

Voting 'yes' on both Gale School warrant articles is the right thing to do

Written by Edward Engler

To The Daily Sun.

There are two articles concerning the Gale School on the warrant for the 2018 Shaker Regional School District voting session to be held on March 13 at the Belmont High School. These articles both deserve a "yes" vote. They may seem to have conflicting purposes, but they don't. The school district needs to have the Gale School off school property in the reasonably near future and these two articles will ensure that happens — one way or the other.

Article 4 authorizes the school district to sell the Gale School to the Save Our Gale School (SOGS) organization for \$1. The SOGS has obtained non-profit status with both the IRS and the State of N.H., has secured an end user for the school and, working with the N.H. Preservation Alliance, got the Gale School prioritized as one of the "Seven To Save" historic properties in N.H. We have nearly everything in place to move, restore and reuse the Gale School. No further progress can be made until we have the voters' approval of the sale of the school to SOGS. Once that has been obtained, SOGS can secure a lot for the Gale School, make final arrangements with our building mover and embark on a program to obtain the remaining funds needed. A "Yes" vote gives SOGS the green light to maintain the momentum we have developed and get this done.

Article 5 authorizes the school district to have the Gale School demolished if it has not been moved off school property by August of 2019 and authorizes the expenditure of the additional funds that will be required to address any hazardous materials issues before demolition. This article provides the district with a fallback option if, for some unforeseen reason, SOGS is not successful in getting the Gale School moved by August 2019.

I do believe, based on the cooperation and support the school board has given SOGS in the last year or so, that if SOGS was almost ready and weather or something similar was holding the move up by a few days or weeks, the board would not proceed to tear down the Gale School and would let SOGS finish the move. If SOGS has not been successful by that time, we are not likely to ever succeed and further delay is not justified.

Voting "no" on Article 4 to transfer the Gale School to SOGS, but voting "yes" on Article 5 to demolish it only results in guaranteeing the school district will have to spend the additional funds to deal with the hazmat issue. The best economic choice is to vote "yes" on both articles. It is also the right thing to do.

Voting "yes" on both Article 4 and Article 5 is fair and gives both the SOGS and the school board the authorizations to move forward and get the Gale School issue resolved for once and for all. Both SOGS and the board have dealt with this issue for over 20 years. Now there is a positive resolution in sight, with excellent odds for success and a "fail safe" provision if needed.

Please exercise the right that has been bought for you at such great sacrifice throughout our nation's history and go vote in both the town and school district balloting on March 13 at Belmont High School. I urge you to vote "yes" on both Article 4 and Article 5 on the Shaker Regional School District ballot, but whatever you do, at least go vote.

Woodbury "Woody" Fogg
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