



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2025

Mayor Beauregard Announces Proposed Next Steps for the Restoration and Preservation of the Historic Searles Estate

Methuen, MA – Mayor D.J. Beauregard has announced the next critical steps in Methuen’s efforts to restore and preserve the historic Edward F. Searles Estate. After extensive analysis and public input, and pending City Council approval, the City is preparing to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to explore a range of potential future uses, including private ownership, non-profit stewardship, and public-private partnerships. This proactive strategy aims to ensure the estate’s long-term preservation while easing the financial burden on Methuen’s taxpayers.

Since acquiring the Searles Estate in November 2024, the City has worked diligently to engage the public and evaluate the best path forward. The Searles Estate Future Use Advisory Committee – comprising representatives from the administration, City Council, key municipal boards and commissions, and both private and public sector subject matter experts – has strongly recommended moving forward with an RFP that establishes clear conditions to safeguard the estate’s historic integrity and maximize its value to the community.

“The Searles Estate is a cornerstone of Methuen’s rich history, and we must take decisive action to preserve its architectural and historical significance for generations to come,” said Mayor Beauregard. “After careful consideration of all options, it is clear that a responsible transfer of ownership with strict historic preservation safeguards is the best way to protect this treasured property.”

The City Council will soon vote on a resolution to formally initiate a competitive RFP process focused on historic restoration and preservation. Key provisions of the proposed RFP framework include:

- **Historic Preservation Standards** – The property must be restored and maintained to recognized historic preservation standards.
- **Protection of Historic Artifacts** – The estate’s historic artifacts must remain intact and protected.
- **Prohibition on Residential Development** – New residential housing construction will be prohibited due to zoning and infrastructure limitations.
- **National Historic Designation** – The purchaser must pursue the property’s designation as a National Historic Site and its listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Comprehensive Proposal Evaluation** – Proposals will be assessed not only on price but also on non-price factors, such as the buyer’s demonstrated financial commitment to

restoration, willingness to contribute to property taxes or equivalent payments, commitment to hiring Methuen residents for any jobs created, and plans to ensure public engagement through events and access.

The City plans to set a preferred minimum sale price of \$3.5 million, reflecting its investment in the estate. However, proposals below this amount will be considered if they demonstrate exceptional commitments to historic preservation and community benefit.

“We look forward to collaborating with visionary partners who share our dedication to protecting and revitalizing the Searles Estate,” added Mayor Beauregard. “Through this process, we will ensure that we identify the best steward for this landmark – one that will honor its history while securing its future.”

Pending City Council approval, the City will issue the RFP in the coming weeks. Through the RFP process, the City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. To safeguard its long-term interests in preserving the property for future generations, the City intends to include a reversionary interest or right of first refusal as a contingency in the RFP.

Public tours of the estate will be held in June. Information regarding these opportunities for the public to visit the estate will be made available on the City’s website.

For more information, please contact the Office of the Mayor at (978) 983-8505 or visit www.methuen.gov.