



Grafton & Upton Railroad Company

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October 15, 2020

Brian Keyes, Chairman
Board of Selectmen
Town of Hopedale
78 Hopedale Street
Hopedale, MA 01747

Re: 363 and 364 West Street, Hopedale

Dear Chairman Keyes:

Please be advised that Grafton & Upton Railroad Company (“GU”) has purchased the real property located at 363 West (known to the Town as 363 West ADJ) and all of the land located at 364 West Street excluding all land subject to the Classified Forest-Agricultural or Horticultural-Recreational Land Tax Lien recorded by the Town of Hopedale, Massachusetts on October 2, 2014 at the Worcester District Registry of Deeds in Book 52875 Page 355 (“Lien”). Additionally, GU has purchased all of the beneficial interest in the One Hundred Forty Realty Trust (“Trust”), which holds title to the aforementioned Lien.

It is with great disappointment to GU that its public private partnership with the Town of Hopedale (“Town”) was unable to be memorialized on this project, despite the collective efforts of GU and the Board of Selectmen (“BOS”) over the last several months. The BOS and Town Administrator put a lot of work into this effort to establish a long-term benefit for the Town and its residents, and GU is grateful for that hard work.

The grossly inaccurate information that was disseminated by the Town’s Water and Sewer Commission Chairman and false slanderous public statements irreparably and needlessly harmed GU’s and Mr. Delli Priscoli’s reputation within the Town. Those efforts also unfortunately undermined GU’s efforts to work cooperatively on a project that would easily and generously serve the present and future needs of both the Town and GU, at no cost to the Town.

As you will recall, GU had agreed in principal to a public private partnership which the BOS had presented to the Town at the BOS meeting on July 13, 2020 which partnership aligns with Jon Delli Priscoli’s efforts (as the owner of GU) to maintain a mutually rewarding relationship with the Town since he purchased GU a dozen years ago¹. The identified efforts that GU had committed to on this project were:

1. GU agreed to protect potential well sites (these are the same sites identified in the September 25, 2019 study commissioned by the Water & Sewer Commission for new well locations) including the 400-foot radius.

¹ <https://www.metrowestdailynews.com/article/20090719/NEWS/307199981>

2. GU offered to provide the Town with several dozen acres of natural corridor habitat, that is otherwise developable under federal law, so that the land could enjoy conservation protection. This land exchange was offered to the Town on a 1.5 to 1 ratio in benefit of the Town and would result in a significant and meaningful increase in parkland acres and extending the parkland trails to the Upton/Milford Town Line while creating an expansive wildlife and recreational corridor. GU committed to focus on economic development in an environmentally sensitive manner while producing jobs and tax revenue for the Town's long-term benefit.
3. GU agreed to assist the Town's Park Commission on its exploration a solution to fund an open space plan for the Parklands and to determine the future of and extension to the Parklands, building on what Henry Manning, who was a student of the infamous Frank Law Olmstead, had originally developed. This effort was intended to include additional walking trails to be constructed by GU as well as other much needed upgrades to the Parklands.

Additionally challenging during these negotiations was the due diligence report prepared by the Town's Finance Committee which consists of numerous inaccurate statements unsupported by law or fact which further exacerbated the misinformation that had already been disseminated by the Town Water and Sewer Commission Chairman. At no time did any representative of the Finance Committee contact GU to confirm the information that was carelessly included in its report, lacking proper authoritative reference.

On August 19, 2020 Attorney Peter Durning, on behalf of the Town, sent a letter to the Trust indicating that the Notice of Intent ("Notice") was insufficient and did not comply with the statute and was therefore ineffective and yet on October 8, 2020 Attorney Durning took the position that the same Notice that he had determined was ineffective, could not be withdrawn.

The Town's inconsistent position on several aspects of its relationship with GU on this matter have befuddled and frustrated the public private partnership that GU had envisioned and previously enjoyed. GU has always taken the position that a public private partnership is the best approach with its relationship with Hopedale given the historical partnership that it has enjoyed with the Town over the last decade.

GU continues to strive for a public private partnership with the Town on this project as it is our strong conviction that our efforts would leave a great legacy for the Town, expand the Town Parklands, and protect wetlands. Should the Board of Selectmen find that it is in agreement, Mr. Delli Priscoli is available for an in-person executive session with the Board of Selectmen to discuss and negotiate amenable solutions regarding the real estate on either Tuesday the 20th or Thursday 22nd of next week. Please, let me know if you are interested in proceeding with this effort.

Sincerely,



Michael Milanoski, President
Grafton and Upton Railroad Company