

CHASE FARM PARK SCENE OF MAJOR PRESERVATION PROJECTS



September 2015---Big changes are on the way to Chase Farm Park, which have been years in the making! Chase Farm Park, the former dairy farm of the Chase family and now owned by the Town of Lincoln, is visited by thousands who come to enjoy its picturesque fields and meadows. At the entrance to the Park stands the 1890 farmhouse, which was vacated in 1987 upon purchase by the town. While Friends of Hearthsides had commissioned a feasibility study for the location of a dairy farm museum there to capture the story of local farming, it was not financially feasible to make the structural changes necessary. After years of being used as a storage facility by the town, the house faced demolition last year because of the continuous cost for maintenance and the fact that it lacked a plan for use.

Research into how we might save this piece of history led to a new program that Preserve Rhode Island was planning to implement as a way to save historic properties, especially those located on government-owned land. PRI met with town officials and proposed an innovative Craftsman-in-Residence program as a model, which everyone feels is a great solution. In June 2015, PRI entered into a five-year lease agreement with the Town.



Over the summer, work will get underway to make the house habitable with new heating and electrical upgrades and a new gutter system. There will be abatement work as well for mold and asbestos, the kitchen and bathrooms will be upgraded, walls repaired and painted, along with the repair of floors, windows and some minor exterior repairs. The house will be restored and ready for rent in January 2016 with an upstairs and downstairs unit available. The income from the rent will repay the fund investment that PRI has made. After five years, if the lease is extended, PRI plans to undertake additional work,

including exterior restoration and the re-creation of the porch, as seen in the accompanying photo of the house taken during the 1930s.

Another big change taking place at Chase Farm will be the relocation of the Pullen Corner School House from Angell Road. The move of this one-story building is scheduled to take place in July. The 1850-era, one-room schoolhouse is also owned by the town and it, too, was in danger of being lost.

Funds from the sale of town ornaments has helped to save this historic building. Last summer, the town prepared the new foundation for the school house, which is somewhat to the farm house. In the photo below, taken in the 1920s, the Chase farmhouse may be seen to the right. The small white building to the left was the original farmhouse that Benjamin Chase built when he settled on this land to start a farm in 1867. That house was torn down around 1927. As you can see, it resembles the size and shape of the school house.

With the preservation of these two historic buildings, a historic landscape is being recreated and besides being saved, both will have new life in them--one as a residence and the other as a place for telling the story of early education in our town.

