

# Little Big Forest, Highland Lake, Stoddard: Outline of Talk

## 1. **3 Lots for Sale**

- The email inquiry
- Visit the property
- Write a report
- Get con com approval

## 2. **Obstacles/Risks**

### Outrageous Selling Price

### Outrageous Conditions in OA (designed to with fail or test ones mettle)

### What is the "Climate" for Raising Money?

Aftermath of COVID~19 Pandemic

Political climate

Economic climate: Feds hiking Interest Rates; Economy flirting between recession and inflation; Rapidly rising food and gas prices: HOW WILL THAT IMPACT DONOR GIVING???

International Conflicts

Local Climate

Importance of cultivating climate of conservation over the years

DEVELOP A ROUGH BUDGET: IS IT DOABLE???

Stewardship Fund real important for funders

Add to the mix, tumultuous and uncertain global tensions, rising interest rates, skyrocketing fuel prices, rising cost of supplies, breaks in supply lines, and consumer wariness, I don't think too many buyers would want to invest in a property with these associated risks

## 3. **Benefits to the Town**

James Faulkner Elementary School Outdoor Curriculum

Shoreline Protection

Wildlife Corridor

Part of Mosaic of Protected Lands in Stoddard

## 4. **Develop Checklist: Simultaneously do the following ASAP**

- Contact realtor & landowner
- Gather natural resource info on the property
- ID local support (BOS, Lake Assn's, other town groups)

- iv. Contact Land Trusts
- v. ID sources of funding
- vi. Develop a budget

## **5. I.D. Due Diligence Requirements**

Appraisals  
Survey  
Finalized deed  
GIS shapefile  
Final Budgets (Cash match; non-cash match)  
Environmental Assessment  
Title Search  
Title Insurance  
Baseline documentation report (Property Conditions Report)  
Publicity

## **6. ID Professional Help**

Experience Attorney  
Appraiser with Yellow Book Review Experience  
Surveyor  
Experienced Appraiser (Yellow book)  
Environmental Review  
Title company (title search; mineral search; handle closing)

## **7. Gather info on property**

Peter Block Video  
Timber Inventory  
ID Features that make property unique and COMPETITIVE

### **What Makes Property Unique/Distinct/Competitive?**

4,000 ft undeveloped shore  
Wildlife corridor  
OG qualities: never cut, pastured, plowed  
Educational opportunities  
Ease of Access  
Proximity to Protected lands  
Community letters of support  
Enthusiasm

Visitors: Get others to visit the property  
Peter Bloch~Drone Video  
Tom Wessels  
Neal Bungard USFS

PSNH  
UNH Cooperative Ext. Foresters  
Six foresters  
Ruby & Little Charlie  
JFES Students  
GIS Maps  
Timber Inventory (for Appraisal and mgt plan)  
Photo Document: MECCA OF MUSHROOMS/FUNGAL FEAST

#### **8. Begin Due Diligence early:**

Survey (Discover Encroachments)  
Appraiser (may need a preliminary appraisal; get appraiser that can do Yellow book appraisal)  
Appraise encroached parcels separate from conservation area  
Title Search/Mineral rights  
Hire Attorney knowledgeable in these transactions  
Baseline documentation  
Hazardous waste review

#### **9. Project gets Wings: Letters of support**

BOS (important to get town fathers on board)  
Town Library  
Historical Society  
Lake Associations  
Road Associations  
UNH Cooperative Extension Foresters  
Experts (Tom Wessels in this case)

#### **10. Looked for Assistance from Land Trusts to Administer**

SPNHF  
Harris Center  
LWCF  
Monadnock Conservancy  
NEFF  
Northeast Wilderness Trust  
Sweet Water  
USDA Rural Development Grants  
SWRP  
Conservation Fund

## **TAKE HOME MESSAGE:**

Good Projects GET FUNDED

“LCHIP, Moose Plate, USFS, etc. tired of dealing with same Land Trusts”  
Do Better off Going It Alone (LITTLE RED HEN ROUTE)

## **11. Book Keeping**

Dedicated Account (to track and honor donor intent)

IRS Status

Certificate of Insurance (Protect landowner's interest)

USFS Sam Account to receive money

Online Accounts/QR Code

Websites

Create SAM account to receive Federal Money

## **12. Look into Funding/Apply for Grants**

USFS Community Forest Grant (new)

LCHIP (Streamlined process; very user friendly)

Mooseplate

Dead Ends for us

Eversource Foundation

C & S Grocer

PC Connection

DES ARM

Forest Legacy

Trout Unlimited

New Ones Discovered Along the Way

Bailey Foundation

Ashuelot River Hydro

Keene Lions Club

Putnam Foundation

TPL contact with Anonymous Foundation

Lesser Grant

Savings Bank of Walpole

M & T Bank

## **Fundraising Blitzkrieg: (March 2022 to May 2023) \$1.5+ in 14 months**

- a. Private Donations: Be Creative in Fundraisers
  - i. Wine & Cheese Gatherings
  - ii. Palooza
  - iii. Christmas Announcements of Grants

- iv. Basket Making Workshop
- v. Challenge Grant
- vi. JFES Students
- vii. Whitney Painting
- viii. **291 Individual donations**
- ix. Estimated \$100,000
- x. Achieved over \$212,000

Zeffy app, QR codes, website, Online Store to help raise \$\$\$ and Keep People Updated

### **13. Donor Concens: What Happens if we don't succeed?**

Failure is not an option

Get option: pro-rate a return of gift,

OR donate to con com fund for Stoddard Rocks property

Or donate to conservation fund for future projects

Develop Safety Net (help at the town meeting Town Meeting)

### **14. Difficulty With Landowner**

#### **Town Treasurer/Proper Tracking & Accounting for 100's of checks**

### **15. Difficulty with Landowner**

#### **Slow response to emails and inquiries**

Difficulty with Landowner's Attorney

AO designed to "fail" or at the very least "test one's mettle"

**Boundary Encroachment**....Landowner refused to solve; town couldn't

resolve until after we owned it; Costly & Time Consuming

How would this Impact USFS, LCHIP, Mooseplate Grants?

Appraisal teased apart conservation land from encroached areas

Had a "Preliminary Value Estimate" done early on (BLESSING IN

DISGUISE: Resulted in a BARGAIN SALE)

Con Com Members and Commitment

Started with 6

Four Resigned For Various Reasons:

One moved out of town

Three challenged the selling price: thought we should negotiate down....accused me of "inflating real estate prices"

One questioned my leadership

More than one town fundraiser (Church was applying for a \$200K LCHIP Grant; Monadnock Conservancy trying to raise money to protect islands in Island Pond)

16. **Success With Grants:** Along with the money comes a plethora of paperwork associated with grants (much of it due diligence requirements)

**USFS**.....individual giving begins to pick up on the announcement of the \$600,000 grant.

### **17. Preparing for closing**

Safety Net: Town Meeting

Rounding up all the money from various agencies for the closing

### **18. Celebration/Thank You/Signs Acknowledging Supporters**

### **19. Stewardship**

Est. Stewardship Committee

Bounds

Parking lot/Kiosk

Trails

Cabin clean-up

Annual Costs (road assn. fees, porta potty; school needs)

Stewardship Policy

Annual Updates to USFS/LCHIP

Agreement with JFES

### **Problems Along the Way; Lessons Learned**

### **20. Psychic Income**

Kids: "this is the best day of my life"

"You're my favorite hike teacher"

Note From Olivia (KROKA)

Email from Maggie after presentation

### **If Passion had points they would triple my score.....**

Jaxon and Mason: two grade school kids that spear headed fundraisers that had a multiplying impact

Richard Whitney Portrait

Press Coverage KEENE SENTINEL: local paper can be huge if they cover.

We got three wonderful articles: one on the front page of a weekend edition.

LBF Cake (literally made a presented at a social gathering)

Ray Lagasse Basket Weaving Workshop

### **21. Epilogue**

Failure Not an Option (Right Attitude)

Good Projects Get Funded

Future Projects (Healy Wildlife Corridor??)

**No act more permanent than protecting a parcel of land**

People in most places shape the land; but in Stoddard the land shapes the people