

Portsmouth Herald

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Maine Meat has big plans for restaurant, expansion



Maine Meat owners Shannon Hill, left, and Jarrod Spangler, right, have a purchase and sale agreement with Best Automotive owner Cissy Furbish, seen behind the desk at her business Monday. Hill and Spangler plan to relocate the butchery and expand to open a restaurant at the new location. PHOTOS BY DEB CRAM/PORTSMOUTH HERALD

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Portsmouth Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

KITTERY, Maine – Maine Meat's owners are planning a relocation to space occupied by Best Automotive to open a new butcher shop and expand into a restaurant.

The plan means Maine Meat would close its nearby location in the heart of the town's Foreside area.

Co-owners Shannon Hill and Jarrod Spangler have a purchase and sale agreement in place to buy the Best Automotive car repair shop property at 2 Rogers Road. A proposal filed with the town notes the repair shop building would be renovated and expanded to house the butcher's shop and restau-



Hill hugs Furbish, expressing the gratitude she and Spangler feel over a deal to purchase the property to expand their business.

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Meat

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rant, while the existing gas station canopy on the property would be demolished.

Best Automotive currently remains open for business. Town Planning Board members will first review the proposal at the group's meeting Thursday evening at Town Hall.

Hill and Spangler had expressed interest in the property to Best Automotive owner Cissy Furbish several years ago, making it known they were interested if the opportunity ever presented itself. When Hill arrived for a snow tire appointment last year, Furbish, who opened the shop 34 years ago with her now late husband, Bruce Furbish, told Hill she was ready to turn the property over to new ownership.

"Our heart was just always set on this. I couldn't believe it," Hill said Monday.

"I'm just happy that it's going to someone local," Furbish said.

Hill and Spangler have shared restaurant dream for a long time

Maine Meat is currently located in 7 Wallingford Square, the same commercial property down the street where Lil's Cafe, Folk, Anju Noodle Bar, Winter Holben architecture and design and other businesses operate.

The business is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. Prior to 2024, Hill and Spangler had been looking for a new location with more parking and accessibility than in the Foreside.

"I've always loved this little corner spot. It always seemed like it had a lot of potential to do something fun here," Spangler said.



Shannon Hill, right, gets emotional while speaking with Best Automotive owner Cissy Furbish about her selling the property to her and Jarrod Spangler, owners of Maine Meat. The three are seen at Best Automotive Monday. DEB CRAM/SEACOASTONLINE

The Maine Meat co-owners' meet-cute took place in 2006 at the former Pepperland Cafe in South Berwick. Hill was a regular patron when co-owner Lindsey Altshul, who has since died, called her asking if she would come work front of house on Friday nights. Altshul knew Hill was familiar with the menu and had bartending and serving experience.

"So I showed up at my favorite restaurant to work and we literally collided in the kitchen," Hill said of her first interaction with Spangler. "I didn't know there was a dish pit off to the side and we ran into each other. That's how we met."

Eighteen years later, the two are working to bring their dream of opening a restaurant to life.

"It's always been something that we wanted to work into. That was always the plan. We were kind of getting

closer to doing something and then COVID hit and put everything on the back burner," Spangler said.

"Everything works out for a reason," Hill added. "We live in town. We're Kittery residents. To own a piece of commercial property in Kittery is the dream."

"It's going to somebody in Kittery that's going to do something for Kittery besides making it into a condo," Furbish said.

Change will be hard for Furbish, though she's looking ahead to the future.

"I'm losing all my customers that have become friends. Moving on is kind of scary and exciting," she said.

Maine Meat's expansion plan details

Best Automotive is 1,328 square feet in size, according to Maine Meat's proposal filed with the town. If approved, the project to turn the building into a butcher's shop and restaurant would bring it to just over 3,400 square feet.

Maine Meat's mission is to continue serving local community charities and organizations, including Footprints Food Pantry, the town Little League and R.W. Traip Academy's food program, in addition to area farmers.

"We're so lucky," Hill said. "Ten years in, we own a business that is so supported by the community that we can add this component, continue to grow and, like Cissy said, continue to serve the community."

"I'm happy that we've been able to support a lot of different farms over the years and help people grow. We'll be able to support more, help our farmers grow and provide more meat. Our business is based on our farmers doing well, so to be able to help support them and help them grow, (have them) be able to raise more animals and sell more, that helps everybody out."

The Kittery Planning Board will meet Thursday at 6 p.m.

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