

Valentine Property FAQ's

How much did the town pay for the property?

The Valentine Property was purchased after a town vote at Town Meeting and election in 2018 for \$3.5 million, comprising of \$600,000 of CPA funds and the remainder funded through a debt exclusion. An additional \$100,000 in CPA funds was appropriated at the same time for maintenance and upkeep of the barn and house.

Why isn't the town developing the property? Do we have to sell the property in order to redevelop it?

After discussions with contractors, the estimate to just simply restore the barn and the house would be millions of dollars. This does not include any additions to make this property a functional restaurant, artist venue, or similar. This is due state laws such as the prevailing wage law and procurement laws, which increase the cost of public construction projects versus similar projects done in the private sector.

The RFP process gives us the flexibility to use the private and non-profit sectors capital and lower construction costs, while also giving us the ability to maintain the important characteristics that led to the purchase of the property in the first place. Any partnership would require deed restrictions to maintain open space as well as the important historical elements of the house and barn. These restrictions run with the land, meaning they cannot be altered.

There are options to both lease and purchase the property.

What condition is the property in?

The Town is concerned with the integrity of the Barn. While experts have rated the frame an "A", meaning it is generally in great condition, the substructure and roof are in need of immediate repair. The roof has rotted and the Town has tried to slow deterioration by installing a tarp and constructing a temp covering for the roof.

Repairs include, but are not limited to:

- Addressing the roof as the roof sheathing has rotted. Tarps have been installed to prevent further damage.
- Reinforcing or removing the lofts on the left and right sides.
- Addressing foundation where it is caving into the well.
- Addressing substructure issues such as the rotted sill, rotted joints, and compromised beams, and footings.
- The verticals are all inadequate on footings that are too small.

For the house, the Town has repaired the chimney and ensured that the home is weather tight. It is expected that it will require all new mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems. Currently the site does not have a working septic system.

How are we going to make sure we protect the town's interest?

Preserving the history and open space of this property has always been of the utmost importance to the committee when discussing the future of the site. (Continued)

The required deed restrictions will run with the property in perpetuity. Therefore, any future owner must comply with both the historical preservation and open space requirements, which outline the need to maintain:

- The original form of the home (additions may be altered or demolition with proper consent from the Ashland Historical Society and Ashland Historical Commission)
- 2 fireplaces in the entryway
- Wide pine floors
- The Barn renovation must include all structural components of the barn's roof, including but not limited to: Anchor beams, arcade posts, braces, collars and collar ties, queen posts, and purlin plates
- Outside walls of the barn (in order to maintain the interior)
- The protected open space must be public accessible

Can housing be built there?

This property is currently zoned as Residential A. The Valentine Committee has found that this property has a great deal of potential for commercial use. Based on the input of the committee, Town planning staff has been working with the Planning Board to create an overlay district that will allow the Town to achieve its vision for this property. We will be asking residents at town meeting to approve a zoning change to create an overlay district that will allow for preferred uses. These uses for the adaptive reuse of this property include, but are not limited to, creating an opportunity for:

- Agricultural/Farming
- Educational or community programs
- Event space or community art/theater space
- Bed and breakfast
- Co-working commercial kitchen
- Restaurants

The purpose of establishing the Valentine Overlay District (VOD) Zoning Bylaw is to promote economic development and the vitality of the corridor, preserve the historical and agricultural character of the district and foster a sense of community through its commercial uses. It will require the applicant to obtain approval and special permit.

Would the community be able to use the space for events? Farming?

The Valentine Committee put great emphasis on the importance of the public's availability for active public use. The Open Space deed restriction requires has to protected portion of the property. Additionally, the proposal will be scored based on the extent that proposal will engage a wide range of residents in its proposed uses:

- Provides opportunities for the community to access and actively use the required open space; higher points will be awarded if the proposer can identify opportunities to provide creative access to the open space such as hosting a Story Walk for the community or allowing outdoor environmental classroom opportunities.
- Provides an opportunity for the community to participate in a community farm;
- Provides opportunities to allow Town sponsored meetings and events to occur on site;
- Provides resident discounts if the proposal includes lodging or function space