

Waterhouse Youth Endowment Kennebunk Downtown Youth and Family Pavilion

HISTORY

A long-time resident and her granddaughter donated a \$1.5 million endowment to foster and enhance the health and well being of local youth by providing recreational and educational opportunities in a safe and healthy environment in downtown Kennebunk. The building will be named after the donors, the Waterhouse family.

MISSION

The Waterhouse Youth Endowment ("Endowment") was created to enhance the quality of life in Kennebunk by promoting and providing programs and events, which foster and enhance health, social skills, recreation and educational opportunities for youth in a safe and healthy environment in downtown Kennebunk.

ACTIVITIES

The Endowment seeks to meet the needs of the community by attracting families and young people to the downtown through a variety of activities, including, but not limited to, dance, music, art, sports, martial arts, competitive athletic events, cultural, civic-oriented and theater. The Endowment will promote partnerships with businesses, as well as social and civic institutions, to provide active and passive recreational activities for all ages that support the community and enhance the downtown.

The Waterhouse Youth Endowment is the logical organization to carry out the project because it was created solely for the purpose of managing activities at this site. The Endowment is a dedicated fund that will be managed by a Board of Overseers (Waterhouse Center Advisory Committee) consisting of: two members representing the benefactors, the Town Manager, the Town Recreation Director, one Recreation Committee Member, and one Downtown Committee Member who will be appointed annually by the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Overseers consists of permanent and established positions within Kennebunk, which will ensure the longevity of this project. These key personnel are dedicated to fulfilling the mission statement along with Town Staff to ensure the Pavilion structure is used for the community.

The overall objectives sought from the programming are divided into three major categories

Children

- Building self-worth and confidence
- Making new friends
- Developing physical agility and coordination
- Expanding educational horizons
- Civic pride

Adults and Seniors

- Feeling valued
- Appreciating and understanding today's youth
- Sharing their talents and supporting the youth
- Serving as positive role models
- Making new friends

Community

- Building community pride
- Creating future leaders
- Fostering understanding
- Supporting local businesses
- Enhancing the downtown

Waterhouse Youth Endowment

Enhancing the health and well-being of local youth by providing recreational and educational opportunities in a safe and healthy environment in the Downtown.

Community Builder, Multi-Functional Four Season Family Center,
Economic “engine”, Creating/Supporting Tourism,
Youth & Family Activities

Waterhouse Youth Endowment

- Three Member Board of Directors (Two Family Members: Geraldine Waterhouse and Paige Schroeder, and Town Manager)
- Waterhouse Center Advisory Committee (Recreation Dir., Recreation and Downtown Committee members, at - large member appointed by Waterhouse Board, and Town Manager)
- Dedicated to serving the youth in various activities, programs and events, especially ice skating.
- \$1.5 million endowment, 501 c3 organization
- Anticipated annual funding \$60,000 to \$75,000 per year from the endowment.

\$1.5 million donated toward all-season Kennebunk activity center

By **Jennifer Feals**

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KENNEBUNK — The town is exploring a use for the Mobil lot on Main Street that officials say will serve as a unique engine for economic development while providing a place for the community's youth and families.

Kennebunk resident Geraldine Waterhouse, and her granddaughter Paige Herr, have established the Waterhouse Youth Endowment Fund to benefit youth opportunities in downtown Kennebunk, making a \$1.5 million donation to that endowment. The endowment was created to foster and enhance the health and well-being of local youth by providing recreational and educational opportunities in a safe and healthy environment in downtown Kennebunk.

The vision, said Town Manager Barry Tibbetts who presented the proposal to the Board of Selectmen Tuesday, is to create an open-sided pavilion at the Mobil lot, located at 51 Main Street, which would serve as an all-season activity center.

"We want to create this different kind of economic engine, but also bring kids downtown and family's downtown," said Tibbetts. "It's a very different kind of economic engine. It preserves that space as a public venue, but it generates income."

Construction of the center could be funded through community support and donations while revenue generated off the interest earned from the \$1.5 million endowment, estimated at \$60,000 to \$75,000 per year, can support activities like family movie nights, dancing, bands, roller skating, theater, and more throughout the year, while continuing to provide the winter ice rink that has been offered at the rink for the past few years.

Tibbetts said the proposal is planned to not impact taxes.

"We believe this endowment, with town participation, will enhance the youth, support family activities, and provide greater opportunities in the downtown for many years to come," Tibbetts said. "It's so unique and rare compared to any other community that I've seen."

The Waterhouse family has a rich history in Kennebunk, with Geraldine Waterhouse spending her summers here since 1944 and moving to the town in 1964. Waterhouse said she has many wonderful memories of the community, particularly the ice-skating rink which has been located at the Mobil lot for the past three winters, which brought back fond memories of her youth.

"Watching the young children was delightful and reminded me of my own ice skating enjoyment," Geraldine Waterhouse said in a written statement. "This endowment will allow all youth in town the joy of free skating. Kennebunk is a lovely community, supporting our youth in Kennebunk is a pleasure, honor and joy for our family."

The Waterhouse Youth Endowment would be run by a three-member Board of Directors, made up of Waterhouse, Herr and the town manager. The Waterhouse Center Advisory Committee – comprised of the town's recreation director, members of each the recreation committee and downtown committee, an at-large member appointed by the Board of Directors, and the town manager – would oversee events.

The town purchased the Mobil lot in August of 2010 for \$280,000 and was unsuccessful in finding a commercial developer for the site, Tibbetts said. In June of 2012, voters supported keeping the Mobil lot for town use.

Prior to its purchase by the town, the lot generated approximately \$5,500 in tax revenue, Tibbetts said.

"We really looked and tried to bring a business in there and it didn't work. This kind of fell into our laps and you have to look and say is this a solution," Tibbetts said. "It's just a win-win all the way around. I just think the benefits are so great for the community."