



The Coddling Farm Culture and Learning Center

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The Coddling Farm Culture and Learning Center

Mission

To create a place that enhances North Attleborough's rural character, fosters community spirit and encourages "learning from the land" by providing locally grown food, volunteer experiences, educational programming and public events that will enrich the value of the Town of North Attleborough and the quality of life for its residents.

"The Coddling Farm Culture and Learning Center" will be an educational institution with its purpose to educate and engage children and adults about sustainable agriculture, preservation of our rural history and environment, through a diverse set of opportunities that a working farm can provide. The Coddling Farm Culture and Learning Center will be able to provide locally grown food, as well as teach the importance of protecting open space, working outdoors on the land and creating community within North Attleborough. The community will be able to participate in volunteer opportunities like teaching a program, participating in farm chores, and volunteering in ways that will enable The Coddling Farm and Barn to become a sustainable community farm and create local stewards of the land.

The Coddling Farm Culture and Learning Center provides year-round educational programs offering learning experiences in:

- Land Preservation and Environmental Stewardship
- Community Supported Agriculture - Farming field crops, learning garden, produce, and hay
- Farm-to-School programs
- Nutritional Awareness
- Farm Workshops
- Practical Skills – farm carpentry and building
- Homesteading – home gardening, farm cooking, food preservation, beekeeping, maple syrup making, and fiber arts
- The culture and history of local farming
- After school/weekend/summer programs - Young people work the land and take home the cultural history, vital experience, and personal identity that farms nurture. Teachers work alongside their students and leave with new insights into their craft and children they teach.
- Building a strong sense of community and responsibility of being a steward of our land and engaging our senior population to share their knowledge.

Statement of Need

The Coddling Farm Open House held June 24, 2012, gained a group of 40+ supporters who are willing to commit their time, skills and resources in moving this project forward from concept to reality and realizing this greater vision for our community. When attendees were asked via a questionnaire what The Coddling Farm property could bring into the community that we are currently lacking, there was an overwhelming response of a need to provide a community agricultural educational program and learning center. The Coddling Farmhouse, Barn, and its 3.78 acres of farmstead and adjacent fields are an important example of a rare combination of a transitional Federal/Greek Revival Cape Cod cottage with a succession of ells, two early 20th century outbuildings, and fields which have been in agricultural use since at least the early 19th century. It is a rare survival of a rural landscape adjacent to the heart of the town center. It is a historical treasure on the National Register of Historic Places due to its role in development of the community and its agricultural and industrial economy through the prominent Coddling family, for its well-preserved surviving architectural and agricultural resources from several historic periods and its retention of integrity in setting, location, design, materials, workmanships, feeling and association. With the appropriate stewardship and volunteer efforts, we can make this vision a reality.

Project Description/Goals

Short Term

On the short term, the NAHC and its project volunteers would look to hosting a Community Outreach meeting and present to the community, the concept of The Coddling Farm Culture and Learning Center. We would seek to recruit a variety of volunteers and increase our base of supporters who would be able to engage their time and talents in the following projects:

- Toast to the Farm event – create awareness and fundraiser.
- Farm Workshops: Composting Worms Workshop; How to Make Garden Beds; How to Build Potato Beds
- Establish Community Garden Beds
- Establish Growing Mushrooms project
- Plant Seeds and Seedlings in garden beds // Volunteers
- Collaborate with North Attleboro Public Schools, Saint Mary-Sacred Heart - offer (2) Spring Classes.
- Create a website – an engaging diverse website which includes: Welcome Page, About Us, Contact us, Get Involved, History of the Farm, Our Mission, Events and Programs page, recipes. Create a Donate on line feature via pay pal. Create a Wish List of items needed (ex. Hay wagons, fence posts, wheel barrows, lumber, hand tools, cooking tools, etc.)

Long Term

- Establish "School to Farm" project with local schools – seek grants to help fund projects with schools
- Build a Farm Stand
- Harvest and sell food via farm stand/farmers market
- Donate food to Lenore's Pantry, Council of Churches, Food and Friends program
- Collaborate with North Attleboro Library / 4-H Summer Science Programs
- Interview/hire a Farm Manager
- Establish "After School Program for Middle Schoolers" at the Farm
- Farm Fall Potluck Suppers
- Sell Food Shares, Flower Shares, Garden Plots
- Purchase/build greenhouse
- Fall Festival Fundraiser at the Farm
- Establish first Annual 5K Run/Walk – increasing awareness, possibly host 200 participants
- Establish a junior historical commission
- Annual Public Meetings

The Coddington Farmhouse

Vision

To restore The Coddington Farmhouse and create a unique cultural and interactive educational site that will provide the interior classroom which would become the educational space and resource center for The Coddington Farm Culture and Learning Center. We want its history to come alive by supporting community events that maximize the use of the site with an emphasis on the site's rural and agricultural beauty and its historical significance to the region and the town of North Attleborough.

Short Term Goals:

- House the North Attleborough Historical Commission – becoming the headquarters for the commission will allow for complete engagement with the restoration process, help keep vandals out and help the commission to identify with the structure and prioritize the goals of the restoration process.
- Develop Mushroom Growing Project (basement/cellar)
- Homesteading – home gardening, cooking from the farm, food preservation, beekeeping, maple syrup making, and fiber arts.
- Farm Workshops
- After school/weekend/summer programs - Young people being educated and take home the cultural history, vital experience, and personal identity that farms nurture. Teachers work alongside their students and leave with new insights into their craft and children they teach. Adults learn to farm and carry essential knowledge from one community to the next.

First year

- Collaborate with Tri-County Regional Technical School , Baristol Agricultural School and other volunteers to perform the house repairs which include stabilizing the deterioration of the house due to water and to create curb appeal. Repair gutters and downspouts. Repair or replace rotted boards, replace missing boards, repair windows, etc. Make house handicap accessible to the public. Create a meeting room/classroom where educational events may be held. Create a working classroom kitchen.
- Major Fundraiser/ Design Show House – engage local interior designers, decorators and contractors to transform individual rooms in the house by restoring , repairing and decorating a room at their own expense. We would then showcase their work with a house tour lasting several days, charging admission to the public. Those participating in the restoration and decorating of the house will gain publicity for their work . Funds raised would go back into a fund for the continuing restoration of the house, etc.

Second year – Paint exterior, renovations to both the home and barn through the support community donations, grants and fundraising efforts.

Long Term Goals (5+ years): Community Preservation Act Funding

- Plumbing and heating upgrade
- Create accessible rear entry
- Repair windows, etc.
- Stabilize structure/ells
- Clean interior ells once stabilized
- Rebuild main chimney

The Coddling Farm Parcel B Land Surrounding House/Barn

Vision

The agricultural and rural character of the land surrounding the Coddling Farm House and Barn, would provide a working farm that will engage the community to learn about sustainable farming and helping the community in which we live. We would like to develop The Coddling Farm Parcel B Land as a preservation development blending the historical, agricultural, recreational, and natural resources into a community supported working farm that will replicate rural farm life in North Attleborough and connect children and adults with the land and the food that nourishes them and our community.

Short Term Goals:

- Partner with the Attleboro Land Trust, which is an organization dedicated to open space preservation, advocacy and education.
- Begin developing raised garden beds, which will allow for any senior volunteers to sit on a stool to garden and keep weeds down.
- Worm Composting
- Community Garden
- Irrigation (Rain Barrels)
- Compost with Pallets

Long Term Goals (5+ years):

- Community Supported Agriculture - Farming field crops, learning garden, produce, fruit, hay and fencing
- Farm-to- School program
- Homesteading programs – home gardening, cooking from the farm, food preservation, beekeeping, maple syrup making, and fiber arts.
- After school/weekend/summer programs - Young people work the land and take home the cultural history, vital experience, and personal identity that farms nurture. Teachers work alongside their students and leave with new insights into their craft and children they teach. Adults learn to farm and carry essential knowledge from one community to the next.

The Coddington Barn

Vision

The historic Coddington Barn has been an important structure of the North Attleborough landscape for over 100 years. A true rarity, our local Barn is essential to the rural and agricultural landscape of our town's heritage. As an important historical, cultural, and architectural landmark, the Coddington Barn speaks to values we hold dear as a community. Viewed from the road, the barn has the appearance of an English barn, with the main wagon door located just west of center in the south, eaves side. In contrast to the restrictive layout of a traditional English barn, this is a sophisticated, innovative eaves-front outbuilding designed to meet the specialized needs of the Coddington Farm in the early 20th century, when the property operated as a prosperous dairy farm.

We would like to organize an old fashioned community Barn Raising Project, creating a spirit of community with this project. We would like to enlist the planning skills, direction and supervision of such groups as Barn Again, a part of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and any Timber Framing Schools that may need a project for their students.

The Coddington Barn can be a community asset that provides for local private and public events, and a place for generations of local residents, school groups, and area visitors to learn about the importance and history of agriculture in our town. The Barn is poised for new life and could offer new activities at the center of North Attleborough's life. We see the barn used for community festivals and educational events that will accommodate larger groups of people than the Coddington Farmhouse. It can be a compliment to the adjacent skating pond in the winter and a passive recreational facility to those using the adjacent open space lands year round.

Short Term Goals:

- Increase efforts to deter vandalism to the barn. Remove trash and unnecessary rotted wood. Remove existing tagging in the interior of the barn.
- Reorganize the effort to rebuild the barn. Enlist the assistance of, and collaborate with the Preserve Massachusetts Barns and their Barn Again group as well as students at a Timber Framing School, to conduct a barn Condition Assessment Report. This report will also address the cost of the work items and alternatives to their accomplishment.
- Hold a major fundraiser to raise matching funds for materials to rebuild the barn and explore grant sources available.
- Educate the community about the way barns were built and how a community can come together to rebuild this one.

Long Term Goals (5+ years):

- Host the Barn Raising, involving community members.
- Develop a sustainable use for the barn that will generate income to maintain the structure.
- Continue to implement a sustainable plan for the community use of this building that is in keeping with the proposed mission of a culture and learning center. Apply for any grants that are available.

Conclusion

The Coddling Farm, which includes the land and buildings on parcel B, were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in April 2003 through the efforts of our commission members with the research funded by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. These buildings are rare examples of early farm buildings in Massachusetts as they have changed little since the house was built circa 1833 and the front of the barn built circa 1910 . The back of the barn was added in 1930. These buildings have had minimum maintenance since the town purchased them in 2001. We are the only commission at town level that has an understanding of historic buildings and their value to the town. We would like to work to restore the buildings and adapt them for a variety of uses that would benefit the town residents.

We ask you to review all that we have presented today. Please consider the important role that you can make in providing the NAHC with stewardship of the property in order to complete the site restoration, and develop the The Coddling Farm Culture and Learning Center project. Let's celebrate this symbol of our town's architectural, cultural and agricultural history with the community of North Attleborough and allow us to make this vision a reality.

We would like to ask the Board of Selectman for the following:

1. A ten year renewable stewardship of Parcel B with Land and Buildings through a Town Meeting Article, similar to the Fire Barn agreement. We can develop the details of this article with the Town Administrator and Town Counsel.
2. To allow us to develop curb appeal around the front of the house this spring by adding perennials and plantings and to establish several plots for a community garden.
3. To move our Historical Commission office to the Coddling Farmhouse as soon as possible in order to develop the restoration of the house and barn and maintain a presence in the house during the day.

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Michelle Reid

All those who attended our open house last June whose vision for the Coddling Farm we have expressed in this proposal.

This report was prepared by the members of the North Attleborough Historical Commission and presented to the Board of Selectmen on February 28, 2013.

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