

# Request for Proposal to Establishment a Business in the Historic Gilbert Block Building

## 5 Commercial St, Gilbertsville NY

### **RFP Overview**

The Village Improvement Society of Gilbertsville (VIS) a registered nonprofit, owns and manages the Gilbert Block Building in the heart of Gilbertsville, NY. The Gilbert Block is a late 19<sup>th</sup> century, three section, Tudor-style building with three naturally lit storefronts and artist's studios upstairs. It was designed to be the economic center of the village and remains so today. One of the storefronts is home to a thriving new business, [Five Kids Bakehouse](#), which has made Gilbertsville a popular destination for pastry lovers from miles around.

We are seeking proposals to operate a business from the middle storefront within this building. This space was most recently the Value Way grocery store and has been vacant since August 2020. The VIS is a community organization with a strong desire to see something that generates foot traffic downtown to complement, but not directly compete with the Bakehouse.

We are requesting business proposals for this space. The requirements for the proposal are listed below. Please submit by December 1st, 2022. Submit in PDF format to [visgilbertsville@gmail.com](mailto:visgilbertsville@gmail.com).

### **Our Organization**

Founded in 1886, the VIS is a 501c3 organization with a seven-person, volunteer executive board and approximately 100 members. We own and maintain the Gilbert Block building and the Gilbertsville post office building, as well as the adjacent park area on Commercial Street. We also own the Overlook Park, across State Highway 51 from this area. Our mission, as written, is: *...to benefit the general social and public welfare and to combat community deterioration through charitable, educational, and historical projects that are promoted through existing organizations rather than by help to individuals.* In the course of our 135-year history, we've taken on varied projects benefiting the local economy and culture. These include:

- Organized tree-planting after fires tore through downtown in the late 1800s
- Mobilized against and successfully blocked an Army Corps of Engineers project to flood the valley (1979)
- Registered the entire Village of Gilbertsville on the National Register of Historic Places (1983)
- Initiated a popular program offering Gilbert Block studios to active local visual artists at affordable rates (1990s)
- Pursued funding opportunities to facilitate recovery from the catastrophic 2006 flood (2006-07)
- Completely renovated the west end of the Gilbert Block, including a new septic, electric, furnace and fuel tank, flooring, installed a commercial kitchen, bathroom, drywall and paint. (2020-21)

### **The Community**

Gilbertsville is home to a wonderful mix of lifelong residents, generational families, artists, and recent urban transplants. Together, they comprise a strong and intimate community. There is a steady influx of seasonal visitors as well, with events such as weddings at the Major's Inn, Centennial Farms, and the Gilbertsville Farmhouse, as well as horse shows by Gilbertsville Horse Shows, baseball camps and holiday weekends bringing people to town. As of the 2010 census, Gilbertsville's population was 399, while the population of the Town of Butternuts (which surrounds the village) was 1786. The demographics of our area are shifting with new families moving from the Hudson valley and New York City area, bringing a new perspective on what type of businesses can thrive here.

Until July, 2020, the middle bay of the Gilbert Block was occupied by the Gilbertsville Value Way, a “general store”-style business that offered grocery staples, refrigerated beverages, local craft items and a consistent array of hot and cold sandwiches, soups, and hot dishes “to go.” The Value Way existed in some iteration for over 50 years. There is considerable desire among residents for a place to purchase provisions (milk, eggs, bread, snacks, beer, dry goods, local produce) in the village or to sit with friends and enjoy café style dining. Priority will be given for plans that include a general store/grocery or some form of a café or restaurant.

### **Project Goals**

The key goals of this project are as follows: to provide goods or services that will benefit the community, to generate foot traffic downtown (and ideally, traffic from out-of-town as well), to provide a consistent and reliable presence that will help anchor the local economy while also preserving the historic character of the space and the building as a whole.

### **The Space**

This storefront boasts original shelving, drawers and counter space, and lots of historic charm. It is roughly 24'x 60' – 1440 square feet with 22 feet of windows and an awning across the front façade facing Commercial Street, and windows across the same space in the rear of the building. The rear windows overlook the Dunderburg Creek. Features include a 10-foot original tin ceiling, 8-foot stained wood wainscoting, built in drawers and shelving, and a 17' original wood counter. Four additional windows are being restored at the rear of the building to introduce even more light than is currently available. A rear egress with stairs down to the creek wall and back yard could eventually be considered. Basement access for shared storage space may be negotiable.

### **Expenses**

In the interest of supporting our local businesses, and to defray startup expenses, the VIS offers the following lease structure:

Rent, years 1-5 - \$350/mo increasing slowly to \$500/mo over the five-year term. We require a five year lease term. Tenants are responsible for utilities, including electric, heat (oil burning furnace), water, and insurance.

For budgeting purposes, you may use the following numbers to estimate operating expenses:

Electric: \$100-\$200/month, depending on usage and equipment

Heat: \$3000-\$5000/year

Water: \$200-\$400/year

Insurance: \$800-\$1,500/year for the required million dollar business insurance policy. This cost may be markedly higher for certain types of businesses (a daycare, for example).

Please indicate in your proposal how much capital you would be able to contribute to interior upgrades. We encourage viable proposals to earmark **\$5-\$10k** for improvements to the space.

## Requirements

- An EIN, aka Employer Identification Number, or a Taxpayer ID number once business is established
- An intention to conduct business face-to-face, with live human beings. (Ecommerce cannot be the primary sales channel for your business.)
- An intention to leave the historic character of the space intact, including the original shelving and drawers, counter, and windows front and back.
- A business plan covering the first five years in operation, and including:
  - An executive summary of business, including the mission statement
  - Products and services, outlining pricing, product lifespan, benefits to the customer, productions/manufacturing process, note any patents, proprietary technology, and R&D
  - Intended hours of operation and how many employees you expect to have
  - Marketing strategy and analysis, including competition/peer organizations in the area (include strengths and weaknesses), consumer demand, and expected ease of acquiring market share. This section will describe how the organization will acquire and keep its client base and should include an outline of the distribution channels with advertising and marketing plans
  - Budget, including estimations of revenues and expenses related to the operation of the business for a set period of time.

## Application Structure

Your application should contain:

- A Letter of Intent outlining your interest in Gilbertsville, the storefront space, serving the community, and working with the Village Improvement Society. (Tours of the space will be made available to those submitting proposals. Please email Greg Watson at [gwatsonpainter@gmail.com](mailto:gwatsonpainter@gmail.com) to make an appointment)
- A business plan, as outlined above, with details covering your operation's first five years in business

## Timeline

- Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis. They are due December 1st, 2022 and can be submitted in PDF format to [visgilbertsville@gmail.com](mailto:visgilbertsville@gmail.com). Our selection will be notified no later than February 10th, 2023, and the space will be made available at that time. The business will be expected to open to the community no later than June 1st, 2023.