

Wasley Farm – Warren, Connecticut – Resident Information and Survey – April 2021

Introduction and Background to the Purchase

In 2011, the residents of Warren voted to purchase the Wasley Farm property (96.64 acres) from longtime and highly regarded residents Barbara and Irving Wasley, also known as Bobby and Wings. Those in favor of the purchase pointed out that it was consistent with the goal of protecting open space in the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), and that the property had characteristics and qualities that were superior to those offered by other Town-owned properties. At the time, concerns were expressed regarding the road frontage and accessibility of the property, as well as the loss of tax revenue.

It is understood that the Wasleys agreed to sell the property below the asking price to the Town because they would be allowed to live there for their final years (which Bobby did until 2017). They hoped the farm would remain undeveloped once they were gone. At the time of the transaction, the First Selectman's plan was to form a committee to "seriously study and come up with a good long-term plan for the use of the property."

(Reference: Town Meeting Minutes, May 19, 2011, *Republic American*, May 15, 2011).

History and Description of the Property

The Wasley Farm is located at 224 Cornwall Road (Route 45) just beyond Brick School Road on the left going north. The property features a beautiful mix of open farmland, wetlands and woodlands, and has a small house and a barn surrounded by a grass yard. Set back from the road, the farm is accessed by a narrow, gravel driveway that travels along the wetlands to open fields, eventually arriving at the house and barn. There are 4 fields, one of which has several fruit crops that are well-established including rhubarb, apples, peaches, blueberries, elderberries, black walnuts. 45% of the acreage is classified as farmland soils by the state and the fields are mowed for hay by a local farmer. The property is accessible to Town residents for walking and hiking, although there is currently no signage.

The Wasleys had a great love for their farm and were generous in sharing the natural and farming wonders of the property with the Warren community. The Committee already has received several letters and oral anecdotes of the Wasley's devotion to their organic garden, the bobolinks who nested in the fields, and to the Warren community at large. There has also been recent interest expressed, by private parties, in the purchase of the property, with the stated intent of maintaining the property in a similar manner to its current state, to include the environmental and agricultural specifications and keeping a single residential site.

Purpose of the Wasley Farm Committee

The Board of Selectman (BOS) formed the Wasley Farm Committee in May 2020 and, at its first meeting, the Committee established its mission: *to present viable and sustainable options to the town and selectmen on the future use of the Wasley property.*

In developing its recommendations, the Committee will seek input from the community through surveys, including this one, and interviews with residents, town employees and other town

committees. The Committee will also make an assessment of recreational activities that are currently available to Warren residents on Town-owned and other Warren properties; Of 15 Town-owned properties, 6 provide public recreational access including the Warren Town Beach and Warren Woods, and other government and land trust owned-properties offer additional public recreational access for hiking in Warren.

In addition to the survey and assessment work, the Committee will also take into consideration the estimated upfront and ongoing cost to the Town of the various options so that viability and sustainability are factored into its final recommendations.

Survey

The purposes of this initial survey is simply to ask you to share your thoughts and ideas with the committee. **Please tell us what would you like to see happen with the Wasley Farm?**

[BIG BOX to write in...]

Thank you so much for taking the time to learn more about the Wasley Farm property and its history, and for completing this survey! If you have any questions or additional comments, please send them to the Wasley Property Committee Chair, c/o Warren Town Hall, 50 Cemetery Road, Warren, CT 06754.