

**The Waldorf School, Inc.**

LETTER OF INTEREST

**Possible use of The Ellen Stone  
Building**

Submitted by

The Waldorf School Inc

A non-binding letter of interest submitted  
in response to an invitation from The  
Trustees of Cary Memorial Library

September 2008

## INTRODUCTION

The Waldorf School is a Nursery through Eighth Grade School established in 1971 that has been sited in Lexington, immediately adjacent to the East Lexington Library, since 1980. Waldorf education is the largest independent school movement in the world with over 900 schools located on six continents. The Lexington School, while a member of the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America, is operated independently and is overseen by an independent Board of Trustees comprised of residents of Lexington and neighboring communities.

Throughout the 1980s, 1990s and now into the 21<sup>st</sup> century The Waldorf School in Lexington has been expanding its educational program offerings while hiring new staff and integrating into its East Lexington community. The Waldorf School occupies the Adams Elementary School and has lovingly maintained this building and grounds in accordance with their original character.

Today The Waldorf School has 270 students, including 70 students residing in Lexington, and it currently employs 61 faculty & staff – many of whom are residents of Lexington. The school is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation with an annual budget of \$3.7mln.

Community involvement is a key component to the life of a Waldorf School, and over the past 28 years The Waldorf School has sought to build strong relationships with its neighbors and community. These have included close relationships with the Follen Church, with whose help and facilities the school started operations of an affiliated high school. During the years that the East Lexington Library was in active operation, Waldorf students were also frequent users of that resource. The school has been an active co-sponsor of the East Lexington Community Fair, located on the grounds of the Stone Building and

has hosted other school festivals on its shared grounds including an annual Holiday Fair each December, open to members of the Lexington Community, and a May Day celebration each spring. We have excellent working relationships with the Follen Church, St. Brigids Church, Wilsons Farm, and work closely with many local and regional organizations in support of their mission; Non-Profit Network, Family Folk Chorale, East Lexington Community Association, neighborhood associations, Four String Academy Boston, the Finnish School, and many others. Our teachers, staff and families are very active in our community participating in many ways including Lexington Symphony, Non-Profit Network, Friends of the Great Meadows, Lexington Sports Programs, etc.

The Waldorf School is thus keenly interested in the future of the Ellen Stone building as it is a very important component of community life in East Lexington. Our primary hope is that the Ellen Stone Building will be restored to serve as a library, for use by both the Waldorf student community and the larger East Lexington Community, and The Waldorf School plans to support this objective in any way it can.

Our expression of interest in the future of the Ellen Stone Building is a heartfelt desire to support our community and the wishes of Ellen Stone. It is clear to us that Town and community collaboration is necessary to develop the future use of this building further. This letter of interest is a statement of our strong interest to offer help and support as a community member to the Trustees of Cary Library for the preservation of the Ellen Stone Building and the continued utilization as a community resource in a manner that honors the original intentions as set out by Ellen Stone. We see our role as a participant amongst others in supporting the future use of this important community resource, whether it continues as a library or another community resource as outlined later in this document (Option#2). This letter of interest does not represent a binding commitment on behalf of The Waldorf School

*Possible Use of Ellen Stone Building*

**QUESTION 1**

**Name of Organization**

The Waldorf School Inc

**QUESTION 2**

**Primary Contact**

Joe O'Regan

Finance & Administration Director

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**QUESTION 3**

**Legal Status of organization**

Not for profit 501(c)(3) corporation

## QUESTION 4

### **Intended use of building and how this fits with deed restrictions**

#### ***Option #1***

We recommend that the Ellen Stone Building be restored to its original use as a full resource library, with secondary use as a meetings center for community, and that it continue to serve the community of East Lexington including students of the adjacent Waldorf School.

#### ***Option #2***

Should Option #1 not be feasible we would put forward our support and help in having the Ellen Stone Building serve two purposes:

1. A reading room downstairs open to the public, with reference materials, periodicals, and with the possibility of library drop off and pick up. A reading room would serve the community well by being open six days a week, 12 months a year.
2. A lecture hall & meeting room upstairs available for community use in the evenings by appointment. The Waldorf School would also host regular evening adult education lectures and workshops in this meeting room, which would be generally open to the public.

The Waldorf School already has an infrastructure for maintaining its current buildings. The Ellen Stone building is in very close proximity to The Waldorf School, thus allowing for an opportunity to offer support.

We believe that the above uses (Option #1 & Option #2) are all keeping with the deed restrictions as laid out in the original deed.

## QUESTION 5

**How would the Lexington community benefit from this use?**

### *Option #1*

The Lexington community would benefit from having the East Lexington Library continuing to operate in East Lexington. The main benefits of this are having the full resources of a library close by and having a central resource for meetings within the East Lexington Community.

### *Option #2*

The Lexington community would benefit from having a reading room and meeting room available on a daily basis in the following ways:

- Library drop off
- Central point for East Lexington Community
- A place to go and read newspapers, magazines and reference materials
- A place to study
- A place to meet friends
- An meeting room available for East Lexington and all of Lexington residents
- Reading room available for six days (with extended opening hours)
- Adult education lectures and workshops

- Venue for young children’s story time and other children’s educational enrichment programs such as marionette shows provided by Waldorf School teachers.
- Possibility of reduction in costs to town by cost sharing with interested community members, on a case-by-case basis as plans develop. We would like to discuss programming and operational support where it makes sense.

## QUESTION 6

### Who would be the intended users?

The intended users would be:

- East Lexington residents, Lexington Organizations and Lexington residents

## QUESTION 7

### Would the facility be open to the public?

The Ellen Stone building would be open to the public as follows:

- **Reading Room downstairs**
  - Monday – Friday 9:30 to 12:00pm and 3:00pm to 6:00pm
  - Saturday 9:30 to 1:00pm

- **Lecture hall & meeting room**

- Available by appointment in evenings
- Open to public for adult education lectures and workshops throughout the year.

## QUESTION 8

### How would the facility and proposed use be staffed?

**Staffing:**

The building would require one staff member to be present when open. This staff member would supervise the reading room and maintain reading materials, open and close the building and maintain appointments for the meeting room upstairs.

The Town of Lexington in association with community organizations would meet the building's day-to-day needs. This would include; cleaning, maintaining supplies, ensure systems are operating correctly etc. Any major building work (building envelope, roof, structural, mechanical or electrical) would be the sole responsibility of the Town of Lexington.

## QUESTION 9

**What kind of parking would the facility require for the proposed use?**

**Parking:**

Six parking spaces are currently allocated to the East Lexington Library. The Waldorf School would continue to ensure that these spaces are only for the Ellen Stone Building use(rs). These spaces will be adequate for use during the daytime. The Waldorf School parking lot could be used for lectures or evening meeting spaces when available. Lectures, workshops and other activities would be scheduled accordingly in association with The Waldorf School to ensure adequate parking space is available. Over the years, The Waldorf School has made arrangements with the Follen Church to coordinate the shared use of its parking spaces for various events when needed.

## QUESTION 10

**What physical renovations do you anticipate would be needed?**

**Physical renovations:**

The physical renovations as laid out in Option 1 of the planning report by HKT Architects offers the most usable space for future use while preserving the historical integrity of the Ellen Stone Building. We would suggest the following additions to that plan:

- Disabled parking placement at the left hand side of the Stone Building as you face the building from Massachusetts Avenue
- Provision to be made for entering each floor separately; allowing either floor to be open while the other floor is closed.

## QUESTION 11

**What furnishings do you anticipate would be needed for the proposed use?**

**Furnishings:**

*Option #1* requires a full library fit out

*Option #2* would require the following:

**Reading Room:** Tables, Chairs, shelving (limited), reception desk with telephone, computer and Internet access.

**Lecture hall/Meeting Room:**

Chairs and some tables with limited shelving.

## QUESTION 12

### **Financial/business plan for operating the building**

We see the Town of Lexington will need to continue taking the lead on financial and programming issues for the property. Where possible, community organizations such as The Waldorf School can contribute through agreed programming, operational support and possible cost sharing to ensure this is a viable long-term resource for the Lexington community. This support and cost sharing becomes viable through the synergies of local organizations close by, but will need to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis as the plans develop.

The Waldorf School, while not rich, is financially stable and planning to occupy and enjoy its campus in Lexington for many years to come. Our resources are directed primarily to our educational mission, however we are prepared to discuss programming, operational support and possible cost-sharing in order to support the shared goals that we have.

Our initial financial analysis indicates that the annual operating costs for the Ellen Stone Building can be significantly reduced with the benefit of synergies, while increasing hours open to the community under option #2 presented in this letter of interest. Such synergies include staffing, day-to-day maintenance, insurance costs, etc. A discussion with Cary Library Trustees, Town and community could best explore how the Waldorf School's adjacency can be best leveraged to realize a shared purpose for the building.

### **Question 13**

#### **Explain any affiliation with Town**

The Waldorf School purchased the Adams Building at #739 Massachusetts Avenue from the Town of Lexington in 1983 and has a long term land lease with the Town for the land that this building is situated on.

### **QUESTION 14**

Any further information?

No further information to add.