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## Meredith Neck camp sale under review in both NH, Mass

By ADAM DRAPCHO, THE LACONIA DAILY SUN  
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The gate to 386 Meredith Neck Road, formerly the site of Camp Menotomy, as seen in May. The trust that owns the land wishes to sell it to a residential developer, and the states of New Hampshire and Massachusetts are reviewing the sale to see if deed restrictions were followed. (Adam Drapcho/The Laconia Daily Sun file photo)

MEREDITH — Ten months ago, the owners of a parcel of land on Meredith Neck signed a purchase-and-sale agreement with a developer, and it seemed the largest undeveloped tract of land on the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee would be converted to the use the real estate market demands: luxury homes.

Yet the agreement — along with the \$18 million offer — remains frozen, as the offices of the attorney general for both New Hampshire and Massachusetts are reviewing whether such a deal can be permitted despite deed restrictions designed to prevent such an occurrence.

Attorneys for the Camp Menotomy Trust, which has owned the property for 60 years, argue that the creators of the 1939 deed could not have anticipated the current value of the property, nor could they have foreseen the contemporary economic conditions in which summer camps operate, and are asking for the deed terms to be expanded in such a way that would allow the sale to go through.

The prospective buyer, Jeremy Martin of Lakes Region Design Group, intends to build no more than 10 homes on the land, and plans to leave at least 30% of the land undeveloped.

The property at 386 Meredith Neck Road, which contains 95 acres, was operated as a private camp known as Camp Waubanaki until 1939, when it was sold to the Arlington, Massachusetts, Girl Scouts. In 1961, the scouting organization transferred ownership to a trust created to preserve and manage the property so the Girl Scouts could operate it as a camp. And so the story of Camp Menotomy remained largely unchanged for more than six decades. In the spring of 2023, the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts — as the scouting organization is now known — notified the trust it was no longer economically feasible to run the camp.

According to a document submitted to the NH Office of the Attorney General's Charitable Trusts Division by attorneys representing the sellers, that notice precipitated a discussion among the trustees about what should be done with the property.

At first glance, it appeared to be a clearly prescribed path. The deed for the property stated the land was to be maintained for use by the Arlington Girl Scouts as a summer camp, that if the scouting organization no longer exists then trustees may rent the property to another organization to operate a camp and that the proceeds should benefit the Arlington Girl Scouts or girls who live in Arlington. Trustees are permitted to sell the property if the above options are not feasible, and the proceeds of the sale would be held in a trust.

An email from attorney Bradford E. Cook of the law firm Sheehan Finney, and sent to the NH Charitable Trusts Division, suggests the trustees he represents believe sale of the property is the most reasonable strategy. He asked Granite State authorities to pause their review of the sale while

his clients pursue a “cy pres action” in Massachusetts, where the trust is based. Such an action requests the deed be broadened, “given the value of the property which was not contemplated by anyone at the time the Girl Scouts conveyed to the trust they created, to benefit themselves.”

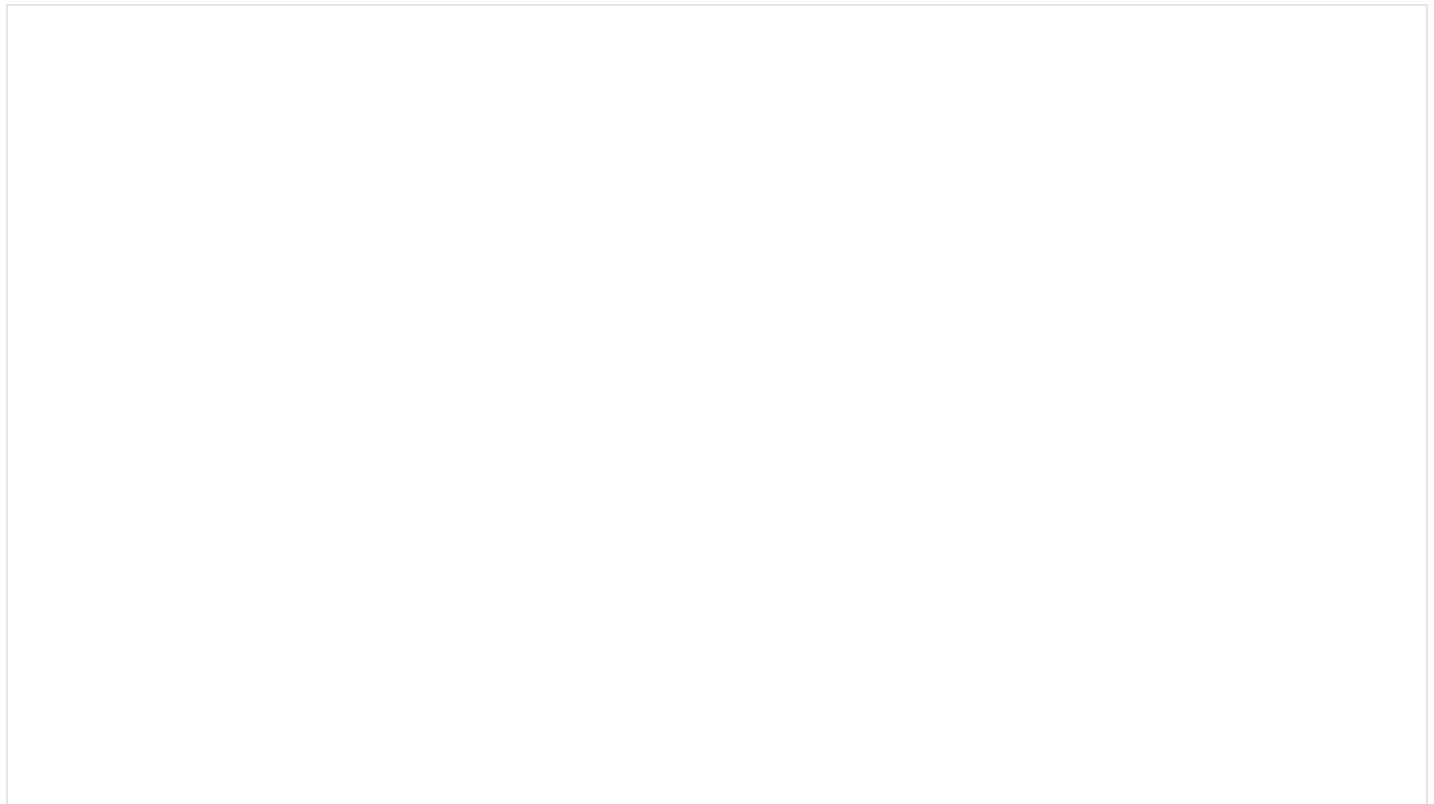
A representative of the NH Charitable Trusts Division confirmed the unit is continuing to review the proposed sale, but declined to make anyone available for an interview. Similarly, a spokesperson for the Massachusetts attorney general confirmed the matter was under review but would not provide any further information.

That review will certainly include consideration of the offer made by Camp Quinebarge, a for-profit camp in Moultonborough, which learned of the property’s availability after newspaper reports of the proposed sale were published in February.

Quinebarge, in a letter signed by CEO and owner Eric Carlsen, offered to pay \$1.5 million for the property so they could operate a camp there. That offer was one-tenth of the property’s assessed value of \$15 million, and a document provided by the seller’s attorneys claims Carlsen did not respond to a counter-offer asking if he would be interested in leasing the property.

Carlsen did not respond to a request for comment. Neither did Thomas Smurzynski, the Camp Menotomy Trustee whose phone number is listed on legal documents associated with the trust.

#### MORE INFORMATION





State reviewing sale of Camp Menotomy property