

Marlboro Music: The Potash Hill Campus



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Thank you for your interest in helping us to identify uses for the Potash Hill campus. Before submitting your ideas, we ask that you first read the following description of the property and its management. Then, please submit your ideas, along with some information about yourself and/or your organization, to our staff member, Brigid Lucey, at blucey@potashhill.org. Brigid will pass along your suggestions to the Potash Hill board and task force.

Overview

Potash Hill is located in the southern Vermont town of Marlboro, between Brattleboro and Wilmington, off Route 9. It is owned by Potash Hill, Inc., a nonprofit subsidiary of the Marlboro School of Music. It is a lovely 560-acre property with 18th century farm houses, arts and academic buildings, expansive views, fields, private roads, and undeveloped forests with extensive hiking trails. From 1946-2020, it served as the home campus to Marlboro College. Hartford's Bradley Airport is about 90 minutes away, and Boston's Logan Airport is 2.5 hours by car. There is also daily train service to Brattleboro from many east coast cities.

Residential Facilities

The campus contains 7 dormitories with 73 rooms (51 doubles), as well as 30 houses, cottages, cabins, and apartments, each with private kitchens and baths, that are suitable for adults and families. Depending on how the spaces are allocated, the campus can accommodate at least 230 students and adults. There is college furniture in all of the living spaces.

Common Use Buildings

The campus includes other buildings one would expect of a small liberal arts college: a library (26,000 SF, still with many books); a 600-seat auditorium (that doubles as a gym); a 200-seat dining hall with institutional kitchen; administrative buildings; a health center with adjoining coffee shop and bookstore; and academic buildings, including a science facility and a large converted barn with classrooms and offices. The campus has an emphasis on the arts. In addition to the auditorium, it contains a new building with music studios; a facility with a recital hall, recording studio, practice rooms, and a dance studio; and a theater-in-the-round, with costume and set shops. There are also visual arts buildings with painting, pottery, woodworking, photography, and print-making studios. The property also includes a greenhouse, small observatory, and maintenance facilities.

Annual Operations

Annual campus maintenance costs are about \$1.4 million (\$117,000 per month), plus capital expenses. This includes a maintenance staff, utilities, security and fire safety, insurance, taxes, internet (there is good fiber optic internet on campus), phones (including lines in each dorm room and office), snow plowing, and grounds maintenance. Since the campus is at high elevation, there can be wintry conditions from November through March; for the occasional power outages, residents rely on back-up generators in five buildings.

Compatible Use

We are seeking use of the property that is compatible with our summer program; respectful of the community; protective of the historic buildings, undeveloped land, and ecology of the campus; and capable of covering nine months of campus costs. Since we require privacy for our program, from June through August tenants must vacate the residential facilities and many other buildings on campus. We have allocated several weeks before and after our season to transition the property (e.g. converting residential housing, moving pianos, etc.).



Off-Season Use

Despite these restrictions, Potash Hill offers compelling opportunities for institutions and individuals who love nature and seek a secluded rural setting for their work and community. In addition, we can envision landlord-tenant collaborations, such as cross promotion, facility enhancements, joint fundraising for property management and land conservation, and even programmatic outreach. Moreover, tenants would be associated with a landlord with a strong administration, rich history and worldwide reputation.

Options for Consideration

There are various possibilities for use of the campus: (1) a single 9-month tenant; (2) several organizations sharing the campus; or (3) a use that is newly-created. Our goal is for tenants who are:

- Nonprofit, progressive, inclusive and dedicated to a fair and just society.
- Cultural and/or educational.
- Reputable, stable, and financially self-sustaining.
- Welcomed by the town, region, and state.
- Supportive of environmentalism, land conservation, and historic preservation.

Of course, compromises may be necessary, and the cost of maintaining the campus must be a key factor in our deliberations. Yet, we are interested in exploring uses that promote the values we hold dear and that, like Marlboro Music, are visionary, idealistic, and well-respected in their field.



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