

New School, old campus Maharishi site to become boarding school

By Sam Bonacci, Monadnock Ledger-Transcript Staff

ANTRIM—The Maharishi Academy of Total Knowledge is moving forward with plans for a prep school at the 450-acre former Nathaniel Hawthorne College site.

John Boncheff, director of the Maharishi Academy, presented plans for the boarding school at the North Branch Road site to the planning Board at its Oct. 4 meeting, highlighting the positive relationship the school plans to have with Antrim.

The academy would be an all-boy college preparatory school, grades 9-12, Boncheff told the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript yesterday. The students will primarily be from surrounding areas, such as Boston, Providence, New York,

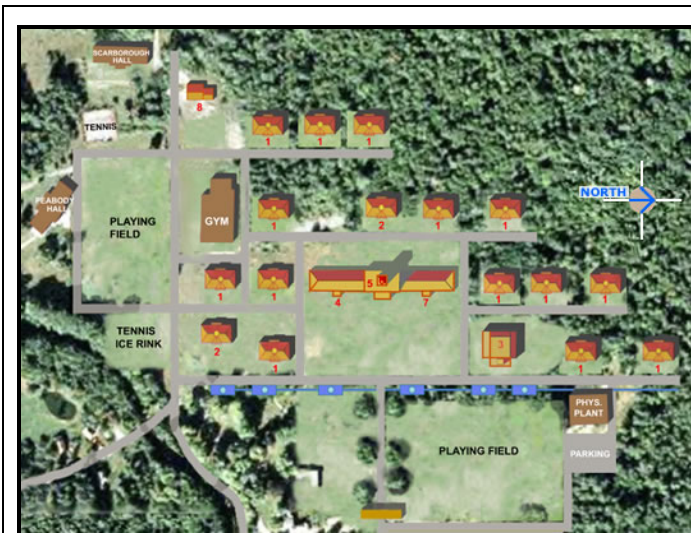
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**John Boncheff,
academy director**

and throughout New Hampshire. The school will have no religious affiliation, although students will participate in meditation to encourage their development and enhance their learning experience at the school, Boncheff said.

"We have the traditional subjects, but we add this technique to develop the student's inner potential," he said.

Hawthorne College was founded in 1962 on the Flint Estate. Its name was shortened to Hawthorne College in the



Initial plans, as presented to the Antrim Planning Board, for the Maharishi Academy of Total Knowledge detail how the preparatory high school will be laid out; an official proposal is expected in January.

1980s when it merged with the Florida Institute of Technology. The doors to the college were closed in 1988. The land was purchased 10 years ago and had been used as the national Maharishi administration headquarters, said Boncheff.

Following a switch to a more regional system, the use of the site as an academy was examined. "It seemed like a good use for the property," said Boncheff.

The boarding school, which would have 444 students, would be smaller than Hawthorne College, which had 1,000 students, Boncheff said, adding that the impact on the community through the use of roads and facilities would be one-fifth of what had been the case with the college, he said.

The school would feature a gated entrance and 24-hour security. Other measures would be taken to minimize the use of town services by the school, said Boncheff.

The new academy would benefit the town of Antrim in a number of ways, he said. The five existing buildings would be renovated, including a 400-seat auditorium and a \$250,000 renovation of the gymnasium.

The academy would work to make those spaces, as well as tennis courts, an ice rink, and two playing fields, available

for use by town residents, said Boncheff. The facilities, such as the gymnasium, would be especially available in the summer when the student population would be less, he said.

"We will work with the town of Antrim to allow the people to have access," Boncheff said Wednesday.

There would be 21 new buildings, including 14 dorms, according to the Maharishi Academy Web site. Boncheff also highlighted the 110 jobs that he said would be created by the boarding school. The jobs would be year-round and cover all income levels, including faculty positions, as well as maintenance and administration.

"We really need your support for this to happen and we want to be good neighbors," Boncheff told Planning Board members.

The site plan review will be submitted to the board in January. Boncheff said the conceptual consultation was made before the board specifically to give the people of Antrim a chance to ask questions and give recommendations.

"We just really want this to be a partnership with the town of Antrim. So if there are suggestions from the people of Antrim, we are very interested in hearing them," Boncheff said.