the agreement and returning the caretaker cottage to AWHS control the Town will receive from the AWHS: financial resources, short and long term plans for the museum, free public access, and valuable volunteer expertise in preservation, grant writing, and education.

Board of Selectmen questions/remarks – Mr. Cardozo expressed concern that the AWHS was considering removing the collection from the Darling House. Ms. Belperron said that the AWHS could not continue with its work or accept any grants unless the entire museum remained as a unit. Ms. Stein recommended installing electronic devices to monitor temperature and moisture as inconspicuously as possible to maintain the historic character of the building. Ms. Heller asked why the museum was not open on a regular schedule. Ms. Belperron explained that there were no visitors. People today want an interactive experience such as the Tavern Night and other planned activities. She noted that the museum was open upon request for tours.

PRESENTATION BY ETHAN SCHNEIDER
Mr. Schneider did not present the proposal included in the Board's packet. He said that five years ago he was invited to live in the caretaker's cottage and continue the farming that was begun by the previous tenant. He expanded the garden and the variety of plants. He spent his own funds to improve the soil and institute modern farming practices. As to the caretaker requirements of his occupying the cottage, he said that the AWHS failed to

provide the equipment required to maintain the grounds. He also claimed that the AWHS kept changing his role and added duties not in the original agreement, with no compensation. Ms. Stein asked if he could continue to farm the property without living in the cottage. Mr. Schneider said that it was possible but would reduce the variety of produce.
He said that he was not interested in applying for a farm lease for the 2020 growing season, and in future endeavors would not agree to anything but a long term lease.

PRESENTATION BY RICHARD BLACKWELL AND RICK WIES
A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes as part of the permanent record.
Mr. Blackwell is a Woodbridge resident interested in helping in the preservation, repair, and the future of the Thomas Darling property and the outbuildings. Mr. Wies is a partner at Gregg, Wies & Gardner Architects in New Haven with historic preservation credentials.

Mr. Blackwell said that he proposes an alternative to the Society's by instituting an oversite group, consisting of a member of the Society, two Town representatives, two residents and a liaison from the Selectmen. The group would be responsible to manage and improve the grounds and outbuildings leaving the management of the museum in the hands of the Society. Mr. Wies has offered to advise the group as pro bono.

He gave a brief history of the life and accomplishments of Thomas Darling and his association with some of this Country's founding fathers.

Mr. Blackwell introduced Rick Wies who narrated slides of the various buildings on the property, identifying each by name and condition. Their proposal urged the Board of Selectmen to act quickly to clean-up and stop the deterioration of the outbuildings. Mr. Blackwell recommended that the Town retain a groundskeeper who would live in the caretaker cottage and handle the grounds maintenance with most of the cost offset by rent credits. The groundskeeper would report to the oversite group. He said that he has set aside $6,500 of his personal funds for barn renovation and $3,500 for landscaping. Mr. Blackwell said that he already knows of people and groups interested in volunteering their services to the project.

Ms. Stein asked for more information on the role of the proposed Oversite Committee. Mr. Wies said that the group would develop a management plan based on National Guidelines for historic properties. He said that the farm should be part of the museum as in the time of Mr. Darling.

Mr. Cardozo asked who the committee would report to and if the AWHS would be able to work with the proposed committee. Mr. Wies said that he envisioned both the committee and the Historical Society reporting to the Board of Selectmen on a quarterly basis.

Ms. Belperron and Ms. Harlow (a member of the AWHS Board of Directors) were receptive to a focus or advisory group but not an oversite committee. Ms. Belperron said that the AWHS' status as a non-profit would be compromised by an oversite committee. Ms. Harlow reminded the Board that the AWHS is the Town's agent overseeing the maintenance of the museum. Establishing another layer is not beneficial to the AWHS or the Town, it would only result in conflict. Ms. Belperron said that the AWHS' strategic plan is in place and working. Last summer representatives of the State visited the property and made recommendations regarding repair of the outbuildings. The Society was preparing to move forward on the recommendations and ready to submit the SHPO

Survey and Planning Grant to receive the funds to hire an architect and engineer. However, it was not submitted due to the Society's uncertainty as to its position as Agent for the Town.

Ms. Heller asked how the Society could let the out-buildings deteriorate to such a degree. Ms. Belperron explained that the SHPO survey would provide the correct way to preserve the buildings. Mr. Cardozo spoke in favor of the oversite committee as a conduit to understand the requirements to historically preserve the buildings. Ms. Stein complimented the Society on the care of the collection and programs and said that she did not understand why it would not accept assistance. Mr. Dey and Mr. Rowland asked how Mr. Schneider and his farm fitted into the current discussion. Was there a proposal for him to continue to farm? Mr. Schneider reiterated that he was no longer interested in the property.

THE TOWN'S PROPOSAL

Ms. Heller read her proposal for the property which was presented as a motion:

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED** (Heller – Crisco) the following motion:

- The current tenant at the caretaker apartment, Ethan Schneider, will be asked to vacate the premises no later than April 30, 2020, and he will further remove his farming equipment, supplies and machinery from the premises no later than October 30, 2020;

- The caretaker apartment will become part of the Darling House Museum and a tenant for the apartment will be recommended by the Amity Woodbridge Historical Society ("AWHS") in consultation with the ad hoc committee/advisory group ("Committee") and subject to approval by the Board of Selectmen. The Tenant, among other duties established by the AWHS and Committee, shall be responsible for grounds-keeping duties at the collective properties of the Darling House;

- The Tenant lease shall be with the Town as owner/landlord;

- The AWHS shall be the manager/agent of the building containing the Museum and tenant apartment. The AWHS shall report to the BOS on a quarterly basis about the operations at the Museum/Building and all major decisions affecting the Museum/Building shall be subject to Town approval;

- The Town and AWHS shall immediately commence negotiations to establish a long term agreement between the AWHS and the Town regarding the operation and management of the Museum/Buildinc by the AWHS;

- The Town will investigate the cost and feasibility of installation of security cameras, fire detecting equipment and environmental controls such as temperature/humidity, moisture monitors which would not detract from the Historical Nature and significance of the Museum/Building;

- The Town affirms its commitment to farming at the Darling House and Ethan Schneider shall be given the option to renew his farm lease at the Darling House for the 2020 growing season;

- There shall be established a Thomas Darling House ad hoc committee/advisory group to oversee and supervise the Darling House Buildings and grounds substantially consistent with the proposal submitted by Dick Blackwell. Richard Weis will be a pro-bono advisor to the Committee. The membership and responsibilities of the committee will be determined by the Board of Selectmen at a future meeting.

Vote: Aye – Heller, Cardozo, Crisco, Stein
Nay – Dey, Rowland

EXECUTIVE SESSION

7:00 p.m. – the Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Cardozo) to move into executive session pursuant to Section 1-200(6)(D) and 1-210(b)(1) of the Connecticut General Statutes re contract negotiations for the proposed sale of a portion of the former Country Club of Woodbridge property.
7:10 p.m. – the Board of Selectmen moved out of executive session. No motions were made or action taken in executive session.

Ms. Heller read the following statement:
We are now out of Executive Session, No motions were made, nor votes taken during the session.

I have consistently expressed my opinion that the Insite/Wernert proposal should go to referendum to allow the voters to decide whether approximately 60 acres of the former CCW site be sold for Senior over 55 housing. I have also committed to have a proposed contract with the developers available to voters prior to the referendum for review.

An attorney with previous experience in this type of transaction was hired by the Town to negotiate the contract with the Purchasers' Attorneys. The contract negotiations were very complex, took many months, and focused on many issues we considered to be very important to Woodbridge.

On Monday, I was advised by Town Counsel that issues, which were important to the Town of Woodbridge, could not be resolved in a way that was acceptable to the Town. The Board of Selectmen has been informed. Mr. Weiner will now explain the issues.

Mr. Weiner's said that while many of the terms of the contract were agreed to during negotiations, however the Town and the Developers were not able to resolve several issues. The important area of concern was Wernert Construction Management's insistence on having the ability to sell its ownership interest in the project to outside investors. Atty. Groggins recommended that the Board of Selectmen seriously consider Wernert's position.

Ms. Heller then continued:

Although I continue to believe senior housing on a portion of the CCW will be beneficial to our taxpayers I will never sacrifice the best interest of the Town to have an unfavorable transaction proceed. I am therefore recommending that the Board of Selectmen cease any further discussions with Insite/Wernert.

ACTION AS APPROPRIATE ON MATTER DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Rowland) to cease any further negotiations with Insight Development and Wernert Construction.

DISCUSSION OF THE 2021 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS TO FILE WITH THE BOARD OF FINANCE

Mr. Genovese reported that he and Ms. Heller reviewed the department requests and working with the department heads made reductions. The result is that the proposed budget before the Selectmen is $1.92M lower that what was requested by the Departments or a 4% reduction.

CAPITAL BUDGET

Mr. Genovese said that the department's requests totaled $8,780,530 and stands at $2,775,363 following staff reductions:

Board of Selectmen.....	($12,500) for wayfinding signs put forth to 2022
Building Maintenance...	($121,800) HVAC Repairs for Library – reassess performance this summer
	($195,000) Senior Center remodel – seek funding through grants
Fire Commission.....	($166,000) engine #3 replacement on order – payments begin in 2022
	($170,000) engine #9 replacement put forth to 2022
	($17,500) rescue boat not to be replaced
Human Services.....	($15,000) new chairs for cafeteria put forth to 2022
	($35,000) a retired police car will be transferred to be used for senior transportation
Parks Department	($10,000) irrigation – Center Field put forth to 2022
	($30,000) new irrigation at West River Field put forth to 2022
	(8,000) bleachers at field - deleted
Police Commission.....	($4,858,496) building upgrade put forth to 2022
	($8,500) of requested $17,000 for speed awareness monitoring equipment
	($49,490) of requested $89,111 for new police vehicles put forth to 2022
	(14,750) door security/surveillance Recording System
Public Works	($70,000) of $130,000 requested for truck reserve put forth to next year
	($13,000) of $73,000 requested for equipment reserve
	($200,000) of $850,000 requested for road repair
	($25,000) of $50,000 requested for bridge & waterways reserve (included in the MS4 Stormwater process)
Recreation.....	($4,000) for outdoor volleyball court – PVC boundary

Mr. Dey requested that for the 2022 budget the Board of Selectmen meet well in advance of the departments' preparation of the budget to discuss the budget process and guidelines. The Board agreed to add the item to the June 10, 2020, Selectmen's agenda.

BOARD ACTION ON THE PROPOSED CAPITAL BUDGET

The Board of Selectmen **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Heller – Stein) to recommend the Capital Budget for FY21 to the Board of Finance as presented and discussed.

REVENUES

The Board reviewed the revenue sheet prepared by Mr. Genovese. Ms. Stein recommended that a portion of the Amity Surplus be used to begin work on the former Country Club of Woodbridge property: mowing, clearing/repairing paths, etc.

OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Genovese noted that as employees left or retired staff positions have been either eliminate, nine full time positions have been reduced to part time or folded into other positions. The Board of Selectmen did not take a separate vote on the operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION TO BE FILED WITH THE BOARD OF FINANCE

Following recommended reductions in the Police Department and employee benefits, the Board of Selectmen **VOTED** (Heller – Stein) to recommend to the Board of Finance the Budget for FY2021 in the amount of $51,923,952 anticipating a non-tax revenue of $3,904,799 with the remaining $48,018,553 to
Be raised by taxes resulting in a 42.71 mill rate. All the members of the Board approved the motion. Because his wife is the Tax Collector Selectman Joseph J. Crisco, Jr. abstained from voting on the Tax Office budget, only.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk

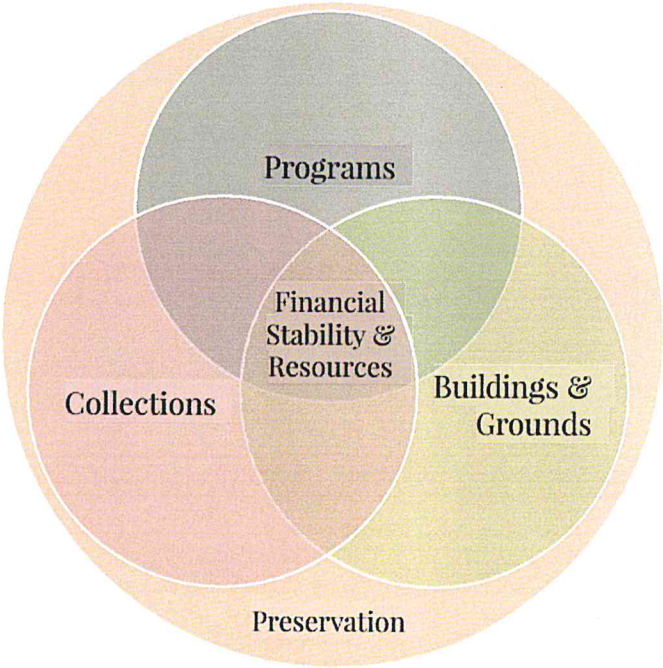
Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society

EST. 1936

LONG-TERM PLAN FOR PRESERVATION AND SUCCESS AT THE THOMAS DARLING PROPERTY

Our Mission

To preserve and promote the history of Woodbridge and Amity Parish. We support this mission through maintaining our museum and collections, creating engaging programs for all ages, and promoting the preservation of historic buildings and sites.



Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society

The Museum

Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society

The Museum

Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society

Our Proposal

To strengthen our partnership with the town so that we can work on mutual goals of preservation and access to the Darling Museum

- **PLANS FOR THE MUSEUM**
  - ❖ Buildings
  - ❖ Grounds
  - ❖ Collections
  - ❖ Exhibits and Programs
- **CARETAKER**
- **FINANCES**

Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society

Buildings *Short-Term Plans:* 2020-2021

PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

- Submit SHPO Survey and Planning grant

REPAIRS TO OUTBUILDINGS

- Make historically accurate repairs to chicken coop
- Make minor repairs to icehouse, horse barn, and large barn

MUSEUM RENOVATIONS

- Complete Good to Great grant
  - Create accessible bathroom
  - Add a kitchen workspace
  - Install fire mist suppression system

CARETAKER COTTAGE

- Complete necessary maintenance and repairs to caretaker cottage

Buildings

Long-Term Plans

PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

- Develop 20-40-year plans for all buildings on museum site with SHPO grant

YELLOW COW BARN

- Complete preservation and restoration of yellow cow barn as outlined by SHPO grant
- Utilize cow barn in museum programs and exhibits when restoration is complete

CARRIAGE HOUSE & SHED

- Complete preservation and restoration of carriage house and shed as outlined by SHPO grant
- Utilize carriage house and shed in museum programs and exhibits when restoration is complete

Grounds

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

- Complete routine yard maintenance with assistance of caretaker
- Maintain site plantings with assistance of volunteers and seek professional assistance when appropriate
- Continue removal of invasive vines

HISTORICALLY-SENSITIVE LANDSCAPING

- Establish memorial fruit tree orchard
- Recover heritage plantings remaining on property
- Collaborate with garden club on herb garden

Collections and Access

INVENTORY & CATALOGING

- Continue work on accessioning and cataloging items in the archival and museum collections

PRESERVATION

- Continue work rehousing archival items and textiles in archival quality boxes
- Identify grant funds to rehouse and convert audiovisual collections

ENVIRONMENT

- Finish disaster plan and share with appropriate town departments
- Complete StEPS assessment
- Complete environmental assessment including integrated pest management assessment

ACCESS

- Digitize a few key collections from our archives once cataloging is complete
- Pursue grant funding for a digital library and make some documents available online

Programs and Exhibits

MUSEUM RENOVATIONS

- Complete Good to Great grant to provide necessary bathroom and kitchen facilities to expand programs

EXPAND IMMERSIVE PROGRAMS

- Begin offering hearth cooking classes
- Develop school history camp
- Host outdoor events
- Expand program offerings to highlight under-told Woodbridge stories

BARN & OUTBUILDINGS

- Develop exhibits in barns and outbuildings as they are restored
- Create programs and tours that utilize the barns and outbuildings and highlight the collections housed therein

UTILIZE COLLECTION IN IMMERSIVE PROGRAMS

- Use rotating items from our collections to create innovative exhibits

The Caretaker

LIMITATIONS OF A HOUSE MUSEUM VS. A TRADITIONAL MUSEUM

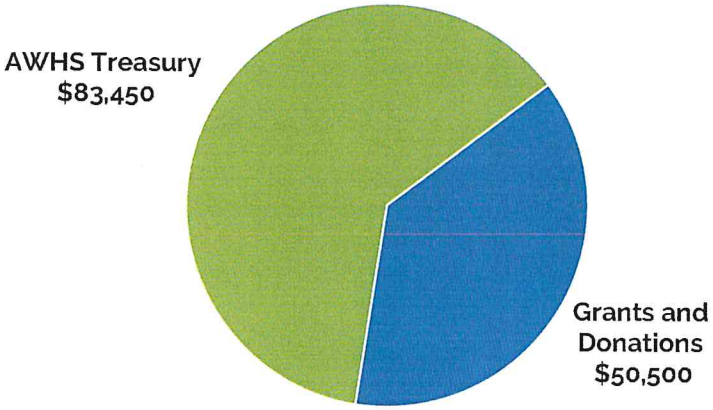
- Our collections are more valuable than those in a typical house museum and our environment poses greater threats to the collection than a typical static museum
- Two of the greatest threats to our collection are water and pests
  - Security and monitoring systems cannot monitor or control for pests
  - Water monitoring systems are cost-prohibitive and interfere with the museum experience

MUSEUM BEST PRACTICES

- On-site monitoring is a museum best practice
- A live-in caretaker is the most responsible, economical, and sustainable way to adhere to this best practice

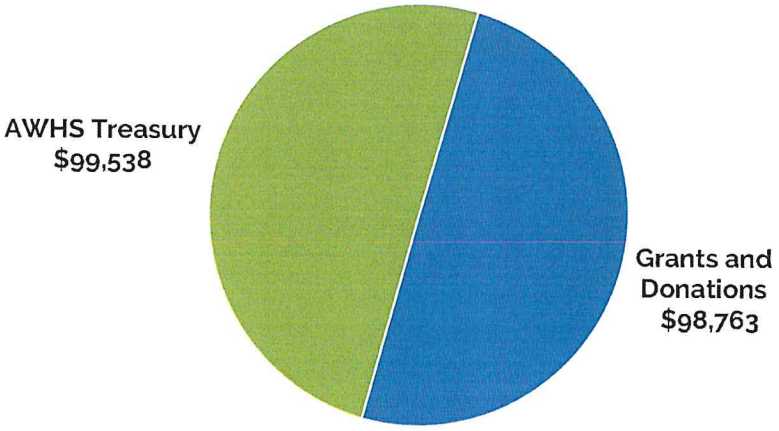
Finances: Expenditures

AWHS Investments Into Property: 2000-2019
$133,950



Finances: Expenditures

AWHS Investments Into Property*: 2000-2020
$198,301



Finances: Expenditures

UTILITIES

Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society

Financial Resources

DONATIONS

- Memberships
- Capital Campaigns
- Fundraisers

ENDOWMENT

- Established to secure future of Society and site

GRANT AWARDS: 2015-2019 $65,900

- Two *1772 Foundation* grants
- Good to Great grant

What You Get From the AWHS

Financial Resources

Resources, stability, fiscal responsibility, dependable long-term income streams, ability to obtain grant funding

Free Public Museum

Free educational and recreational programs and tours featuring priceless Woodbridge artifacts

Complete Short- & Long-Term Plans for Museum

Preservation, maintenance, collections, programming, education, executed by a non-profit organization

Valuable Volunteer Expertise

Experience running museums, work at CT Trust and National Trust for Historic Preservation, archival education and experience, CLHO training, grant writing

What We Are Asking For In Return

A Return to Our Partnership

Updated Agreement

Vote today to sign the updated 20-year agreement that reaffirms our managerial authority over the site

Caretaker Cottage

Vote today to return the caretaker cottage to Historical Society in 30 days

The Other Plans: Ask Yourself...

How is this plan benefitting Woodbridge taxpayers?

Is there a plan for long-term management?

Do the architects of this plan have a treasury or an endowment at their disposal?

Do the architects of this plan have the ability to obtain grant funding?

Does this plan include hidden costs to the Town?

Was this plan designed to benefit the community as a whole or a single individual?

Does this plan include preservation, as historic resources are part of the public trust?

Does this plan work without the resources and commitment of the historical society?

Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society

OPTIMIZING THE THOMAS DARLING PROPERTY—February 25, 2020
PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

I'd like to propose to the Board of Selectmen an alternative to the Society's proposal that will more effectively manage and improve the grounds and outbuildings than done currently while respecting the legacy of Thomas Darling. To do this, I am asking that the Board establish an Oversite Group that would be responsible for all Darling grounds and outbuildings and leave the management of the museum in the hands of the Society. This Group would significantly encourage community volunteerism while enhancing the entire Property for use by all visitors to the Museum.

Thomas Darling's biography, "Thomas Darling, A Man of Integrity and Uprightness", provides wonderful insight into his legacy for us. It revealed he owned livestock equal to the largest Connecticut farmers of the period. There were oxen, cows, horses, sheep to shear, hay to mow, steers to butcher, tallow to render, hides to butcher, grain to thresh, flax to mill, cider and beer to make and wood to cut and haul. Darling also experimented at growing tobacco. His cash crops were rye and flax, used to produce fibers for spinning linen plus his livestock was an important component of West Indies trade. Darling's butter, cheese and butchered animals were sold or bartered and on several occasions Darling sold butter to Roger Sherman who owned the first retail grocery store in New Milford. Darling's livelihood from 1774 until his death in 1789 was primarily as owner and manager of a successful farm in addition to serving as Justice of the Peace and Woodbridge Selectman. He lived through the formative years of the United States and met and corresponded with Benjamin Franklin regarding several business ventures and was a Yale classmate and friend of our Town Father Benjamin Woodbridge, freshman class of 1736. He actively advocated for passage of the Constitution and most importantly was a successful farmer, one of the largest in Connecticut, and to do him justice we should honor this legacy.

(Introduce Rick Wies, Partner at Gregg, Wies & Gardner Architects, New Haven).

Slide 1—aerial overview of Darling property. The Darling property today has been whittled down to 153 acres from 413 acres in 1785 and today we are focused on the 2.3 acres that encompass the House Museum, ice barn, storage barn, carriage house, horse stable, chicken coop, pig house and privy.

Unfortunately, the grounds and outbuildings have been severely neglected over the years, as shown in the attached recent photos that I took:

Slide 2—View of ice barn, erected in 1773, and attached shed for farm equipment.
Slide 3—Rear of ice barn showing green tarp placed over collapsing side 2 ½ years ago by Chris Sorensen. Nothing done since then to repair.
Slide 4—Same rear of ice barn showing collapsed side behind tarp.

Ice barn shows rotting at ground level and a structural engineer needs to inspect it.

Slide 5—Junk inside barn. A dissembled one-room schoolhouse from south Woodbridge takes most of the space. A complete side is missing and no one wants it.
Slide 6—One of many chests scattered in junk. Looking through windows I counted 6 chests. An original copy of the Declaration of Independence was found in the house over 20 years ago and an 18th century dress in a closet a few months ago and no one knows what's in the barn aside from the sleigh, horse-drawn cart, plow and seeder.
Slide 7—Horse drawn cart used on farm
Slide 8—Wooden plow
Slide 9—Seeder
Slide 10—Sleigh from either 18th or early 19th century
Slide 11—Inside roof of barn. Beautiful; when barn is cleaned out , would be so impressive.
Slide 12—Storage barn. Packed to the gills with what appears to be a schoolhouse.

The Town will approve removal of the one-room schoolhouse if the Society sends a letter to the BOS requesting its removal.

Slide 13—Chicken coop. Inside is packed with junk including rusting equipment, roof shingles, leaves, animal poop.
Slide 14—Collapsing fence next to chicken coop.
Slide 15—Pig house
Slide 16 and 17—Inside pig house used for storage with unsightly squirrel/bird poop
Slide 18 and 19—Privy and rotting wood at entrance and floor
Slide 20—Carriage house outside facing Litchfield Turnpike needs painting
Slide 21—Backyard of Darling House showing original bluestone walk overgrown and almost invisible, overgrown lilac bush, peeling back of chicken coop, picket fence with green mold. Also many dead trees and limbs.
Slide 22—Front door of House showing collapsing, moldy picket fence, overgrown bluestone walkway.
Slide 23—Overgrowth of brambles and weeds obscuring southern view of house. Overgrowth obscures line of sight north of house also.
Slide 24—Front yard of house. Some 18th landscaping needed. Wildflowers would be nice, also car not in carriage house.
Slide 25—Beautiful and classy hanging Darling House sign in front highly visible to passing traffic on Litchfield Turnpike, Removed by AWHS.

Not shown is the horse stable which houses many antique farm and other implements.

These deteriorated conditions need immediate attention. We recommend the BOS establish an Oversite Group tasked to develop an overall strategy for stabilization and repairs and develop plans, priorities, timetables and budgets for execution. The overriding goal is to create for visitors an immersive experience of understanding what it was like to live and farm in 18th and early 19th century Woodbridge. Honoring Thomas Darling's legacy as a successful farmer and public servant involved in church, school and town leadership is integral to this goal.

It is recommended that the Oversite Group consist of a representative from the Society, two Town representatives, two residents and a liaison selectman. An architect with historic preservation credentials, Rick Wies, principal of Gregg, Wies & Gardner Architects of New Haven, has offered to advise pro bono the Oversite Group. It is also recommended the Group and AWHS report quarterly to the BOS on progress toward specific goals.

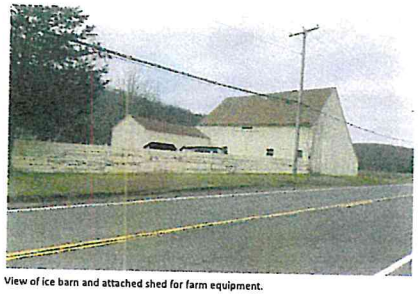
Financing. The resident groundskeeper would handle grounds maintenance with most of the cost offset by rent credits, and he would report to the Oversite Group. Dick Blackwell has set aside $6,500 for barn renovation and $3,500 for landscaping and his time as needed by the Oversite Group. Chris Sorensen has volunteered his equipment and personnel to clean out the ice and storage barns and overgrowth. Two boy scout troops have expressed a desire to help and we would also ask the girl scouts for their help. My daughter in law teaches at Beecher Road School and will help get school kids involved in projects; e.g., pig house, privy, flower planting (my 7 year old granddaughter is very enthused to help plant flowers). Massaro Farm is also a potential source for volunteer help. Also, grant opportunities will be aggressively pursued for this unique property.

I believe the Historical Society will benefit from this reorganization since more visitors will be attracted to the Museum and surrounding grounds, more antique farm treasures will be uncovered and hopefully displayed in the 18th century ice barn. Also, more time will be available for events and regular openings; e.g., every Sunday from 2:00-4:00, and more items will be displayed.

In closing, it was a tremendous shock to read that the Society is willing to move the precious, priceless possessions out of the house where they have resided for over 200 years if they don't completely get their way. I often wonder if Thomas Darling could stand here in this room tonight and hear this how he would react. I suspect he would feel appalled and betrayed by the people entrusted the most to preserve his legacy and that he would want an Oversite Group to protect his legacy.

Aerial Overview

1



View of ice barn and attached shed for farm equipment.

2

Rear of ice barn showing green tarp placed over collapsing side over 2 years ago by Chris Sorensen. Nothing done since then to repair.

3

Same rear of ice barn showing collapsed side behind tarp.
Barn shows rotting at ground level and a structural engineer needs to inspect it. Preservation Trust of Connecticut, whose circuit rider told Alexia is sound structurally, is not a structural engineer or engineer of any sort.

4

Junk inside barn. One room schoolhouse takes most of space.

5

One of many chests scattered in junk. Looking through windows I counted 6 chests. A copy of the Declaration of Independence was found in the house attic over 20 years ago and an 18th century dress in a closet a few months ago and no one knows what is in this barn.

6

Horse drawn cart used on farm.

7

Wooden Plow

8

Seeder

9

Sleigh from either 18th or early 19th century.

10

Inside roof of barn.

11

Storage barn. Packed to the gills with what appears to be schoolhouse.

12

Chicken coop. Inside is packed with junk including rusting equipment, roof shingles, leaves, animal poop.

13

Collapsing fence next to chicken coop.

14

Pig House

15

Inside pig house used for storage and squirrel/bird debris.

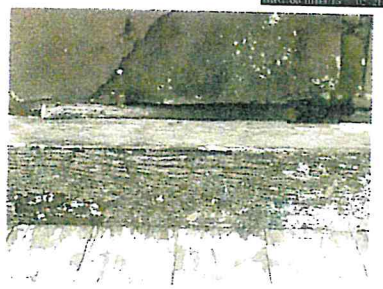
16

Inside pig house used for storage and squirrel/bird debris.

17

Privy and rotting wood at entrance to and on floor of privy.

18



Privy and rotting wood at entrance to and on floor of privy

19

Carriage house outside facing Litchfield Turnpike needs painting.

20

Back yard of Darling House showing original bluestone walk overgrown and almost invisible, overgrown lilac bush, peeling back of chicken coop, picket fence with green mold. Also dead trees in background.

21

Front door of House showing collapsing, moldy picket fence, overgrown bluestone walkway.

22

Overgrowth of brambles and weeds obscuring southern view of house. Overgrowth obscures line of sight north of house also.

23

Front yard of house. Some 18th century landscaping needed; Wildflowers would be nice, also car not in carriage house.

24

Picture of beautiful hanging sign since removed by AWHS

25

possibly in the old Sperry house immediately east of the new house. Even after Darling freed Timothy and Cloe and their baby Timothy in 1777, Hila, Gad, Lilice, and Lulu remained his property, apparently living in the garret. In addition, Abigail Noyes's former slaves Jack and Sabina lived with the family for a time, beginning in 1785.[5]

Between 1775 and 1780 the family also housed apprentice Justice Wood, who was indentured to learn husbandry, reading, writing, and arithmetic under Darling's tutelage. Then, in 1785 young Isaac Fish came to study with Darling for several months.[6]

Darling was fifty-four by the time he moved his family into the new house, so it is unlikely that he did much of the arduous physical farm labor himself. Timothy, Thomas Jr., apprentice Wood, and various hired hands or tenants did the work, including Darling's annual highway work. For example, in June 1772 he had hired John Cotter, Jr. for four months at £1.10. a month to be paid in the form of forty gallons of rum. Cotter to supply the cask. In April 1785 he "Agreed with Martin Clark to work for me for 6 mo at 48/ [shillings, or £2.8.] p mo from this day to 1 Oct next I am to charge Salt Pork at 6 d [pence] p pound & salt beef at 3-1/2 Other provisions at Cash price not to lodge him or wash or mend for him." In December he agreed with Clark "to give him his Breakfast & Supper. . Morning & Evening—he & Jack & Jean to provide for his fire & mine—I to give at the rate of 40 [shillings, or £2] pr Month when he Works for me all Day—Jack to help him for nothing when I can spare him." Hired hands varied in quality. One day "Abraham Cooper came late, worked poorly, eat dinner, drunk rum, went of sick."[7]

Although his total acreage had not increased since the 1760s, Darling now owned livestock equal to the largest Connecticut farmers of the period. There were oxen, steers, cows, horses, sheep, and hogs to tend. In season, there were fields to plow, crops to plant, sheep to shear, hay to mow, steers to butcher, tallow to render, hides to prepare, hogs to butcher, grain to thresh, flax to mill, cider and beer to make, fences to build, and wood to cut

and haul. Darling also experimented at growing tobacco. The kitchen garden included potatoes, turnips, and corn.[8]

Cash crops were rye and flax. Flaxseed was one of Connecticut's prime exports, used both for planting and for the production of linseed oil. The flax itself was rotted and hatcheled to produce the fibers for spinning linen. Wood also had cash value, either as lumber or barrel staves, or as firewood for sale in town. Livestock was an important local component of the West Indies trade. Butter, cheese, and butchered animals might also be sold or bartered. On several occasions Darling sold butter to Roger Sherman.[9]

Income was also obtained by land rental. For example, in 1772 Darling "Let Danl Toles about 3 Acres of Land he is to Sow it twice & is to give me 3 bushels a year of such grain as is sowed on the land." And the same season he "Let Ruben Sperry a Ten Acre lot for the Summer for £3.0.0."[10]

The women were kept busy. There was homegrown wool and linen and purchased or bartered cotton wool to spin into yarn. The yarns were dyed and woven into checked and plain linen, cotton, and woolen cloth. The women may have done some of this themselves, but in the 1780s Alexander M. Kirgen did much of their weaving, as well as performing farm labor. Abigail and her daughters also worked at the quilting frame.[11]

The kitchen occupied much of their time. Periodically they churned butter and made cheese. More often they baked bread. Abigail recorded recipes for cherry wine, currant wine, currant jelly, plum cake, johnny cakes, short cakes, short gingerbread, rice pudding, and cheese cake: "make a curd with rennit like cheese when drained bruise it fine to 3 pints of milk 5 eggs some sugar spice it with nutmeg."[12]

In their presentation, meals were wholesome, not extravagant. There was some silver in the house—two porringers, a tankard, thirteen large

8. A tobacco yard is mentioned in the Waste Book, 4 July 1789, and fifty pounds of tobacco were listed in the probate inventory; at the time of his death Darling owned 6