

Friends Of Algiers Village, Inc.

638 Coolidge Highway

Guilford, VT 05301

(802) 254-8477

Request - Letter Of Interest

From: Qualified Operators

For: The Guilford Country Store

September 7, 2010

The Business

Friends Of Algiers Village, Inc., (FOAVI), a 501(c)(3) organization, is seeking proposals from qualified store operators to lease and run the store operation in the historic 1817 Broad Brook House. The building is in the heart of the Algiers Village section of Guilford and stands at the busy intersection of U.S. 5, the Coolidge Highway, and the Guilford Center Road. At a minimum, we offer the opportunity to:

- Lease commercial space to operate a store, which has been serving the Town of Guilford and the Village of Algiers for well over a century
- Provide, at a minimum, basic groceries to area residents
- Provide a public space with tables, chairs (cafe style), and a public restroom

- Operate the store under a long term lease to serve the local community

Applicants will be expected to operate the store as a commercial venture under general guidelines to be established by the owner in consultation with the lessee. The building contains two apartments on its second floor, which will be managed by FOAVI.

The Process

The following is the process for selecting a qualified operator.

- Interested operators are asked to submit a letter of interest which contains the information outlined in the “Response Requirements” section of this request.
- FOAVI will review all letters on an ongoing basis and invite those applicants who best meet our criteria to submit a complete proposal. The proposal should include a detailed description of their proposed operations, including financial information and projections for same, any contingencies and

requirements for implementation and an assurance form. (question: do we have an “assurance” form format?)

From the invited proposals, a proprietor to operate the store will be selected as soon as possible. FOAVI will then work with that proprietor to develop a mutually acceptable agreement. FOAVI will also require a reasonable deposit and proof of insurance. Should an agreement not be reached, FOAVI reserves the right to enter into negotiations with the next qualified bidder.

Background Information

The Guilford Country Store:

The Guilford Country Store has a history dating back to the early 1800's beginning as a stage-coach stop, a hotel and then a country store. The store stands at a critical juncture in the town – US Route 5 and the Guilford Center Road. This assures a steady flow of traffic passing by the store. US Route 5 is a widely used alternate route to I91 and draws traffic from the south (Massachusetts population), as well from the west. Many people who live in the area and work in Brattleboro travel past the Country Store at least twice a day.

Because of the store's strategic position (access to products from local farmers, dairies, bakers, preserve makers and other Vermont artisans) the store operator will have the unique opportunity to readily offer locally grown and healthy foods and goods. In addition, the store will continue to provide hunting and fishing licenses as well as turkey, deer and bear checking services.

FOAVI will assure that the guidelines for the store operator will be met, but will not be involved with day-to-day operations in any manner.

Market Analysis

Guilford is a rural community. In 2008 it maintained a population of 1,939 citizens with 931 households. Median household income during the same period was \$57,828. Seventy-seven (77%) of the population drove a car alone to work while eleven (11%) car-pooled (According to the 2000 census).

Market Segmentation

The core customer base will be derived from Guilford and its surrounding towns. But because of the outstanding location of the Guilford Country Store, it is anticipated that significant store sales will be forthcoming from casual/convenience customers consisting of snowmobilers, hunters, workers and other tourists.

The development of a public space and a cafe area to have coffee/tea with carry-out specialty food will attract a customer base that presently goes to one-another's home for committee/organizational meetings.

The store as a community center would also allow better communications for the Guilford residents. A message board will be installed to alert citizens to meetings and other vital information.

Convenience Shoppers:

The store will be a natural stop for tourists and citizens alike who will purchase the sundry items that the store would provide. The Delta Campus, which houses Omega Optical and Commonwealth Yogurt (currently under construction), employs 75+ people. Over the past several years, Friends of Algiers Village has collaborated with the Windham Housing Trust to develop moderate and mixed-income housing. Presently, there are 7 rental housing units occupied in the historic Tontine Building (on the corner of Rte 5 and the Guilford Center Road) and there are plans underway for the construction of 2 new buildings which will house an additional 16 rental units. These buildings will be located on the Guilford Center Road directly across from the Guilford Volunteer Fire Station - a short walk to the store. There are also a number of smaller businesses within a small radius which will avail themselves to a new and improved Country Store.

The store will be the “easy” stop for Guilford residents who need convenience items that the store will offer.

Nostalgia Shoppers:

There are still many people: Guilford residents, tourists, hunters and others who search out the Country Store for the regional nostalgia it represents. The Vermont brand is unique, accepted and desired and with the Country Store tying together all these components it can't help but be successful for present and future generations.

The combination of convenience and nostalgia shoppers as well the community people attracted by meeting rooms, tables and picnic tables should assure a successful investment for the store operator.

Products and Services

The store will have traditional convenience items: newspapers, milk, flour, candy, beer, soda, coffee, etc. What will make the store unique will be its selection of locally grown meat, vegetables, fruit, milk, preserves and locally baked goods, sandwiches and prepared meals. There is also the option of selling local crafts (woven goods, pottery, etc.). Possible future services may include postal services as well as gasoline sales.

As part of bringing the building up to code, a wheelchair ramp, public restroom and public space with information about Guilford will be incorporated. We also anticipate that picnic tables will be provided for outside eating. Structural improvements will be the responsibility of the owner. Store operator will provide furniture and equipment that are not "fixtures" i.e., items that s/he would anticipate taking when lease expires.

Because the town of Guilford's population and the traveling public represent a wide variety of income levels, the potential exists for a delicatessen/ sandwich and prepared food business.

The opportunity for success for the store operator is limited only by his/her imagination and dedication. Subsequently, the operator's success

will assure that the building will continue to be a historic landmark, serving the community for generations to come.

Future Plans

FOAVI acquired the Guilford Country Store property in August, 2010.

Future plans for the property by FOAVI include:

- Renovate the retail space to meet current State codes, provide accessibility, a public space and a public restroom
- Ultimately restore the entire structure following the guidelines set forth in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- Contract with an experienced operator to run the store
- Continue to lease space to the Town of Guilford for two recycle containers on the property
- Seek listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Timeline and Application Process

- Site visit(s) by request
- Letters of Interest (LOI) will be accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis
- Invitation to submit a full proposal will be sent out to prospective operators whose LOI's are selected by committee

- If selected, the prospective operator will be asked to submit a full proposal within 10 business days of notification
- It is anticipated that the store will be ready to open in the winter of 2011.

FOAVI reserves the right to adjust the schedule presented above.

Letters of Interest may be sent by mail or electronic means. No faxes, please. They should be addressed to:

Eric Morse, President
Friends Of Algiers Village, Inc.
638 Coolidge Highway
Guilford, VT 05301

emorse@sover.net

FOAVI reserves the right to reject all offers. FOAVI representatives are available to clarify points contained in this request and will share responses with all responders. Questions and requests for additional information should be submitted by email to Fred Humphrey (fredhump@gmail.com), Anne Rider (rider.anne@gmail.com) or Katie Buckley (guilfordta@yahoo.com).

Response Requirements

- Provide your name, postal address, and phone and email.
- Describe your experience and proposed plan to operate a country store and, if you possess it, your experience with operating a similar business.
- It is a goal of FOAVI to provide new employment opportunities to low and moderate income individuals. Please indicate your willingness to participate in this goal. Based on your vision of this business in its early stages, for how many staffing hours a week do you anticipate needing hired help.
- Describe your proposed business model and your roles and responsibilities in it.
- Describe how you would propose to collaborate with FOAVI and the Town of Guilford in once again making the Guilford Country Store a cornerstone of the Village and the Town.

Other Requirements and Information

Applicants will be expected to comply with all laws, ordinances, permits, and regulations that may in any way affect the proposed venture. Any changes to the local, state, or federal permits and/or additional permits, licenses, or approvals are the responsibility of the applicant.

The successful applicant will be required to carry Comprehensive General Liability Insurance for their business.

Any future changes to the business plan or operation will be subject to review by FOAVI. FOAVI will make this award without any discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, color, age, creed, or national origin. FOAVI expects the selected lessee to act in the same fashion. All expenses incurred in the preparation and submission of a letter of interest in response to this request shall be borne by the applicant.