

Let's not give up on saving Gale School; come to March 6 meeting

To The Daily Sun,

At the Shaker School District meeting on March 6, the voters will be asked to pass a warrant article that would provide the money to demolish the Gale School. For about a year now, a dedicated group of people have been exploring different possibilities that would re-purpose this historic icon, thus saving it for future generations. This has not been an easy task because the town does not wish to take part in this project, the Shaker School District does not want to use the building, and views it as "in the way". The building will need to be moved, likely to a lot on Concord Street that the district owns, if they approve (it is too large for a longer move). It would then need to be restored. Any activity/entity that would use the restored building would need to be approved by the district.

Here is where we stand at this point:

We have received an estimate to move the building for approximately \$10,000 more than the demolishing costs. The lot referred to on Concord Street is vacant and close enough to make the move possible. The road that would need to be constructed to move the building would be located in the same area as the district's proposed (future) bus loop.

We have been contacted by some very generous Belmont business owners offering materials that will be needed for the road and site preparation. Another business owner has offered to construct the entire site prep work on the lot. The School District's own future plans relate to the need for space for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes, as well as changes that will be needed to relocate the SAU staff currently located in the Memorial Building. (There will more

information on this provided by Pret Tuthill /former School Board member now working to save the Gale School.)

At this point, it would appear that the preservation of the Gale School could provide the space that will be needed and an approved use for the building.

Because we do not want this project to become a property tax money pit, we are asking/challenging Belmont alumni who attended classes in the Gale School to please consider a donation of time, material, or expertise, and/or yes, money to help us fund this worthy project. This building was part of so many lives. Some material and expertise that will be needed: Concrete and form work, plumbers and electricians, carpenters, roofers and siding installers, power plant work, other miscellaneous construction needs.

We would also appreciate any donations from other people interested in preserving an important piece of Belmont history. Our group intends to continue raising funds and solicit donations throughout the project.

(Monetary donations can be sent to: Save Our Gale School Fund, Franklin Savings Bank, 387 Central St.; Franklin, NH 03235 or brought by any Franklin Savings Bank location.)

The biggest concern of the voters is that even more of a property tax burden will result from this project. This is understandable. We are striving to find ways to ensure this does not happen. Requested donations will offset possible a property tax increase

Voters, please come to the March 6 Shaker District meeting, listen to our presentation, and vote to preserve the Gale School.

Ken Knowlton
Belmont