

DUNSTABLE RURAL LAND TRUST

Report of the Trustees

April 2019

During the past twelve months, 90% of the DRLT's time, effort, and resources have been working to fulfill the wishes of Olive F. McLoon -- to preserve her family homestead as open space. We have continued working through the settlement issues that arose carrying out the terms of Olive's will and appear to have come to a consensus that allows the process to move forward. Although the path has been burdensome and time-consuming, resolution appears to be within sight.

As we proceed toward final resolution and the buy-out of the heirs, the Trust has undertaken the process to raise funds necessary to complete this project. Funding sources will encompass a number of areas including sale of some property previously owned by DRLT, use of operating funds, curtailment of some of our routine expenditures on land preservation and short-term borrowings. As initially contemplated, certain parcels (those causing the least amount of disruption to the farm and Main Street) will need to be sold to preserve the major portion of the property. Our focus remains to retain the picturesque entrance to the Town by securing the property's future with conservation and preservation restrictions on the open space in perpetuity.

Since December 2015, the Trust, to date, has expended in excess of \$140,000 for ongoing operating costs, including payments for insurance, real estate taxes, cleanup, and maintenance of the property. Once the buy-out is completed, the Trustees anticipate its ongoing costs to be minimal, (principally insurance and minor maintenance costs).

The fire at 389 Thorndike Street this past July destroyed the home of the original owners of the McLoon Farm (Howard B. and his wife Dorothy McLoon). Since July, the DRLT has cleared the property and reclaimed the land at the entrance to the Town.



There have been many improvements made during this past year to the McLoon property -- the most visible, as many of you have noticed, is the restoration of the McLoon Barn. Grants received from the Donaldson Charitable Foundation Trust have funded the restoration process completed by Tobies Restoration of Groton MA. Today we have a restored, solid building. We would like to thank the Donaldson Charitable Foundation for their confidence and support during this past year and Tobies for the beautiful workmanship.

Our attention has now turned to the best use or uses of the barn and surrounding property. We welcome your input, ideas and suggestions can be brought to the attention of any of the Trustees, or by dropping a note to us at 1070 Main Street, Dunstable, MA.

Once again, like the three preceding years, we have had to cancel Winterfest events due to "lack of winter" and safety concerns. We are contemplating a change of venue should warmer temperatures continue in the future.

During the past year, the Trust worked with the Town of Dunstable entering into an agreement to hold permanent conservation restrictions on four parcels of land encompassing approximately 175 acres. We have also provided support to two landowners interested in permanently protecting their properties for future generations.

Looking to the future, the Trust established an endowment fund making annual additions from a portion of the Operating Funds. Memorial donations made in memory of several former Dunstable residents are added to this fund. Although not substantial, the Trust has accumulated in excess of \$130,000 to date. The Trustees have established this fund for the long term benefit of the Trust and as such the principal cannot be expended.

Please contact any member of the Board of Trustees of the Dunstable Rural Land Trust with any concerns and/or ideas to aid the Trust in its long-term goals of preserving the rural character of the Town of Dunstable.

Trustees of the Dunstable Rural Land Trust
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(drlt.org)