

LAMPSON BROOK FARM MANAGEMENT PLAN

Submitted to the Lampson Brook Farm Board by
Conservation Works, LLC

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Lampson Brook Farm Board Members

Robert O'Connor, Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Jonathan Spiegel, Belchertown EDIC

Gerard Kennedy, Mass Department of Agricultural Resources

Tammy Ryan, Belchertown Agricultural Commission

David Haines, Belchertown Conservation Commission

Nikolas Gove, Mass Department of Conservation & Recreation

DRAFT
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WHAT THE PLAN COVERS

This Land Management Plan is a product of many discussions among the new Lampson Brook Farm (LBF) Board, the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), members of the New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) Board and collaborators, former NESFI staff, Belchertown residents, representatives of Belchertown Town Government, farmers and farm groups currently active on the farm, and outside experts. It covers the big picture for the overall 430-acre farm property, the farm's five representative parcels and their future management, expectations for the way in which each of the parcel will be managed, and the following specific management categories: the farm's biodiversity, forests and agricultural uses, historic structures and landscape, trails and trail users, and adjacent open space. This Plan does not provide legal advice of any kind.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For decades it has been the hope of NESFI, its late Executive Director Judy Gillan, and the farmers and supporters of Lampson Brook Farm, that the farm be preserved from development and its future as a dynamic leader in farm education and sustainable production will be assured. Thanks to the legislation filed and supported by Sen. Eric Lesser and passed in January 2021, their hopes should soon be realized. The legislation provides that the farm's five parcels, each with a different goal, will be passed on to parties chosen by the new Lampson Brook Farm Board and approved by DCAMM as best suited to managing them properly.

Senator Lesser, the Town of Belchertown, and many others have helped lead the campaign for the legislation and the land preservation plan. Now the expectation is that the Management Plan will help guide the next steps.

Transfer of the five parcels from DCAMM to new owners will take place following DCAMM's approval of a survey, appraisals, environmental site assessment, and Management Plan. The following acreages are based on survey figures provided in March 2022.

- Community Farm Parcel – 54 acres to go to a non-profit organization and to be protected by a permanent Conservation Restriction and Historic Preservation Restriction.
- Commercial Farm Parcel – 114 acres to go to the Mass Dept of Agricultural Resources and to be protected by MDAR's ownership.
- Forest Parcel – 242 acres to go to a non-profit organization and to be protected by a permanent Conservation Restriction.
- Jepson Farmstead Parcel – 8.4 acres to go to NESFI and to be protected by a permanent Historic Preservation Restriction.

- Enterprise Zone – 12.9 acres in two separate parcels (which, if approved, could be transferred separately) to go to a non-profit organization or a private entity to be managed as a sustainable, natural resource-based enterprise. Note that the Board may consider recommending more than one owner for the Enterprise Zone, depending on interest.

Ideally, the Lampson Brook Farm Board will promote coordination among the five ultimate owners with the common goal of the conservation and sustainable management of farm and forest resources, the promotion of and provision for passive outdoor recreation with a special access easement for the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts, the enhancement and promotion of local economic opportunity including tourism, the protection of open space including Lampson Brook Farm’s historic working agricultural landscape and viewshed, the protection of habitat and promotion of biodiversity, and the preservation and appropriate use of historic farm structures and infrastructure.

The Board will conduct fair and wide-ranging searches for the entities that will own the Enterprise Zone, Community Farm Parcel, and Forest Parcel, and will control the new Lampson Brook Farm Fund. The Fund may be used toward the restoration of any of the five parcels, administrative support to the Board, and related expenses.

The Board will look for ways in which the new parcel owners can strengthen the farm’s diversity and revitalize its infrastructure. The Board is also interested in examining ways to include farmers of color and low-income farmers in decision-making, and work with Indigenous peoples in guiding the future of the farm. There is the possibility of creating farmer housing on one or more of the parcels. The Nipmuc Nation has suggested the possibility of establishing an “agrihood” that would combine farming with farmer housing. It is important to recognize that this entire region is traditional Nipmuc territory that was also inhabited and traveled by peoples of the nearby Nonotuck, Wampanoag, Mohegan, Pequot, Mohican, and Abenaki. The selection of new owners for the Community Farm, Forest and Enterprise parcels will be made by the Board and approved by DCAMM after an open Request for Proposals process following the guidance of Massachusetts Chapter 355 of the Acts of 2020.

The Board will also work to assemble the resources necessary to preserve nearby properties as parts of a larger network of open space. The farm has the potential to draw on its rich history to create a destination that will serve residents of Belchertown, the region, and other parts of the Commonwealth. The property is well suited to bringing together farming, farm training and education, food production for underserved communities, conservation, demonstration forestry, history, art, and outdoor recreation. Its trail network could serve as a link among the various parcels and other local destinations. Past studies and plans such as those created by the Conway School of Landscape Design and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, discussed below, provide suggestions for future landscaping and program elements.

Management of the future use of the five parcels will be achieved by:

- (1) The Conservation and Historic Preservation Restrictions, which will be fashioned by the board, the future holders of the restrictions, and the new owners.
- (2) A proposed new Value-added Agriculture zoning district whose goal is to allow a wide variety of agriculturally related pursuits and prevent incompatible uses.
- (3) A proposed Memorandum of Agreement among the future owners and the Board to be put in place after the owners take title. The Board is also looking into the possibility of a longer-term covenant among the parcel owners and the Board (similar to that used at the Economic Development Industrial Corporation at the adjacent campus area) but Chapter

355 of the Acts of 2020 may need to be amended to go beyond the 25 years agreement authorized therein.

- (4) In the event that a subsequent potential buyer of the Community Farm parcel proposes to cease farming activities, there has been discussion of a possible right of first refusal that would allow MDAR or another party to purchase the parcel and keep it in farming.

Possible options in front of the Board as it goes about securing compatible uses of the Enterprise Zone parcel and implementing the Management Plan are several:

- Requiring a Memorandum of Agreement among the future owners of the five Lampson Brook parcels to secure initial or continuing cooperative management. In order to be an enforceable contract, all the parties to the MOA would need to intend to create such a contract. Otherwise, the MOA is simply an expression of mutual understanding of such a contract.
- A deed restriction held by a third party may be necessary to make sure that new uses continue to be compatible with the Management Plan. Part of this goal might be accomplished by the proposed zoning ordinance. Deed restrictions are not permanent, but while they are in effect, they decrease the value of a property and can limit the pool of potential buyers. The holder of the deed restriction would need to be a party to the instrument creating the restriction and would need to have the resources and intent to enforce its terms, which should be written objectively. For example, a municipality may not make a determination of incompatibility without due process of law.
- Possibly solidifying a way to fund and accomplish site restoration, possibly before the Board issues an RFP soliciting bids on the parcel.
- Possibly finding room on the parcel for a non-agricultural enterprise whose purchase would boost the LBF Fund and which might assist in coordinating other uses.

THE FARM AS A WHOLE

History of Lampson Brook Farm and New England Small Farm Institute, Inc

As noted on the Lampson Brook Farm website, the farm has been in continuous farm production for 250 years. It is close to the center of Belchertown and includes more than 220 acres of working woodland and rich natural habitat, sheltering rare native plants, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds. Its 160-plus acres of farmland produces vegetables, cut flowers, poultry, beef, small grains, and hay. It is home to the Belchertown Community Garden, the Pioneer Valley Biochar Initiative, and the Belchertown 4-H Community Garden Club. Its “working rural landscape” is on the National and Massachusetts Historic Registers and it has spectacular views of the Valley’s Mount Holyoke Range. The Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has recognized Lampson Brook Farm as a “Special Place,” confirming its significant ecological resources and cultural heritage. Note that the land now known as Belchertown was used as planting grounds (food production) for the Indigenous bands in the area including the Quaboag, whose main village is now known as the Brookfields. A major trail led through parts of today’s Belchertown that Nipmucs and other Native residents used to travel between bands and seasonal settlements.

As noted by former NESFI co-director Kathy Ruhf, the late Judy Gillan’s passion for land stewardship, agriculture and social action was galvanized in 1978 when a local citizens’ action group called Women in Agriculture, Food Policy and Land Use Reform founded NESFI. Kathy writes, “The group, including Judy, petitioned the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to obtain

long-term secure tenure on 400 acres of state-owned land. NESFI's goal was to establish a small farm demonstration and training center on the former Belchertown State School Farmstead."

From the beginning, with Judy as Executive Director, NESFI improved the site, delivered farmer training and education, gathered an extensive agriculture library collection, and provided sub-leases to beginning farmers. Those practices have continued right up to the present. Literally hundreds of agriculturalists and on-the-ground farmers have benefited from Judy's knowledge, enthusiasm, and persistence, and have added to LBF's collective storehouse of experience.

The 2021 legislation and proposed amendments

After years of discussion and planning by a steering group coordinated by the late NESFI Executive Director Judy Gillan, the Mass Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), and Senator Eric Lesser and his staff, S2972 (Chapter 355 of the Acts of 2020, "An Act Providing for the Permanent Protection and Stewardship of the Historic Lampson Brook Farm") passed the Massachusetts Senate and House in January 2021. The bill designates five distinct parcels (defined by survey) as follows:

- The Commercial Agriculture Parcel (120 acres \pm) – 114 acres by survey
- The Community Farm Parcel (44 acres \pm) – 54 acres by survey
- The Enterprise Zone Parcel (10 acres \pm) – 12.9 acres by survey
- The Forest Parcel (240 acres \pm) – 242 acres by survey
- Jepson Farmstead Parcel (16 acres \pm) – 8.4 acres by survey

The legislation establishes the Lampson Brook Farm Board of Directors, describes the required management plan and the farm's important public values. Those values are (1) the conservation, sustainable management and demonstration of forest and farmland resources; (2) the promotion of and provision for passive outdoor recreation and for access by the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts; (3) the enhancement and promotion of local economic opportunity including tourism; (4) the protection and enhancement of regional open space, including Lampson Brook Farm's agricultural landscape and viewshed; (5) the protection of habitat and promotion of biodiversity; and (6) the preservation and appropriate use of historic farm structures and infrastructure. The Land Management Plan shall also include a Lampson Brook Farm vision statement and a 10-year renewing operating plan with input from experts, stakeholders and the local community.

The legislation provides for the establishment of a Lampson Brook Farm Fund and specifies that the five parcels will be passed to new owners as follows: the Community Farm parcel and the Forest Parcel to non-profit owners approved by the Board and DCAMM, the Jepson Farmstead parcel to NESFI, the enterprise zone parcels to a non-profit organization or a private entity approved by the Board and DCAMM for fee ownership or a 99-year lease, and the Commercial Farm parcel to the Mass Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR).

Amendments to legislation written in October 2021 but, as of the date of this plan, not yet approved by the Legislature, include these items:

- The amendments extend the deadline for action on land transfers to January 2023, 2 years from the date the initial legislation passed.
- The amendments clear the way for the Legislature to approve appropriations to the Lampson Brook Farm Fund while it is still overseen by the Board.



- The amendments remove the possibility of ground lease payments to the Fund because DCAMM will not be an owner in the future.
- The amendments include legal language that allows DCAMM to issue the RFPs and convey the Forest Parcel, Enterprise Zone, and Community Farm parcel to new owners,

- based on selection of those new owners by the LBF Board, since it is DCAMM that needs to do the conveying.
- The amendments clarify that the Commercial Farm parcel will be conveyed to MDAR.
- The amendments allow DCAMM to convey the landfill not included in the NESFI lease if it chooses.

PREVIOUS PLANS THAT IDENTIFIED POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS FOR THE FARM

This information is presented to provide insight into the values and guideposts of the coming land transfers and future of the farm. It may also provide good examples of the activities, responsibilities, and directions that may be possible in each particular parcel under new ownership.

Recommendations from the 2014 Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Report

PVPC's report dated September 2014, "A Community Vision for Agriculture and Open Space at Lampson Brook Farm, Belchertown, Massachusetts," was presented as "A summary of community goals, ideas and possibilities for the 430-acre Lampson Brook Farm property near Belchertown Center and the former Belchertown State School campus." Some of its central points are as follows:

- The loss of the site to development, or inaccessibility created by adjacent development, would be a significant loss of open space in the town.
- The Lampson Brook Site provides ecosystem services worth \$475,000-\$1.375,000 per year. They include stormwater management, water quality protection, carbon storage, erosion control, and air pollution removal.
- A few of the possibilities for the future are these:
 - Facilities improved to better support dairy, livestock, grains and food processing and sales.
 - Improved processing facilities for agricultural products.
 - Restaurant/café seasonal or year-round.
 - Discovery Center with information kiosk and community center.
 - Connections to former state school redevelopment and town center.
 - Add new trails including multi-access to serve former BSS clients, families and friends.
 - Bird and wildlife observation.
 - Solar PV on farm structures, buildings, and parking area canopies.
 - Gas heat from anaerobic digester.
- Establish and enforce management standards for highly visible fields that border public roads.
- Establish a food processing station (vegetable washing, packing).
- Designate a preferred parking area, possibly off George Hannum Road across from the Sewage Treatment Plant.
- The plan proposes a Small Farm Discovery and Education Center that would function as a hub for an interpretive and educational trail network.
- The plan also proposes a possible Natural Resource-based Business Park. Considerations for attracting small businesses to the Lampson Brook Farm location would include:
 - Small scale – probably less than 20-30 employees.
 - Locally owned and local target

market. • Financially secure with a sound business plan. • A business mission that complements Lampson Brook Farm’s public purpose, such as sustainable and organic agricultural production. • Leverages benefits from location in an attractive rural setting. • Makes use of options available for creative financing, including attracting tax incentives or credits, flexible lease payment terms. • Flexible local regulations, including zoning.

Recommendations from the 2014 Conway School Master Plan

The Conway School of Landscape Design Master Plan for Lampson Brook, prepared in 2014, was prepared (1) to design education, demonstration, and gathering spaces to accommodate NESFI programming needs, (2) to design spaces that engage the community and generate revenue, (3) to enhance the sense of place of the NESFI core, and (4) connect the NESFI core with new and existing trails through surrounding agricultural fields, natural areas, and future enterprise zones.

The plan provides an array of fascinating design alternatives for various farm spaces and buildings which should be considered by potential future occupants of the various farm parcels. Garden beds, ornamental and shade-tree plantings, decks, kiosks, seating nooks, gathering spaces, bioswales, welcoming signs, reorganized parking, interpretive paths, trellises, improved drainage, apprentice housing, and an events pavilion are among the plan’s recommendations. Note that as yet none of those design alternatives have been implemented, but all of them may be possible as the farm moves into a new phase.

Recommendations and observations include the following:

- All agricultural and other uses of the stream called Lampson Brook should follow farm practices that protect its water quality. Forest buffers should be established or widened to protect the brook.
- For a farmland trail system to be successful, NESFI’s sub-leaseholders must plan for an increase in visitors.
- To accommodate an increase in use and visitors to the Horse Barn, it should be connected to the town sewer or equipped with a composting toilet storage tank in its cellar.
- The farm core’s historic buildings and large, centrally located open field provide opportunities to generate revenue and serve educational uses.
- The current main parking area next to First Barn should be reconfigured and a formal overflow parking plan created.
- A photovoltaic or solar hot water system on the First Barn’s south-facing roof could improve the building’s heat and energy systems and provide a sustainable, reliable heat and energy source.
- Additional shade around the central field of the farm core would help create a more comfortable environment for visitors to the sunny field.
- The Jepson House north of Jackson Street could be remodeled as a bed-and-breakfast to host overnight visitors to the farm.

How “the five parcels” relate to each other

The parcel map above shows the farm’s internal and external boundaries. The central, main Forest Parcel is surrounded by the Commercial Farm parcels, the Community Farm parcels, and the Enterprise Zone parcels. Jepson Farmstead is to the north, across Jackson Street from the

community farm parcel. The historic First Barn and Horse Barn structures are within the community farm parcel, and the federally recognized historic viewshed includes the community farm parcel, the commercial farm parcels, and some of the associated buildings. The northern forest parcel, located north of George Hannum Road, currently includes the compost area (whose ultimate parcel designation is to be established).

The intent of the legislation and the Land Management Plan is to create a framework to transfer the land out of state ownership into private (except for MDAR) ownership by whomever is best suited as determined by the Board, to continue the vision and values in place for the farm as a demonstration and operational place for renewable and sustainable agriculture by small scale farmers and the community, and to ensure protection of conservation and historic values.

Future Plan Amendments

The Lampson Brook Farm Board will endeavor to conduct an annual review of the Management Plan to consider any necessary changes in coordination with the various stakeholders. The Management Plan may be amended in accordance with a process to be set forth in the Board's Bylaws and must be updated each ten years per the legislation.

PARCEL BY PARCEL DESCRIPTIONS WITH PRINCIPAL MANAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS IN BOLD

COMMUNITY FARM PARCEL

Purposes of the Community Farm parcel shall include (1) historic preservation and land conservation, (2) passive recreation, (3) promotion of small-scale farming, local food production and food system development, and (4) farm management services, (5) demonstration and education.

The Lampson Brook Farm legislation authorizes the LBF Board to select, along with DCAMM approval, the sale of the Community Farm Parcel through a competitive process based on the compatibility of the applicant's proposal with the Management Plan, the applicant's ability to steward the parcel, and any other criteria established by the Board.

The owner of the parcel should be prepared to work with, and retain where possible, farmers currently leasing and working farm plots and establish an open process for selecting new or existing farm partners to take over agricultural activities on segments of the Community Farm parcel when an existing program partner decides to relinquish their rented or leased segment. The owner should demonstrate a commitment to supporting small-scale farming that respects the environment and social and ecological responsibility. The owner should endeavor to involve the community in farm-related educational and cultural activities on the parcel. The preservation and restoration of the historic barns on the parcel should also be a priority. Activities on the parcel shall comply with the Conservation Restriction and Historic Preservation Restriction that will be developed for the site.

The owner of the parcel shall be responsible for providing "farm management" covering all of the parcels of the original farm in accordance with the expectations set forth in deeds and other documents under the guidance of the Lampson Brook Farm Board. The Community Farm parcel is in many ways the heart of Lampson Brook Farm. Hundreds of beginning and experienced

growers have benefited from the land and educational opportunities of the community farm, and the farm buildings have a long history as a valuable resource. The importance of this area was dramatized by a large and enthusiastic turnout at a summer 2021 public gathering – people with strong opinions about potential uses of the community farm.

Vision for the Parcel

The Community Farm should continue the activities derived from the original NESFI vision of renewable, varied agriculture engaging new and seasoned farmers in a collaborative atmosphere of learning, sharing, experimenting and producing. Project partners – groups such as the Belchertown 4-H Community Garden Club and the Belchertown Community Garden – have benefited from the availability of land at the Community Farm to fulfill their missions. A portion of the Community Farm should be reserved for demonstrations and workshops serving the town and larger community to raise awareness of good land practices. The new owner must honor the remainder of the farm-plot leases and conduct an open and public process to choose new leases.

For decades the Community Farm parcel and the rest of the Lampson Brook Farm have been under the supervision of NESFI. As background, NESFI's vision and mission statement are as follows:

Vision & Mission:

- ✦ We *Envision* a thriving Northeast agriculture in which sustainably managed, small-scale farms and farmers are valued, supported by public policy, and strengthened by the local communities they serve.
- ✦ As a place-based, non-profit organization, our *Mission* is to establish our Vision on the land – first & foremost, through development & sustainable management of *Lampson Brook Agricultural Reserve*.

Farming Philosophy & Values:

Farming philosophy & values shape the structure of every farm. NESFI has turned to its farming constituency to frame the philosophy & values that shape our work. In the words of successful, small-scale farming friends...

- ✦ *Small farms* are:
 - Intensively managed, diversified agriculture practiced on relatively small holdings, farmed at a scale in which the farmer is in intimate, direct and regular contact with all aspects of production.
 - Managed *and* worked by the farmer or farm family, and that the 'eyes-to-acres' ratio is small. The labor and management provided by the farmer is a significant portion of total labor and management, and the farm is small enough that the farmer is actively involved in all of it.
 -
- ✦ *Fundamental principles of a sustainable agriculture* include:
 - Respect for the constraints of ecological systems – decisions are made with knowledge of their ecological impacts; commitment to biodiversity;
 - Commitment to farming as a way of life, not simply a means of making a living;
 - Commitment to place – the farm is not a moveable unit of production, but a neighborhood presence;
 - Commitment to goals that consider the community, the environment, education and quality of life as well as profit; respect for the requirements of nature, farm family needs, and personal values and goals;

- Commitment to the regeneration of rural and farming communities;
- Commitment to on-farm nutrient and materials recycling; conservation and improvement of soil, water and air quality;
- Commitment to humane animal husbandry (i.e. the ethological needs of all livestock, or ‘the five freedoms: freedom to stretch all limbs, to groom, to turn around, to access adequate light, food and water, and to satisfy social needs’);
- Concern for social justice and social and ecological responsibility.

Possible Ideas for Future Uses of the Community Farm Parcel

Some of the suggestions brought up at the July 20, 2021, public meeting and by outside communications are as follows. These are ideas from which the Board may select or for the new owners to consider if they are so inclined and if the ideas are consistent with the Management Plan.

- Restore the two barns to serve as a farm store for local products, a place to sit and look at the landscape, a facility for cooking, a place to teach about organic farming, a place for community gatherings, and a focal point for local artisans.
- Provide pebble paths between the garden sections with nearby picnic tables and benches.
- Introduce floral gardens with sculptures surrounding or adjacent to the gardens.
- Connect the community garden with a trail to the forest parcel.
- Provide a shaded area or gazebo near the barns for people to congregate (the gazebo to be dedicated to Judy Gillan).
- Provide a trail to the pond for wildlife viewing.
- Build a rainwater collection system from the barns.
- Provide wells for agricultural water so as not to be dependent on town water.
- Encourage an on-site farmer’s market that would highlight LBF-grown products and possibly continue through the winter.
- Install information kiosks at the various entrance points to the property.
- Maintain a seed library along with an actual library of small farming practices in New England.
- Continue the model of encouraging multiple diverse uses.
- Encourage community food forests (the permaculture practice of growing multiple layers of vegetation together).
- Provide performance space.
- Require composting of plant wastes.
- Retain the machine repair shop as an invaluable resource for the entire LBF.
- Consider housing a mobile poultry processing facility.
- Consider providing farmer housing somewhere on the parcel or at the adjacent Jepson Farmstead.

Future funding of activities at the Community Farm parcel will need to accommodate salaries for staff, insurance, building maintenance, infrastructure improvements, and related expenses. Applicants for ownership of the Community Farm should demonstrate in their response to the RFP their financial capacity related to those items.

One possible avenue for future stewardship of the Community Farm parcel is to follow the pattern set by NESFI over the past several decades. According to NESFI, it would look like this: the New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) proposes to manage the Community Farm parcel

as a dynamic center for farmer training and education around sustainable production practices, building on its experience of over four decades as a steward on the Lampson Brook Farm site. NESFI is a land-based farming organization dedicated to advancing sustainable practices and viability for small farm agriculture and empowering small farmers for success. Its vision is “a robust, sustainable and just local food system and thriving rural economies that work for all.” NESFI hopes to continue working towards that vision and continue with its mission working on the Community Farm parcel, either as a future owner or as a co-owner in partnership with other interested organizations sharing similar goals.

Another proposed use of the Community Farm is to pass it on to an Indigenous tribe with roots in this area, for example the Nipmuc Tribe, so that they could incorporate a special vision for the land. The following has been proposed by the Nipmuc as a conceptual plan for an “Agrihood”:

The plan would include their assembling the Community Farm, Forest Parcel, and Enterprise Zone and providing farm housing for farm families living at the site. The Nipmuc concept plan text reads in part: Families would be vetted for their commitment to farming as a living, with an understanding of the hard work that farming entails. Preference would be for Nipmuc families, but anyone able to live and work in the Agrihood would be accepted. We would also want to convert one of the barns into a commercial kitchen and classroom/social space. Families would grow food to consume, trade, and sell (at a stand or farmers market). The commercial kitchen would allow the families to produce value-added products to enhance the farm stand/farmers’ market offerings. The forest parcel would be used for foraging, education, and passive recreation for residents, tribal members, and any others. Otherwise, the forest would be preserved and maintained. Some of the Community Farm would be farmed by the tribe itself to support its current food sovereignty/food justice programs such as food distribution to elders and families in need. The income from farm leases would help support the Agrihood and the families living there... This is a way to help people develop real relationship with the land and to build community among people. Belchertown sits on unceded Indigenous land – this is a chance to return the land to the descendants of its original stewards at little cost to the State and Town.

Optimizing the Success of Future Growers

The future owner of the Community Farm Parcel will be expected to conduct an annual needs assessment at the end of each growing season, which should lead to additional support, education and connections for those participating in activities on the parcel and on others of the farm parcels. Opportunities for collaboration with adjacent parcel owners should be considered annually.

Public Access

Limited public access could be provided to the Community Farm with proper signage and designated parking spaces. A plan should be developed that will allow members of the public to learn from the demonstrations of the ongoing farms operations in the parcel without walking through the growing fields or otherwise interfering with farm work or crops. This limited “parking plan” should also cover situations where visitors will leave their vehicles when attending scheduled programs offered by any of the participating LBF members or when seeking to purchase produce at established farm stands on the property.

The Future of the Barns

The barns should be repaired on a schedule that rainproofs and stabilizes them first, then upgrades the interior sections on a prioritized basis while preserving current uses and provides for inclusion of new uses. One of the barns could be used much as in the past: providing office space for farmers and project partners and serving as potential storage or pick-up site for a CSA or a small farm store where farmers on site could sell their products. It could also provide a place to hang produce such as garlic or flowers to dry. The other barn might have different functions: classroom space, library space, and the possibility of rental space to a farm-related enterprise.

July 2021 barn inspection comments by Alicia Spencer and Douglas Thayer, transcribed by Betty Sharpe, are as follows:

“The First Barn (near Jackson Street) is in great shape with a good foundation and decent siding. Since it’s largely finished it’s hard to see the entire structure, which could hide “hidden demons.” There are water spots upstairs. Everything in the building should be removed to expose any hidden problems. The barn is the most wired of the barns, and wiring often takes out a barn by causing fires. Barns actually move, causing chafing of the wiring, and rodents can chew the wiring to make nests. The first chore is to shut off all the electrical items that do not need to be operational. Electricity is needed in the library but not in the whole barn.

The Horse Barn, farther from the road, is the most vulnerable and needs the most work, but is representative of the landscape and the identity of the farm. The foundation work is good and the end-grain blocking is cool. The floor is “brilliant” and to make it functional it should be raised, compacted, and re-installed. The foundation is good and appears to be fairly young. Almost all the damage to the building is from water intrusion.

There are red flags. On the east side of the barn, there are rotten posts and plates and some rotten floor beams, which represent the bulk of the necessary repair work. The roof looks better on the west side. Tin should be immediately slid into the roof everywhere there is a leak, a basic operation that could be done quickly. The underlying roof boards are rotten, and eventually that wooden sheathing, along with the shingles, should be replaced. The cupola has settled and might require some repair work. In the long term, it would cost more to take the building down than to shore it up, probably involving at least 30 dumpsters at \$1,000 each.

Future use of the barns could include weddings and other gatherings, requiring accessibility and bathrooms; food processing; and horse boarding. The conservation restriction should require agricultural use of the barn to be its primary focus, with usage for non-agricultural uses limited.”

Additional Structures.

In general, the Conservation Restriction over the Community Farm parcel will limit the construction of permanent structures but may allow temporary, farm-related structures like hoop houses or animal shade structures. The greenhouse belonging to one of the farmers needs electrical improvements, repairs to the fans and vents, and other basics to keep it functioning, which would be the owner’s responsibility. There is also a small shed near the greenhouse that is used to store farm items. At the southwest corner of the First Barn is the Belchertown Community Garden shed, which appears to be in serviceable condition.

According to NESFI, many farmers and growers at the Community Farm have repeatedly asked for storage space for farm goods and equipment. Within the constraints of the Conservation

Restriction and Historic Preservation Restriction for the Community Farm, new structures should relate directly to agricultural functions and be consistent with the directions spelled out in this Management Plan.

Future of the Library

The library is an unmatched resource for the entire agriculture community. It should be properly re-catalogued, cleaned and the resource put on-line. Connecting with a wider library network would also be desirable especially if that would allow additional resources to flow to the NESFI library for maintenance, staffing and growth. The library is a NESFI-owned resource and needs to remain under NESFI's care and control, even if that should include relocation and placement under the care of another entity of NESFI's choice. Without barn restoration and renovation, the deteriorating condition of the barns would require moving the library from its present location.

Restrictions on Growing Methods

In keeping with NESFI's past practices and the intent of the legislation, GMO crops should be prohibited (except in certain circumstances, e.g. where a GMO variety of American chestnut conferred resistance to chestnut blight) and organic growing should be required. Limited use of herbicides should be allowed for the control of non-native invasive plants.

Beaver Activity on the Community Farm and Other Parcels

Significant beaver activity and dam construction have caused occasional flooding between the former parcels 1 and 2 of the Community Farm, as shown in 2020 drone photographs included in the management plan supplementary photographs. A beaver deceiver has been installed next to the farm road, but seasonally high-water levels have nevertheless occasionally flooded the lower part of the parcel 2 field. As climate change brings more frequent heavy storms, this phenomenon will probably be customary. We recommend that Michael Callahan of Beaver Solutions be asked to review the situation and, if necessary, to increase the flow capacity of the deceiver pipe and to add upstream deceivers.

Compost Area

If clean-up of the compost area portion of the Community Farm must take place before DCAMM conveys it to a new owner, LBF should obtain a commitment and schedule for its clean-up and the clean-up of the biochar barrels elsewhere on the farm under the oversight of NESFI.

The Lampson Brook Board should create a schedule for the clean-up of the compost site (part of the Community Farm), located north of George Hannum Street and adjacent to the state-owned landfill, before DCAMM conveys the Community Farm Parcel to a new owner. Clean-up of the biochar barrels elsewhere on the farm should be part of the clean-up plan.

ENTERPRISE ZONE PARCEL

Purposes of the enterprise zone parcel shall include transitioning the property to a sustainable, natural-resource based enterprise(s) that will accommodate public access, tourism, public education value, and other public benefits. Restoration of the site, including the demolishing of some buildings, the possible retention of others in whole or in part, and the general clean-up of the site, will be expected. Future uses of the site should be compatible with uses taking place on the adjacent Community Farm parcel, Commercial

Farm parcel, and Forest Parcel. Where possible, access ways and parking should be shared with the Community Farm parcel.

The Enterprise Zone Parcel, whose boundaries are being surveyed and provided with a legal description, includes (1) the old dairy complex adjacent to the Community Farm Parcel, and (2) a small parcel just east of the intersection of Hamilton and George Hannum Streets. Legal vehicle access to the former dairy area will be by way of the current driveway from Jackson Street. The dairy complex parcel and the parcel at Hamilton and George Hannum Streets could be separated and conveyed to different owners. The Board may consider additional adjustments to the parcel boundaries in keeping with the legislation and based on actual responses to the RFP.

The Lampson Brook Farm legislation authorizes the LBF Board to select, with DCAMM's approval, the future owner of the Enterprise Zone parcel through a competitive process based on the compatibility of the applicant's proposal with the management plan, the applicant's ability to steward the parcel, and any other criteria established by the board. The board may, at its discretion, use the LBF Fund to restore the enterprise zone parcel to "complete the transition from the former dairy farm into sustainable natural-resource based enterprises ... with provision for public access, tourism and public education value and public benefits."

It is clear that before the parcel can be used for commercial purposes, the site must be restored to usable conditions. The old farm buildings must be demolished or restored to safe, sustainable status, the site must be readied for new construction, and any above-ground or below-ground hazardous materials, if any are still present, must be removed. Negotiation with any selected new owner shall determine the responsibilities associated with those tasks.

Building Status.

The status of the Enterprise zone Buildings, based on an informal examination done in late August 2021, is as follows. Note that there are no buildings on the small enterprise zone parcel next to George Hannum Street. Note that EEA has hired Weston and Sampson to complete a Phase I 21E report, soil and groundwater analysis, and cost estimation for the demolition or basic repairs to structures at Lampson Brook Farm. The full report will be posted on the Lampson Brook Farm Board of Directors website when it is final.

- Buildings tentatively recommended for restoration:
 - Molasses shed
 - Hay barn
 - Manure shed
 - Storage shed
 - Silos # 3, #5, #6
 - Greenhouse
- Buildings tentatively recommended for demolition:
 - Dairy barn #1
 - Dairy barn #2
 - Dairy barn #3
 - Loafing barn
 - Bull pen
 - Calf hospital
 - Milk room
 - Silos #1, #2, #4

Following is a thumbnail summary of the status of each building (see map and current photographs of each building in Appendix).

Buildings Tentatively Recommended for Restoration.

- Molasses shed. This cinder-block building has a concrete floor and concrete interior walls. Its roof appears to be largely sound, but its south edge does not quite meet the south wall. One or more of the roof trusses need repair or replacement. The building has an overhead door and is currently used for vehicle and equipment storage.
- Hay barn. This post-and-beam structure appears to be largely sound, with a roof that needs immediate patching with tin or shingles to prevent deterioration of the building interior. The building is partly filled with old equipment and junk that should be removed to allow a full inspection and shoring up of its structural members. Electrical items should also be removed. Alicia Spencer's and Douglas Thayer's inspection comments transcribed by Betty Sharpe: The hay barn has thoughtfully done foundation work so it is sitting square. The plate needs repair and the central post is compromised. The one piece that is propped up is a tie that should be repaired, not too difficult a job. Alicia suggests a continuous pull all the way across, though not necessarily everywhere. The roof leak, which can be catastrophic for a barn, is at least five years old. Suggestion: remove the hay loft since it is not currently used. The joists could remain, but the plywood should be taken out. There is a leak through the plywood, and it would be better for the leak to come on through to the floor. Wires used for garlic drying should also be removed. This barn is sited for utility use and is connected to other enterprise zone use. The recent tree and brush removal work we saw on the horse barn should be continued here and the door should be fixed so it closes.
- Manure shed. Although this concrete structure appears to be stable, the roof appears to be in poor condition and the building is open to the weather on both south and north sides. It is currently used for storage.
- Greenhouse. The roof of this building is largely gone and much of the greenhouse glass is broken. The greenhouses themselves may be usable.
- Storage shed. This is another cinder-block structure with a roof that appears to be at least partly sound.
- Three of the silos appear to be vertical with intact roofs. A professional examination of these structures would determine whether they are salvageable with any potential usefulness other than as scenery.

Buildings Tentatively Recommended for Demolition

Note that some observers have proposed re-use of one or more of the following buildings for various purposes. Re-use might be possible, but compared with new construction the cost would be considerable.

- Dairy barn #1. This barn has no roof and is essentially a dead building. It is full of junk materials that need disposal.

- Dairy barn #2. Similar status as dairy barn #1.
- Dairy barn #3. This building is boarded up and thus more difficult to assess, but the roof has large holes and the structure appears not to be worth restoring.
- Loafing barn. What used to be the loafing barn is now a pile of junk wood and debris.
- Bull pen. This concrete building is largely a shell, with most of the roof gone and nothing worth saving.
- Calf hospital. This is another building that appears to be in poor condition.
- Milk room. This structure's windows are largely ruined, the roof is full of holes, and the interior is full of junk.
- Silo #1. This silo is leaning to the north and would be hard to save. Silos #2 and #4 have both lost their roofs.

Also on the site are a large area of asphalt pavement and numerous old vehicles, equipment parts, and junk articles. The Weston and Sampson report clarifies the condition of LBF and will be posted on the LBF Board of Directors' website.

Vision Statement and Possible Commercial Uses of the Enterprise Zone Parcel

Ideally the Enterprise Zone will become a focal point and draw that bring visitors and agricultural people to Lampson Brook. It must be compatible with activities on the other four Lampson Brook parcels, especially the adjacent Community Farm parcel. The Enterprise Zone could house a single commercial use or a collection of several enterprises, either profit-making or non-profit.

To be successful, proposed businesses must be profitable enough to cover the costs of property management and stable enough to last. We estimate the catchment area for potential customers of LBF farm products as the area within approximately 20 miles of Lampson Brook. Wider areas could be served with different distribution methods and/or different products.

Other potential compatible uses are as follows:

- Farm-to-table café, restaurant or coffee shop.
- Large, agriculturally-related business utilizing most or all of the area.
- Walk-in cooler or freezer space.
- Greenhouse for micro-greens, hydroponics, aquaculture, or other intensive farming.
- Conference or performance space.
- Farm store (provided it would not compete unfairly with other farm outlets started recently in the Belchertown area).
- Locally operated butchery or slaughterhouse.
- Chicken processing facility.
- Event facility that could be rented for weddings and gatherings.
- Living agricultural history museum or other museum use.

- Low-income farmer housing.
- Solar energy production.
- Biotech operation that could supplement farm-related businesses.
- Scientific and agricultural research.
- Space rented to farmers for processing or drying.
- Space rented out for commercial food or beverage production.
- Farmer wash-station space.
- Innovative composting.
- Space to house farm equipment.
- Portable sawmill operation for specialty wood production.

Facilities or considerations that would be needed for some or all of those possible uses are these:

- Power.
- Expanded, well-equipped kitchen.
- Parking and bike access for employees and customers.
- Sewer connection.
- Bathrooms for various events.
- Truck loading facility.
- Water source.
- Compatibility with town zoning.

Options in front of the Board as it goes about securing compatible uses of the Enterprise Zone parcel and implementing the Management Plan are several:

- Requiring a Memorandum of Agreement among the future owners of the five Lampson Brook parcels to secure initial or continuing cooperative management. In order to be an enforceable contract, all the parties to the MOA need to intend to create such a contract. Otherwise, the MOA is simply an expression of mutual understanding of such a contract.
- A deed restriction held by a third party may be necessary to make sure that new uses continue to be compatible with the Management Plan, or could part of this goal be accomplished by the proposed zoning ordinance. Deed restrictions are not permanent, but while they are in effect they decrease the value of a property and can limit the pool of potential buyers. The holder of the deed restriction would need to be a party to the instrument creating the restriction and needs to have the resources and intent to enforce its terms, which should be written objectively. For example, a municipality may not make a determination of incompatibility without due process of law.
- Solidifying a way to fund and accomplish site restoration, possibly before the Board issues an RFP soliciting bids on the parcel.
- Possibly finding room on the parcel for a non-agricultural enterprise whose purchase would boost the LBF Fund and which might assist in coordinating other uses.
- Farmer housing could be provided on the Enterprise Zone parcel as well as on the Community Farm parcel, or the Jepson Farmstead parcel.

Types of businesses to which the Board should give high priority for Enterprise Zone occupation are these:

- An operation that can make use of food crops produced on the Community Farm parcel or the Commercial Farm parcel and other surrounding farms in an inclusive and non-competitive way.
- An operation that attracts customers from the Belchertown area and, ideally, from the State School EDIC redevelopment area.
- A business that promises to help maintain Lampson Brook Farm's and NESFI's long traditions of agricultural education, innovative growing methods, and environmentally sound farming.
- A business that draws people from the region and beyond to learn about the farm's illustrious history.
- An operation that develops connections with the natural world around the parcel – the farmland, the scenery, the beaver pond and other wildlife habitat.

COMMERCIAL FARM PARCEL

The Commercial Farm parcel shall be made available to farmers under rental agreements or licenses for periods not to exceed a total of 15 years. Currently, MDAR licenses are limited to 5 years but given the authority in the LBF legislation these can and should now be extended to 15 years. This will allow farmers to justify more investment in the land. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources is expected to require best management practices with special attention to soil protection and respect for the environment and the parcel's wildlife habitat, flora, and agricultural landscape.

The Lampson Brook Farm legislation states that the Commercial Farm Parcel shall be under the care and control of the Department of Agricultural Resources. The law authorizes MDAR to lease the Commercial Farm Parcel to farmers or organizations and states that the leases must be compatible with the Management Plan.

Past and present uses and current lease arrangements.

For decades the Commercial Farm parcels and the larger Community Farm parcels have been under sub-lease agreements between NESFI and local farmers. The present farmers who manage these parcels through September 2023 are as follows, using the numbers formerly given by NESFI to the various sub-let parcels:

- 3, 7 – Kirk Stephens
- 6, 6a, 8 – Jeff Pronovost (Rubee Ranch)
- 9, 11 – Dan and Loni Austin

Note that the former parcels 2, 2a, 5, and 10 are now part of the “Community Farm parcel.”

August 2021 field assessment information:

3 – The main hillside field is in a good crop of hay that has evidently been mowed at least once this year prior to August 25. The small, reclaimed field just south of the farm road T at the southwest corner of the former parcel 2, is in a rough grass and weed cover, probably not good enough for saleable hay, but might be harvested as mulch.

6 – The field is in pasture, with a couple of dozen beefers of mixed breeds including Scottish highlanders, belted Galloways, at least two other breeds, and a few goats. Jeff Pronovost's farm

stand advertising beef and pork also sells sweet corn. The stand is on the small, adjacent Community Farm parcel, and is not part of the Field 6 sub-lease. The edge just outside the stock fencing and electric fence has been well mowed.

6a – This field is in a good crop of hay. Staghorn sumac is along the upper edge at the south side of Hamilton Street.

7 – This field is also in a good crop of hay.

8 – Goats and one or two sheep are grazing on this fenced pasture. In hot weather (upper 90s at the time of this inspection) there is barely enough shade, which includes the shade of a few large trees at the lower, south side of the field, and a low lean-to that is too small to accommodate all the animals present.

9 – The fields are in hay, with a good cover. Autumn olive is dense along the entry farm road near George Hannum Street. The mowing bumps up against reed canary grass wetland and the Lampson Brook channel, which represent good bird habitat.

11 – “The contours” field is in field corn. This year’s corn crop has covered up the small farm road at the west boundary line. Staghorn sumac patches are along the field’s Boardman Street frontage. Rental agreements for this field should require farming on the contours as a soil-conservation strategy. Renters should be asked to re-establish the original farming demonstration and goal of selected rotational and restorative farming on the contours.

Vision Statement

The Commercial Farm parcels will continue to be managed for the production of vegetables, meat (grazing animals), hay, and compost. The parcels could be reconfigured to accommodate demand, and will be used by both experienced and beginning farmers who employ sustainable farming techniques consistent with Lampson Brook’s agricultural education mission and stewardship standards. Now that the legislation allows licenses of up to 15 years, farmers who are interested will have the opportunity to negotiate those longer terms. Rents and payments for leases will be deposited in the LBF Fund. Farmers here will be expected to share equipment and resources, and their products will continue to benefit the larger Belchertown community. Educational trails that allow visitors to walk next to active farmland could connect with the trails on the adjacent forest parcel. The Commercial Farm parcels are considered permanently protected through ownership by MDAR.

Details of expected MDAR management

MDAR intends to open the Commercial Farm parcels to license periods of up to 15 years. We recommend that, where possible, priority be given to local farmers with modest farm incomes. MDAR cannot guarantee that current farmers will remain in place, as farmers will be selected by an open application process. Note that MDAR agrees that the Stewardship Standards being proposed by NESFI and the LBF Management Plan will be reviewed and will explore applying them to the commercial agriculture fields through an agreement with the “farm manager” for oversight. MDAR’s policies will emphasize good farm stewardship and will include the following:

- Cover crops will be required, with evidence provided by late October that they have been planted.

- MDAR will encourage sustainable, BMP (Best Management Practices), and IPM (Integrated Pest Management) as integral parts of good farm management.
- Clean-up and maintenance of field edges will be required, including the cutting back of encroaching shrubs and vines like staghorn sumac and poison ivy and the control of invasives like Oriental bittersweet, multiflora rose, glossy buckthorn, autumn olive, black locust, black swallowwort, and Japanese knotweed.
- Organic practices will be encouraged but not required. Discussion of this point is needed.
- GMO crops will be discouraged but not prohibited. Discussion of this point is needed.
- Farm roads within licensed farm parcels must be maintained in passable condition without erosion.
- MDAR will encourage biodiversity enhancement.

Environmental, habitat, and physical issues that MDAR should deal within the lease agreements or in the conveyance of the land are the following:

- Erosion at the head end of the farm road that leads from George Hannum Street north to the compost area.
- The presence in recent years of nesting grassland birds on several of the hayfields, especially those on the former parcel 3 (on the hillside leading up to the EDIC complex) and the former parcel 9 (on the large fields next to Lampson Brook).
- The abundance of invasive shrubs and vines, as mentioned above, at the edges of most of the commercial farm parcel fields.
- Organic growing practices on the community farm parcel that could be contaminated by pesticides that might be used on adjacent commercial farm fields. (*Needs discussion.*)
- The presence of toxic weeds that have been a concern for farmers at Lampson Brook including cow-parsnip, *Heracleum maximum*, and wild parsnip, *Pastinaca sativa*, that have been found along field edges.
- The scarcity of shade at the pasture on parcel 8 (next to the large wetland).
- Patches of staghorn sumac along the Boardman Street edge of parcel 11.
- The presence of a large variety of birds and wildlife at and near the main fields, including bears recently recorded on remote wildlife cameras.
- The need for a deeded access easement from Jackson Street over the Community Farm parcel.

FOREST PARCEL

Ideally, the Forest Parcel will serve as a Lampson Brook Farm habitat core, a community outdoor recreation site, a forest management demonstration area, and a model trail network headquarters. This is the largest Lampson Brook Farm parcel.

Vision Statement

The Forest Parcel should be managed primarily for passive recreation, wildlife habitat, scenery, and forest conservation consistent with the legislation and the terms of the Conservation Restriction that will be developed for the property. Public access will be allowed and encouraged except in environmentally sensitive areas. The trail system and woods roads should be improved and maintained in sound condition and parking for visitors should be provided. The owner of the forest parcel must complete a forest stewardship plan that conserves the biodiversity, outdoor recreation, scenic and other values of the parcel and includes sustainable forest management. The

owner may develop passive recreational and educational trails compatible with the Management Plan and the forest stewardship plan “in coordination with the Town of Belchertown.

Ideally, the Forest Parcel will serve as a Lampson Brook habitat core, a community outdoor recreation site, a forest management demonstration area, and a model trail network headquarters. At 240 acres, this is the largest Lampson Brook parcel. It is also the central parcel, with direct connections to Lake Wallace, Lampson Brook itself and its abutting wetlands, several of the Commercial Farm parcels, the LBF compost site, the enterprise zone, and the large Soja property.

According to the governing legislation, the Forest Parcel will be owned by a nonprofit organization selected by the board and such organization must be organized for at least forest conservation and management purposes. The Forest Parcel must also be placed under a Conservation Restriction to be held jointly by the Mass Dept of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) and the Town of Belchertown through its Conservation Commission.

The Forest Parcel has the potential to be managed as a neighborhood conservation area that can serve the public by providing organized public access for many passive recreational activities. The property could be further integrated, through trails and other types of access, with the adjacent, re-developed Belchertown State School property located on the hill to the southeast of the farm complex. The property could also be the site of Indigenous land management, with traditional stewardship and ceremonial and food-gathering activities expected. The conservation restriction (CR) for this parcel should utilize the language in the state model CR regarding allowing Indigenous practices.

Forest management plan and recent management history

Forest management conducted intermittently since 1982 has dealt with the main, 175-acre forested hill in the center of LBF. No management activities have been prescribed for the woods north of George Hannum Road, which are interspersed with large wetlands.

Principal forest management goals have been the enhancement of timber products, improvement of bird and other wildlife habitat, maintenance of access for hiking and skiing, protecting water and soil quality, demonstrating good forest management, and protecting special cultural areas. Forest income has been secondary.

A proposal prepared by NESFI about ten years ago called for the design and construction of a sustainable woodlot management interpretive trail. The proposal described the need for “educational programming targeting the stated needs of small farmers, landowners, and the general public ... for the demonstration of innovative woodlot management techniques used in the commercial production of fuelwood and sawlogs.” The proposal also stated that “research on the optimal plan for this multi-use site will draw upon a broad spectrum of available expertise and encourage future development of similar projects on public forested open spaces across the Commonwealth.”

Fertility for growing commercial timber species is generally moderate. Note that the gypsy moth epidemic of 1979-1981 put these central woods under stress that has affected growth rates right up to the present. As of 2021, fuelwood and sawtimber operations had harvested more than 400,000 board feet and 500 cords of firewood. Total standing volume is more than 740,000 board feet and 800 cords of fuelwood/pulpwood. Overall habitat diversity is limited but the shrubby areas near Lampson Brook and the aspen stand on the east slope above the brook are still

considered good candidates for the improvement or creation of early successional habitat, which is in short supply in the region.

Woods roads and trails are generally in good shape. For years a steep trail section above the landing area at the edge of George Hannum Street has suffered from overuse and lack of maintenance, with consequent erosion. In addition to forestry activities, the trails and woods roads are used for education around the topics of forest ecology and management and for cross-country training, hiking, skiing, and hunting access.

Written shortly before the time of this report was a Mass Wildlife Habitat Management Grant Program Proposal that would involve the clear-cutting of 6.6 acres of a 30-acre aspen-birch-oak type to increase the proportion of quaking and bigtooth aspen for habitat purposes. The project would benefit woodcock, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, chestnut-sided warbler, eastern towhee, veery, and white-tailed deer by producing dense young sprout growth. Charles Thompson, author of the proposal, wrote that “the particular treatment area in this grant application was selected for two reasons: the need to capture the sprouting potential of the larger, older aspen component before it declines; and because the level of invasives in and at the edge of this area is manageable. Other sections of the 40 acres, especially lower on the slope and in the Lampson Brook riparian zone, should not be clear-cut until a very serious invasives problem has been addressed.” The proposal was not funded, but the future owner of the forest parcel might consider undertaking the proposed treatment through other means.

JEPSON FARMSTEAD

New England Small Farm Institute shall manage the Jepson Farmstead parcel in compliance with the Historic Preservation Restriction that will be developed for the site. Agricultural or farm-residential use may be made of the old “root cellar” site and its foundation and should be consistent with the Management Plan. The Jepson House may accommodate farm residences or visitor accommodations.

According to the governing legislation, the 8.4-acre Jepson Farmstead parcel will be transferred to NESFI at no cost. There will be a historic preservation restriction over the parcel to be held by a historic organization, possibly one of the Town’s two such organizations. Permitted uses include but are not limited to office space, classrooms, meeting and archival storage space, residential use “for providing site security and a management presence at Lampson Brook Farm.” Because other uses appear to be allowed, it may make sense to consider the creation of additional farmer housing, visitor accommodation and possibly greenhouse or other agricultural use of the root cellar space.

Vision Statement.

Assuming renovation and maintenance funds can be assembled, the Jepson House structure and functions should be preserved into the future for their importance to the farm. The house served as Judy Gillan’s NESFI office for many years, and there may be a way of recognizing Judy’s accomplishments in connection with the continuation of the building’s functions.

Field Inspections.

1. Notes from an inspection of the Jepson House by Alicia Spence, Douglas Thayer, Betty Sharpe, and Laurie Sanders July 14 transcribed by Betty Sharpe:

Where the chimney is on the main part of the house, there is a bit of a lean to one side. Chimneys go either one way or the other relative to the building; they either push out, as in this case, which results from the house going down rather than the chimney rising up. The foundation has probably settled a few inches, which pushed the chimney out.

A mason is needed, as the chimney is due for a total re-work from the roof up. There appears to be a lot of loose brick, as it has been sitting there for at least a hundred years. The brick within the house is much more protected. The building was probably originally heated by coal, then oil. Gas is a killer to chimneys because the exhaust is caustic to mortar so the chimney needs to be lined with clay tile material, which is really good for the purpose. A stainless steel liner could easily be added. A new heating boiler was installed in November 2021. The house is also due for a re-wiring.

2. Notes from a field inspection of the parcel Sept 6, 2021.

An active beehive is behind the house next to an old stone wall that appears to be in good condition. A few hundred feet to the east are the remains of the old root cellar structure, a largely wood building with at least one concrete wall. The old shingle roof has many large holes and the west end of the building has entirely collapsed. There has been talk of building farm housing on the root cellar site. The young forest west of the root cellar is fairly open, with fairly level ground, many hardwood saplings, and a few larger trees. The north boundary is posted with unsigned “private property” signs about 50 feet from the railroad bed to the north.

Jepson House itself currently has 3 apartments in use by farm personnel in addition to the downstairs office space. Behind Jepson House are a trailer, which is currently used by a person associated with the farm, and various articles of equipment, a shed, and a portable shelter. Old apple trees, which might be rehabilitated, are near the house. To the west, on the former parcel 4, are a plastic greenhouse, a roofed shelter, a tractor, trailer, and more equipment and containers.

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LAMPSON BROOK FARM HABITAT CONSERVATION

Hedgerows and Forest Edges

Hedgerows are the zones of dense shrubs and sometimes trees that separate cleared fields. These are zones that are often un-mowed because they surround waterways and wetlands. At Lampson Brook Farm one hedgerow exists along Lampson Brook in the NE corner of the farm between two community farm fields (former parcels 1 and 2). A second one is along a waterway between the commercial farm parcels in the SW corner of the farm (former parcels 9, 10, and 11). Hedgerows and field edges are similar in vegetation because full sunlight allows abundant shrubs to grow.

Shrubby edges add significantly to the biodiversity of Lampson Brook Farm and are the preferred habitat of many birds including mockingbird, brown thrasher, catbird, blue-gray gnatcatcher, cardinal, Baltimore oriole, warbling vireo, and prairie and yellow warblers. The hedgerows and forest edges here are a mix of native and non-native plants. Native shrubs and vines include staghorn sumac, gray dogwood, grape, speckled alder, elderberry, arrowwood, blackberry, hazelnut and mulberry. All these shrubs provide berries or nuts as well as dense cover for nesting. In some areas up to 50% of the shrubs are non-native invasives, namely autumn olive,

honeysuckle, multiflora rose, willow, burning bush, bittersweet and privet. These non-natives are prone to spreading extremely rapidly and densely unless kept in check.

It is impractical to try to remove the invasive species from the hedgerows—they are too extensive and abundant. The primary management of the hedgerows and forest edges is mowing to keep them from encroaching into the fields.

In the hedgerow in the small Enterprise Zone (EZ) parcel north of George Hannum Street is a distinctive, large spreading sugar maple. Understory shrubs are lacking, and if the abundant poison ivy here were treated, this spot would make an appealing gathering spot for an outdoor classroom or a picnic area. This section may be developed as provided for in the Enterprise Zone section of this document.

Autumn olive is one invasive shrub that produces fruit that's delicious and nutritious for human consumption. The abundant and easily harvested fleshy drupes can be cooked into a puree and made into jam, tarts, or fruit leather with no additional sweetener needed. They are high in lycopene, a substance that helps prevent prostate cancer. Readily identified by its silvery leaves, autumn olive is present at several locations along the field edges. Harvesting and processing autumn olive products could potentially be a niche enterprise with the additional advantage of removing seeds from the environment.

One additional management idea for the hedgerows is to place snake cover boards along the very edges of fields. Made simply of 4 x 4 plywood, the cover boards provide protected sites for thermoregulation, skin shedding and reproduction, and will improve in desirability as the plywood ages. Milk, eastern racer, garter, redbelly and smooth green snakes are likely to use the boards in dry areas and ribbon snakes may use ones placed near wetland edges. The main prey of milk snakes and racers is small rodents including mice and rats, so they are an asset around a farm.

Vernal Pools

We have identified four potential vernal pools by site visits, all of them in the large forest parcel. Two of them are at the north end of the parcel near the three houses on George Hannum Road. VP1 is right next to the road where a trail enters the woods just east of the easternmost house. Unfortunately, trees cut alongside the road have been felled into the pond, possibly reducing its habitat value. VP2 is along the east side of the trail as it goes behind the houses. This long narrow pond is mostly unvegetated and probably is good habitat. At the south end of the forested parcel lie the other two vernal pools located by Conservation Works. VP3 (photo 1699) is round, about 40 feet in diameter and mostly open water >2 feet deep. It's mostly open water with a little winterberry. This has also been identified by BioMap2 as PVP1969. VP4 (Photo 1698) is open water that was about 1 foot deep on Sept. 6, and about 50 x 75 feet in size. It has some winterberry at one end along with as red maple, sphagnum moss and cinnamon fern.

Because vernal pools are critical breeding sites for spotted salamanders, wood frogs, and several rare species (which have not yet been confirmed on this property) it's important to protect them by preventing logging within 50 feet, dumping into them, draining them, or allowing dogs to wade or swim in them. They should also be kept free of mosquito treatment chemicals.

Grassland Habitat

In general, birds that nest only in open hayfields require large, unbroken expanses of grass and are unlikely to nest with 150 feet of obstacles like hedgerows or trees. Typical grassland species of our area include savannah sparrow, bobolink, eastern meadowlark, American kestrel, northern harrier, and other less common species. Nesting bobolink pairs have been recently documented on fields numbered by NESFI as 2, 3, 7, 9, and 10. Only fields 3 and 9 are large enough to be regarded as regular habitat for these birds, and both will come under the ownership and management of MDAR, which typically does not require farmers to delay the mowing of hay crops to allow grassland birds to complete their seasonal nesting cycle. Other organizations have successfully protected grassland birds by paying farmers the difference between the value of an early season crop and a late season crop so they can afford to delay mowing. We urge MDAR to work with farmers who have an interest in maintaining habitat quality to find a way to encourage them to undertake whatever appropriate and feasible grassland management is possible without significant financial loss.

LAMPSON BROOK FARM ACCESS POINTS

A large property like Lampson Brook Farm inevitably has many points where walkers or vehicles can enter. To control and help monitor access, those points should be equipped with clear signage and in some cases gates or other barriers. The Belchertown Fire Department should be provided with keys or combinations to locked gates.

Access points are as follows, as shown on the access map included as an Appendix:

1a. First Barn. The main entrance here on Jackson Street is equipped with Lampson Brook Farm and NESFI signs. This entrance provides access to the community gardens, 4-H gardens, other small farm plots, the metal maintenance building, and one of the commercial farm parcels, and provides an alternate access to the enterprise zone. A welcoming kiosk with a property map here would be helpful.

1b. Enterprise zone entrance. The gravel drive here runs along the north side of the community garden area to the Enterprise Zone and the maintenance building. Signage here would also be helpful.

1c. Foot and tractor access is possible here between the Rubee Ranch Community Farm field on the left and the Rubee Ranch pasture on the right. No signage is needed here.

1d. A small parking area, currently occupied by the Rubee Ranch farm stand and compost area, is at the intersection of Hamilton and George Hannum Streets. It has been reserved by NESFI over the years for a diverse set of possible projects including an animals slaughter area and trailhead. Access to the small, northern Enterprise Zone parcel and the Commercial Farm parcel is available across George Hannum Street. Signage at those points would be helpful if the enterprise zone parcel is developed.

2a. North farm road. The gravel road here leads past two commercial farm fields and continues to the gated compost area and the state-owned landfill site. It would help to have a sign here that identifies the land as part of Lampson Brook Farm.

3. The small gravel parking area here is on Town land and provides access to the bridge and snowmobile trail that crosses the adjacent Soja parcel to reach the trails on the forest parcel. A

sign and map identifying the land ownership and showing the trail system would be helpful. This is a good place for an additional parking area for the Forest Parcel trails if allowed by the Town and abutting owner Michael Soja, whose land the trail crosses.

4. Log landing and trailhead at George Hannum Street. Parking for the trail network might be provided here at a future date. Clear signage and a trail kiosk with trail map are needed here.

5. North end of Underwood Street. This seldom-used woods road could be gated here to prevent access. The Belchertown Fire Department will need to be provided with a gate key.

6. Farm road at George Hannum Street. The small community farm parcel here is a gateway to the large parcel 9 fields. It is currently chained to prevent public access and the small entrance field is mowed only occasionally. The farmer who leases the back fields prefers that the public not be encouraged to enter here.

6a. Small entrance on George Hannum Street to greenhouse and seasonal farm retail sales.

7. Farm Road at Boardman Street. This entrance is evidently not used except by the leasing farmer and is blocked by the corn crop in the current growing season.

8. South end of Underwood Street. The leasing farmer has installed a new gate here. If walkers are invited to enter here, clear signage and a trail map should be provided. Side-of-the-road parking is available for only a maximum of two cars. Neighboring residences are near the gate and their owners would probably object to more than a tiny minimum of parking there.

9. Lake Wallace connection. A gate at Foley Field blocks vehicle entrance here. The trail that connects Lake Wallace with Lampson Brook Farm crosses a bridge and turns northwest to join the LBF trail network. The Snowmobile Association has placed directional arrows here, and additional signage would help users locate the LBF trails.

10. Future access from the State School EDIC site. The LBF farm road that starts at the main Jackson Street entrance (1) runs up the hill to the LBF boundary, where a future trail to Lake Wallace by way of the sewer easement has been planned. Signage will be needed if this trail is built. It is possible that other uses might develop for this farm road which would require upgraded and increased maintenance and different signage. Note that the top part of Field 3 is on EDIC property.

LAMPSON BROOK FARM TRAILS

Present Trail Network

Existing Conditions. Most of the existing “trails” are old, natural-surface woods roads suitable for light motorized vehicle use as well as all forms of pedestrian use and are in good condition. Generally, they cross the property in a NW-SE direction climbing up over the summit of the hill and back down the other side (See the attached trail map for the extent and location of the existing trail network). All the existing trails have sections of “fall-line” layouts with some minor erosion/water issues. Additionally, there are some soft, wet, and muddy sections of some of the trails. The eastern trail, while shown on the map, (colored in yellow on the attached trail map) is overgrown and use of this trail seems to have been abandoned.

The Snowmobile Association Trail and Trail Easement. The LBF “snowmobile trail” used by the Mill Valley Snowmobile Club is a critical connector in its 100-mile system. Its purpose is to provide connections to snowmobile trails to the south, west and north. This LBF snowmobile trail (identified in red on the attached trail map) enters LBF on the north at two locations, joins up and crosses George Hanum Road to flow up and over the hill on the large, wooded tract and exits the LBF on the southern end of the wooded tract by the outflow of Lake Wallace and Lampson Brook. It has been well-maintained by the club and is easy to travel on. While the trail has a classic, erosion-prone “fall-line” layout going over the hill, it does not adversely impact land or habitats during winter use because when the ground is frozen and covered in snow and the tracks of the snowmobile are buffered by the snowpack, there is no impact to the underlying ground.

Additionally, under the current low volume of traffic and the benign nature of the current users, there is no appreciable impact to the trail tread. However, during the other 3 seasons of the year, if these trails attract high numbers of mountain bike and e-bike users, this may result in adverse impact to the trail tread due to the fall-line layout of the trail. Tread erosion and subsequent sedimentation in surrounding or downhill wetlands may occur from this heavy use. One means of addressing this would be to install water bars or grade dips sufficient to address the problem. Another means is to revise the trail’s layout to create a more sustainably designed (one with lower running grades) trail that can accommodate greater volumes of traffic in non-snow conditions.

For this reason, an easement that guarantees SAM access through the property using the most sustainable and practical route may be preferable to a surveyed route.

Other Trail Users.

In addition to winter use by snowmobilers, cross country skiers and snowshoers, the property is now used by hikers, walkers, dog walkers, nature enthusiasts and photographers and mountain bikers primarily from the local neighborhood. The use of the trails by all these groups appears to be minimal at this time based on visual evidence of wear and tear on the trails and compaction of leaf debris on the trail. This may be due to a lack of awareness of the public’s ability to access these trails, to the absence of convenient and appealing trailhead parking, trailhead kiosks, or posted maps, and little way-finding signage or trail blazing at the property. Officially, NESFI also prohibits public use for insurance and liability reasons. Once adequate insurance is in place under new ownership, and once basic trail-user amenities are provided, the volume of use on the trails will inevitably increase. Additional signage should cover topics in a way to better preserve the trails – a list of prohibited uses, what to do to enhance the trail and what not to do, how someone can help by connecting with the group shepherding the trails, etc.

The woodlands of the Farm are currently actively managed for multiple uses including timber products. The forest cutting that occurred recently opened sections of the trails to increased sunlight, which stimulates plant/tree growth on and along the trails. At many points along the trails the stumps of mature oaks and pine trees that had been shading the trail and providing a different woodland experience (both visual and emotional) for users could be seen. While the harvest operation that occurred was carefully supervised, it had a significant immediate impact on the visual experience of trail users and could have a long-term impact on users’ experience on these trails. CW would recommend a discussion among the management team or new owner regarding the balance of passive recreation and active forest management. While both can co-exist on the property, there should be a clear understanding of what each is trying to achieve at the property and how best to do this to the benefit of both goals.

Maintenance of the Present Trail Network.

The primary trail maintainers here are members of the Mill Valley Snowmobile Club. Although some of the trail markers need replacement, the Mill Valley Club's maintenance work has been particularly good. The club's motivation to provide trail maintenance is that this trail over the top of the hill is its main connector to other trails within their network. There is little to no motivation for the club to provide additional trail maintenance on trails that don't meet their needs, such as the other trails that exist on LBF. An example is the trail to the east of the active snowmobile trail, which has been left to grow back into woods because it no longer connects to their greater network.

The bottom line is that expansion of the trail network at LBF should not take place if there are no plans or entity to take on the maintenance of the current and future trails. The Management Plan will identify one or more groups willing to take the lead in developing a community-based volunteer trail stewards group that will maintain the trails outside of the Snowmobile Club's interest, including any new trails that may be considered for the property.

Possible Trail Expansions and Linkages. Expansion, including linkages to other present trails, should not be undertaken unless there is a viable plan for trail maintenance that identifies a local group of "trail stewards" who will undertake the task. With this caveat stated, there are opportunities for expansion and linkages with other areas on the larger property and within the Town.

Within the Wooded Tract itself, there is the potential to create trails on the eastern and western sides of the tract that would expand opportunities for foot and snowmobile travel during the winter months. These trails could be laid out in a sustainable manner following the contours around the sides of the hill in a slightly rolling manner causing little to no impact on the environment while providing additional trail experiences for all trail users. These would be similar to the existing snowmobile trail in width and surfacing.

Possible Agricultural Trail. Interested users of Lampson Brook Farm have expressed an interest in developing a gravel or natural-surface trail that would bring walkers into close contact with the small agricultural plots within the community farm parcel for educational purposes. Such a trail could connect to the present trail network on the forest parcel if an environmentally sensitive way to cross Lampson Brook and its associated wetlands can be designed.

Mountain Bike Trails. If the management team or new owner desires to attract mountain bike users, it would be possible to construct a network of single-track, rolling contour trails on this property that could attract biking enthusiasts from the region to ride at the property. This network should be designed with help from the Pioneer Valley Chapter of NEMBA (New England Mountain Bike Association), as the layout of good mountain bike trails is different than the layout of single-track hiking trails. NEMBA is also a trail group that has a very good reputation for building and maintaining trails that their members use. Any expansion of trails on the property should consider the goal of eliminating the fall-line layouts of existing trails because over time, the effort and resources saved in the ongoing maintenance of these trails would be quite large.

Beyond the Wooded Tract, LBF trails connect with the Universally Accessible Lake Wallace Sensory Trail that now runs from the Police Station to Foley Field. Ideally, LBF trails will also connect with the development occurring in the core of the old Belchertown State School and link to farms to the east and north of the property. Additional future trail connections in other parts of

the town have been envisioned by the Belchertown Heritage Trails Network. LBF should be viewed as an important trail hub within this regional network of trails.



Resources for Trail Construction and Maintenance. The MassTrails Program is one source of

funding for new trail construction and trail restoration/repair projects. It is a federally funded, state-administered, competitive matching-grant program that has provided millions of dollars to eligible communities and entities for over more than 25 years. It awards up to \$50,000 for single community trail projects. It should be a primary option for building out the Lampson Brook Farm Trail Network.

Community Foundation grants are also a good source of funds for trail projects. While its grant amounts are less than those of MassTrails grants, they can range from \$10K to \$20K. These too are competitive grants and may or may not require a matching component.

Community Preservation Act funds are also capable of funding trail projects. As a community that has adopted CPA, Belchertown can use some of these funds to develop the trail network at Lampson Brook Farm if the request is made to the CPA committee. Many communities who have adopted CPA have used their funds for this purpose to produce excellent trails that truly benefit the community.

Volunteer Trail Stewards and User Group volunteers: Many communities with extensive trail networks have established formal trail stewardship groups (e.g. Groton, Leominster, North Quabbin) to oversee new trail construction, trail repair and restoration, and routine trail maintenance. Belchertown should explore this possibility if it does not already have a local trail stewardship entity. Additionally, user groups (snowmobile associations, NEMBA, Pioneer Valley Hiking Club) all perform trail stewardship activities. Again, this is an avenue that could be explored for Lampson Brook Farm.

Day of Caring events like that sponsored by United Way of North Central Massachusetts generate support for the trails and get needed trail work accomplished. The mission of other service groups in the area is to perform community service projects that include trail development. *Community Trail Days or Events* can raise awareness and generate support for trail projects and trail stewardship.

OPERATING GUIDE AND STANDARDS BY WHICH THE RESOURCES WILL BE PROTECTED

- **Regenerative Agriculture.** The history of Lampson Brook Farm has been one of teaching and requiring regenerative practices, a pattern that the Board hopes to see continue into the future. One definition of regenerative agriculture is as follows:

“Regenerative Agriculture is a conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming systems. It focuses on topsoil regeneration, increasing biodiversity, improving the water cycle, enhancing ecosystem services, supporting biosequestration, increasing resilience to climate change, and strengthening the health and vitality of farm soil. Regenerative agriculture is not a specific practice itself. Rather, proponents of regenerative agriculture use a variety of sustainable agriculture techniques in combination. Practices include recycling as much farm waste as possible and adding composted material from sources outside the farm. Regenerative agriculture on small farms and gardens is often based on philosophies like permaculture, agroecology, agroforestry, restoration ecology, and holistic management. Large farms tend to be less philosophy driven and often use “no-till” or “reduced till” practices. As soil health improves, input requirements may decrease, and crop yields may increase as soils are more resilient against extreme weather and harbor fewer pests and pathogens. Most plans to mitigate climate change focus on “reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Regenerative agriculture, i.e. the capture of atmospheric carbon dioxide by growing plants that move that carbon dioxide into the soil, is ... a currently-functioning

technology available for drawing down greenhouse gases that are already in the atmosphere, mostly through the cultivation and nurturing of forests and permanent perennial pastures and grasslands.”

- Cover Crops. The farm’s soils must be protected by adequate cover crops, particularly during the November-through-April season when soil loss by wind and by erosion caused by more and more extreme storms and heavy rainfall is likely to take place.
- Forest Stewardship plan elements. The Board hopes that future management of the 240 acres of woodlands on the Forest Parcel will include provision for the following:
 - Regular monitoring and assessment of forest health including the impacts of deer browse.
 - Maintenance of the parcel as a largely unbroken forest tract serving as part of a regional wildlife corridor.
 - Protection of the aesthetic quality of the forest landscape.
 - Resistance to incoming insect pests.
 - Maximum freedom from invasives (e.g. from Norway maple that can quickly occupy the forest canopy, Oriental bittersweet that can overwhelm forest trees, garlic mustard that can compete with spring ephemerals, and glossy buckthorn that can suppress native shrubs).
 - Carbon sequestration and the development of old-growth forest characteristics.
 - The documentation and protection of rare species and biological diversity.
 - Provision for future fire protection.
 - Stewardship of trails, access points, and signage for passive outdoor recreation and maximum accessibility.
 - Silvicultural activities that may be needed for forest protection and the enhancement of future forest composition.
 - Erosion prevention, including the maintenance of forest cover and abstinence from intensive activities on steep slopes.
 - Maintenance of shade for the Lampson Brook stream channel.
 - Coordination with farmers in the management of forest edge areas.
 - Indigenous forest management practices.
- Extent of Structures That May Be Allowed by the Future Conservation Restrictions and Historic Preservation Restrictions
 - Forest Parcel. No structures allowed other than small recreational structures that enhance the recreational user experience.
 - Jepson Farmstead. Jepson House and future permanent structures on the “root cellar” site and possibly additional housing sites allowed outside the constraints of the Historic Preservation Restriction so long as consistent with all applicable laws.
 - Commercial Farm Parcel. Agriculturally related structures allowed by permission of MDAR.
 - Community Farm Parcel. Agriculturally related structures and possible future farm housing structures allowed within the constraints of the Conservation and Historic Preservation Restrictions and exclusions created specifically for future residential building sites.

STEPS INVOLVED IN THE TRANSFER OF THE PARCELS

- Completion and approval of Management Plan by DCAMM and the Board.
- Completion and approval of Survey by DCAMM and the Board.
- Application to the Belchertown Planning Board for subdivision approval to create the five (or more) parcels.
- Phase I study of the entire Lampson Brook Farm conducted.
- Preparation, review, approval and issuance of RFPs for the Forest Parcel, Community Farm Parcel, and Enterprise Zone.
- General publicity sent out to alert all possible applicants of the RFPs that will appear.
- Establishment of a point of contact for interested buyers.
- Completion of appraisals of the Community Farm, Forest Parcel, and Enterprise Zone.
- Receipt of proposals for the three parcels.
- Board meetings and interviews leading to the recommendations of the best applicant for each parcel.
- Recommendations forwarded to DCAMM.
- Prospective new owners and DCAMM enter into Contract for Purchase specifying all the conditions that must be met for a successful transfer (title, any environmental hazard cleanup, demolition, CR/HPR completed).
- DCAMM prepares deeds to the five parcels.
- Agricultural Value-added Zoning District approved by Belchertown Town Meeting
- Recording on the five deeds.
- Draft Conservation Restrictions and Historical Preservation Restriction, including definition of possible exclusions, are negotiated by the Board, the restriction holders, and the prospective new owners.
- Restrictions and accompanying applications are submitted to appropriate state agencies (Division of Conservation Services, DCR and Mass Historical Commission) for amendments and approval with fully executed restrictions held in escrow.
- Parcels conveyed from DCAMM to new owners.
- Restrictions are recorded simultaneously.
- Baseline Documentation Reports for each restriction are completed.
- Additional steps as needed.

TOOLS TO ASSURE THAT STANDARDS ARE FOLLOWED INTO THE FUTURE

Prospective tools that will govern future use of the parcels are these:

- Conservation Restrictions over the Community Farm Parcel and Forest Parcel (required).
- Historic Preservation Restrictions over the Jepson Farmstead and the Community Farm Parcel (required).
- Proposed Town Agricultural Value-added Zoning District that will need to be re-submitted to the Belchertown Town Meeting for the required 2/3 vote.
- Possible CC&R (Covenants, Conditions, & Restrictions) document and possible Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) may be added to the governing documents (including the Board and the parcel owners).

PROPOSED CONSERVATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION RESTRICTIONS

The legislation governing future Lampson Brook Farm activities specifies that new Conservation Restrictions will be recorded for the Forest Parcel and the Community Farm Parcel and Historic Preservation Restrictions (HPRs) will be recorded for Jepson Farmstead and the First Barn and Horse Barn, both located on the Community Farm Parcel. Additional HPR coverage may be established for a stone foundation southeast of the Horse Barn. The following proposals describe suggested prohibited and permitted uses for each of the restrictions. Final language of the CRs and HPRs could be determined either before or after the new owners are assigned. If the latter, the new owners would be in a position to make sure their particular needs and plans would fit into the CR's prohibited and allowed activities. In accordance with long-standing tradition for the farm, hunting will be allowed on the Forest Parcel contingent on a written application by the hunter, provision of proper appropriate identification, and issuance of a written permission form by the owner.

Community Farm

A. Conservation Restriction

Holder of the Restriction: any qualified organization selected by the Board that has been organized for purposes that include farmland conservation.

Conservation Values: Open space, agricultural education, wildlife habitat, habitat connectivity, soils, water quality, working farmland, climate change resilience, consistency with clearly delineated state and local government purpose, heritage/scenic landscape.

Prohibited Uses:

Standard:

- New structures except those specifically permitted or those occupying sites excluded from the restriction
- Extractive activities
- Disposal/storage
- Adverse impacts to water and soils
- Introduction of invasives
- Subdivision

Specific:

- Restrict location, size and design of all structures so as to protect the views
- No herbicides except for stem (rather than broadcast) applications to help control invasive or noxious plant species

Permitted Uses:

Standard:

- Vegetation management – tree pruning, mowing, removal or pruning of shrubs
- Composting
- Natural habitat and ecosystem improvement
- Motorized vehicles by persons with mobility impairments

Specific:

- Agricultural uses: animal husbandry, horticulture, up to ____ plots ____sf (require farm conservation plan – checking with NESFI)
- Agricultural infrastructure: agricultural roads, wells, agricultural structures: barns, greenhouses, sheds (with size limits on all structures), fencing (the ongoing ownership of permanent structures should be specified)
- Agri-tourism (harvest festival, weddings)
- Green energy: rooftop solar
- Public access on designated trails
- Trail infrastructure: kiosks, benches, trail improvements
- Farm stand or other retail structures
- Public parking area
- Art structures
- Machine repair shop with specific restriction guidelines and a limited envelope
- Farmworker housing, also with a limited envelope
- Limited use of herbicides
- Indigenous cultural and food-growing practices
- Affirmative right of the CR holder to farm or seek new farmers if the Community Farm is unfarmed
- Programs and meetings for educational purposes and for agriculturally related organizations

B. Historic Preservation Restriction on First Barn and Horse Barn

Holder of the Restriction: Any organization selected by the Board that has been organized for purposes that include historic preservation.

Preservation Values: The iconic barns represent the agricultural use of Lampson Brook Farm and are part of historic view and heritage landscape. The HPR will apply to each barn and a small rectangle that encloses each barn.

Prohibited Uses: Without prior written approval of Grantee, no activity shall be undertaken that will alter or adversely affect the appearance, workmanship, or structural stability of the following exterior and interior portion of the barns.

Exterior: All facades, roofs, chimneys, foundations, windows

Interior: Floors, doors, window hardware

- The barns shall not be demolished or moved except as provided for herein (if Grantee determines unsalvageable)
- No other buildings may be constructed within HPRA
- No dumping of trash, rubbish, or any other unsightly or offensive materials
- Create a Historic Preservation Restriction Area that encompasses each of the two barns and prohibits any use of the land that would be inconsistent with the purposes of the HPR. An example would be a chain link fence.

Permitted Uses:

- With prior written approval of Grantee, Grantor may undertake structural improvements required to stabilize and maintain the barns including but not limited to: replacing rotten

or defective wood beams and framing, repairing the roof and foundation. Grantor must submit design plans to Grantee that include materials to be used.

- Grantor is permitted to renovate the interior space of the barns to create modern offices, meeting rooms, event space, visitor center, storage and utility rooms, bathrooms all of which may include constructing interior walls, installing insulation, plumbing, electrical wiring, and communication cables affixed to the exterior provided that Grantee first determines that the proposed renovations will not adversely affect the interior beams, posts, girts, plates, studs, sheathing boards, rafters, purlins, masonry walls, and masonry piers.
- Installation of replacement shingles
- Installation of screens, storm windows, storm doors, heating and air conditioning systems
- Interior and exterior painting or paint removal provided that the materials and methods to be used will not damage the underlying substrate
- Replacement of broken window glass or framework
- Rooftop solar after written approval of plans for such installations by the grantor(s)
- Educational signs

Forest Parcel

Conservation Restriction

Holdings of the Restriction: Mass Dept of Conservation & Recreation and Belchertown Conservation Commission

Conservation Values: Intact forest, wetlands, outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, climate change resiliency, habitat connectivity.

Prohibited Uses:

Standard:

- Most structures except those permitted below.
- Extractive activities.
- Disposal/storage.
- Adverse impacts to water and soils.
- Introduction of invasives.
- Subdivision.

Permitted Uses

Standard:

- Vegetation management
- Timber harvests pursuant to a Forest Stewardship Plan and Cutting Plan both approved by Grantees. FSP must be designed to protect & enhance biodiversity, recreation, and forest health.
- Construction and maintenance of new and existing non-motorized recreational trails, including trail infrastructure, either by right or with approval from Grantees, conditioned on a viable plan for trail maintenance.
- Construction and maintenance of accessible trails.
- Environmental education uses.

- Indigenous cultural practices.

Specific:

- Creation of a demonstration forest or forest areas
- Selling carbon offset credits
- Snowmobile access on specified trails

Jepson Farmstead Parcel

Historic Preservation Restriction on Jepson House and Surrounding Land

Preservation Values: Protecting the historic house and surrounding landscape. The HPR will apply to the Jepson House and the 16 acres of associated land between Jackson Street and the railroad.

Prohibited Uses: Without prior written approval of Grantee, no activity shall be undertaken that will alter or adversely affect the appearance, workmanship, or structural stability of the following exterior and interior portion of Jepson House.

Exterior: All facades, roofs, chimneys, foundations, windows

Interior: Floors, doors, window hardware

- No visual impairment of the view of the house from the road
- No other buildings may be constructed within HPRA except as specified below
- No dumping of trash, rubbish, or any other unsightly or offensive materials
- Create a Historic Preservation Restriction Area that encompasses the house and prohibits use of the land that would be inconsistent with the purposes of the HPR. An example would be a deck or garage.

Permitted Uses:

- With prior written approval of Grantee, Grantor may undertake structural improvements required to stabilize and maintain the house including by not limited to: replacing rotten wood beams and framing, repairing the roof, chimneys, and foundation. Grantor must submit design plans to Grantee that include materials to be used.
- Grantor is permitted to renovate the interior space of the house to create modern offices, meeting rooms, event space, visitor center, residential use, storage and utility rooms, bathrooms all of which may include constructing interior walls, installing insulation, plumbing, electrical wiring, and communication cables affixed to the exterior provided that Grantee first determines that the proposed renovations will not adversely affect the interior beams, posts, girts, plates, studs, sheathing boards, rafters, purlins, masonry walls, and masonry piers.
- Installation of screens, storm windows, storm doors, heating and air conditioning systems
- Interior and exterior painting or paint removal provided that the materials and method to be used shall not damage the underlying substrate.
- Replacement of broken window glass.
- Ground-mounted solar in specific, limited, unobtrusive locations.
- Educational signs so long as not attached to a historic structure.
- With written approval of Grantee, a replacement building may be constructed on the old “root cellar” foundation located east of the Jepson House.
- Additional language for activities allowed on the 8.4 acres other than “no buildings.”

Enterprise Zone

Zoning District: Proposed new zoning for the Enterprise Zone and a large contiguous part of the farm will tentatively be termed an “Agricultural Value-added District.” It will accommodate the various possible uses that the Enterprise Zone and adjacent land may be put to. See below for the draft text of the proposed district.

RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL

A Right of First Refusal (ROFR) gives the holder the option to step into the shoes of a bona fide purchaser and purchase the land under the same terms. If the Lampson Brook Farm Board chose a nonprofit to own the Community Farm Parcel, and that nonprofit later decided to sell the land to a non-farmer or non-farm organization, the holder of the ROFR could step in and acquire the land under the same terms as the prospective buyer had, usually as set forth in a Purchase and Sale Agreement, and buy the land instead of the non-farmer. Presumably the new owner would then either continue to own the Community Farm parcel or find a different buyer. The process gives the holder of the ROFR a say in who owns the land should the current owner ever decide to transfer the land. An ROFR for the Community Farm Parcel could be held by MDAR or the Town of Belchertown. If MDAR or the Town then decided to transfer out the land, Art. 97 legislation would be required.

The ROFR could be held by the holder of the Conservation Restriction over the Community Farm, but the CR holder would need to raise the money to buy the parcel from the current owner and the CR and fee interest would merge (and the CR would be extinguished) unless the CR holder simultaneously granted a CR to a different entity. The ROFR could be in the deed from DCAMM to new owner of Community Farm parcel, but it would apply only to the first conveyance. The ROFR does not “run with the land” and so would not apply to subsequent conveyances unless the Seller and Buyer agreed to put it in a subsequent deed.

COVENANTS, CONDITIONS, & RESTRICTIONS (CC&Rs)

Note that the Board will need to decide whether one or both the proposed CC&Rs (described here) and the proposed MOA (described below) will be used.

If the board feels that the conservation restrictions on the Community Farm and Forest Parcel, the historic preservation restrictions on the barns and Jepson House, the new zoning district designed specifically for LBF, and the MOA are insufficient to protect the LBF property, exclusive of the Commercial Farm parcel, then the board could request that DCAMM impose covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&R) prior to conveying out each of the parcels.

CC&Rs, which are similar to regulations for homeowner associations, were used at the Belchertown State School (Carriage Grove) and Northampton State Hospital (Village at Hospital Hill) properties. There are three stark contrasts between these two projects and the LBF project. The first is the presence on the first two properties of common areas which would require property owners to agree on maintenance and expenses. LBF does not have any common areas. The second is the presence on the first two properties of residential housing units and commercial units that require all the owners in the neighborhood to agree on certain restrictions that result in a consistent appearance and use. For example, only single-family housing is allowed and such housing must comply with design guidelines. LBF does not have the same use intensity as the

Belchertown State School or the Northampton State Hospital. Most importantly, LBF parcels will be encumbered with permanent conservation restrictions, historic preservation restrictions, and Article 97, the latter which will protect the Commercial Agriculture parcel. Belchertown State School and Northampton State Hospital did not benefit from those protections.

Given the lack of common areas (except for trails and parking areas), residential, and commercial use at LBR, along with the requirement that conservation restrictions and historic preservation restrictions be put in place, plus the fact that the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources will own one of the parcels, further restrictions appear to be unnecessary.



MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) AMONG THE LBF BOARD AND FUTURE OWNERS OF LBF PARCELS - Optional

Purpose of the MOA. This potential document would be signed by the Board and the owners of the five parcels. It would be a guide to future interactions among the Lampson Brook Board and the owners of the Community Farm Parcel, the Forest Parcel, the Commercial Farm Parcel (MDAR), the Enterprise Zone, and the Jepson Farmstead (NESFI). In the spirit of mutual cooperation, the MOA is intended to lay out policies and expectations for activities that will take place on the farm. The MOA would go above and beyond the CRs and HPR, but the CR/HPR language is at a higher level than the MOA's. Since the Board, MDAR, and NESFI would be signatories, those three could draft the initial version of the MOA, with the other three signing as they take title.

Note that the following are suggestions, not requirements, for a possible future MOA:

Communication Among the Board and Parcel Owners. The hope is that frequent talks among the LBF Board and representatives of the five owners and farmers, growers, user groups, and abutters will take place so each party stays abreast of what is going on.

Good communications will lead to good problem solving and consensus on how best to approach important farm issues. Representatives of the Belchertown 4-H Community Garden Club, Snowmobile Association, Belchertown Community Gardens, and Belchertown EDIC will be included in discussions where possible.

Duration of the MOA and future amendments to the MOA. This document could remain in place for the first five years of the new LBF configuration and could be renewed for subsequent ten-year periods if the group agrees. The group could review the document annually in January of each year to prepare for the coming growing season and by consensus make any amendments that may be needed.

Sharing of roads, parking spaces, and access points. Traditionally, the various farmers, growers, and staff of the farm have enjoyed unhindered use of the gravel drives and farm roads within the farm. The exceptions have been the farm road that runs through the north part of commercial farm parcel #9 from George Hannum Street, which the leasing farmer has blocked with a chain; and the continuation of Underwood Road at the south end of commercial farm parcel #9, whose entrance is blocked by a locked steel gate. Both of those access points have always been accessible to NESFI for use at any time for any purpose, and in future could be ceded to the farm manager and the Board. Where ownership and a road easement occur, the easement should clarify when the easement holder is responsible for maintenance.

With the above exceptions, the management plan recommends that the future use of internal roads be organized as follows:

- Gravel road from George Hannum Street to the compost site and retired state-owned landfill: to be available to the commercial farmers using parcels 6b and 8 (as far as the gated entrance to the compost site), to future users of the compost site via a locked gate, and to farm management and the LBF Board. There shall be an access easement reserved to DCAMM for necessary access to the former landfill site.
- Gravel road between the community farm parcel and the enterprise zone: to be controlled by the enterprise zone owner but to be available to farmers using the community farm parcel.
- Farm road from the First Barn-Horse Barn parking area running south and then east between community farm parcel 2 and commercial farm parcel 3: to be used by farmers using those two parcels and by walkers eventually using the road as a trail that will connect the farm to the EDIC redevelopment area and to Foley Field and Lake Wallace. The Board may need to provide for commercial use of this lane if a business located part of its operations on the adjacent EDIC area and another part on the farm. For insurance and liability reasons, current community farm owner NESFI prefers that public parking be located in a future, adjacent space, leaving the current parking area to be used for NESFI-related purposes and Community Farm purposes.
- Farm road running from Jackson Street into the enterprise zone and through the log processing site: to be available to the owner of the enterprise zone and to farmers who may use the hay barn.
- Woods road from George Hannum Street into the forest parcel: to be used as a parking site for recreational users of the parcel and as a vehicle access way for forestry and habitat management.

Note that a CC&R, described above, may be helpful in the governing of the use of Lampson Brook Farm roads.

Sharing of farm equipment and storage areas. In general, farm equipment is the exclusive property of the farmer, but historically the closeness of the Lampson Brook farm community has engendered mutual aid among the group.

Machine shop use, farm equipment repairs, and Ed Go's operation. For years Ed Go has tended Lampson Brook farmers' vehicles and the LBF farm buildings from his headquarters in the metal barn in the community farm parcel. Farmers should not abuse the privilege, as Ed generally has an extremely busy maintenance schedule. The manager of the Machine Shop shall comply with and follow all Best Management Practices for the protection of soil and groundwater beneath and surrounding the shop.

Use of the barns and library. Ideally, largely through dedicated organizing, clean-up, and salvage work by Grace Adzima, the library in the First Barn will continue to house an extensive resource collection that includes many publications produced by NESFI. Other uses of the First Barn, Horse Barn, and Hay Barn have yet to be determined and will depend largely on the future ownership of the community farm and the enterprise zone.

Trail maintenance, construction of trail connections, new ag trails, trail regulations. Trail maintenance will be primarily the responsibility of the owner of the forest parcel, but other LBF owners and tenants are welcome to assist. The proposed trail from the historic barn area to the EDIC property to Lake Wallace and Foley Field should be the target of a new Mass Recreational Trails Program grant application, since the previous RTP grant expired when permanent protection of the land beneath the trail could not yet be guaranteed. Maintenance of that trail should be accomplished by a coalition of parcel owners. Possible future internal agricultural trails among the community farm plots, which could be surfaced with gravel or wood chips, should be built and maintained by the owner of the community farm and volunteers.

Expected types of growing / GMO and organic farming practices / herbicides and pesticides.

The Board will encourage organic growing with a minimum of herbicide/pesticide use and to discourage the use of GMO crops. The use of herbicides/pesticides (beyond the targeted removal of invasive species and the maintenance of organic growing) will be discouraged.

Basic property upkeep.

- Invading non-natives, shrubs, vines, trees control at buildings, edges, interiors:

The parcel owners recognize that it is important to keep shrubs, vines, and trees from climbing up or crowding barns and other buildings so as to prevent persistent moisture from causing rot and decay. Early detection and control of non-native invasive plants - especially Oriental bittersweet, multiflora rose, autumn olive, glossy buckthorn, and black swallowwort - is also important. Mechanical removal before seed production will help prevent their spread, but eradication, difficult at best, is unlikely to succeed without the careful stem-application (rather than broadcast) use of herbicides.

- Roads and parking areas: The owners of the five parcels must agree to keep unpaved roadways within their parcels graded or mowed and in serviceable condition.

- Agricultural edges. To prevent the gradual encroachment of shrubs like staghorn sumac into agricultural fields, frequent brush-hog mowing or other control along field edges will be beneficial.

Waste and trash. Owners agree to maintain all portions of their properties free of waste and trash.

Habitat considerations: pollinators, grassland birds, vernal pools, beaver pond, edges, nest boxes. Owners agree that maintaining diverse, high quality wildlife habitat at Lampson Brook is of high importance.

Lighting of buildings and public spaces. In the interest of maintaining dark skies, outdoor lighting will be directed downward to the maximum degree feasible.

Winter field cover and erosion prevention. To prevent erosion, sedimentation, and soil loss, adequate winter cover on fields within Lampson Brook Farm must be established by November 15.

Construction/installation of new temporary farm structures. MDAR policies will dictate what temporary structures may be allowed within the commercial farm parcel. The conservation and historical preservation restrictions and Town zoning will dictate what permanent or temporary structures, if any, will be allowed within the community farm, forest parcel, and Jepson Farmstead parcels. Town zoning will specify the buildings that will be allowed within the enterprise zone.

Dog policy. Dogs must be kept on leashes within agricultural areas. The owner of the forest parcel will establish a separate dog control policy for the trails and woods of that parcel.

Signage and kiosks. In general, signage will be reviewed and approved by the ownership group before installation. The group may choose to establish a common design for informational and directional signs. Limits on signage and kiosks will be specified in the CRs, in the HPR, and in the zoning.

Additional items.

The following subjects may be addressed by the ownership group and included in the MOA after discussion and agreement:

Volunteers at the farm.

Sale of farm products.

Publicity, advertising, photography, remote cameras.

Art works.

Public gatherings and events.

Farm considerations – fences, manure, compost, noxious weeds, invasive plants.

Purchasing of Community Farm and Commercial Farm food products by operators of the EZ.

Teaching workshops.

Possible farmer housing.

Agricultural animals.

Future solar panels or wind-power generation.

Scientific agricultural research.

Sawmill operation and wood storage.

Accessibility issues.

Bathroom availability and use.

Proposed Agricultural Value-added Zoning District

New language describing a proposed “Agricultural Value-added Zoning District” will be submitted to Belchertown Town Meeting in the near future. Original language is included in this plan as an Appendix.

ADJACENT LANDS AND OPEN SPACE.

The setting: Lampson Brook is within walking distance of the Belchertown Town center, the newly redeveloped main State School campus (with its mixed-use commerce center, assisted living facility, walking trails, and open space), the Chestnut Hill Community School, and Belchertown High School. It’s only a short drive from Route 202 and Route 9, and considerable traffic passes the site on Jackson Street and George Hannum Street.

Protected open space immediately adjacent to LBF includes the Town of Belchertown’s Foley Field-Lake Wallace complex south of LBF and a small Belchertown recreation area across the railroad from the northeast corner of LBF. Within one mile of LBF are the Chestnut Hill Recreation parcels south of Route 202, the Town’s Piper Farm Conservation Area, and several Springfield Water Supply parcels northeast of the Town center. Immediately southeast of LBF is the old State School property, now being fully redeveloped by the Belchertown EDIC. Northeast of LBF, immediately across Jackson Street, is the Town DPW garage.

North of LBF are two agricultural properties (the only two in the vicinity) that should be considered for permanent protection (they are now under Chap 61A), both of which are part of the LBF viewshed. Discussions with one of the owners have taken place within the past few years. Just west of Lake Wallace is a privately owned forest parcel that is also in a key location. Another undeveloped forest parcel is off the southwest LBF corner (check as to whether these parcels are in Chap 61). Nearly all the other properties adjacent to LBF are in residential development.

Any land protection efforts would be strictly voluntary on the part of the owners, but there are various incentives that would make it likely that they might enter protection discussions with Lampson Brook and the Town. The Town Conservation Department and Commission are currently looking to select parcels for FY23 grant rounds and has already assisted with a Conservation Land Tax Credit program application for one of the parcels mentioned above.

Available land protection mechanisms

Conservation Restrictions (CRs). With the help and encouragement of local and regional conservation land trusts, the Valley has an illustrious history of generous donations of Conservation Restrictions. Charitable tax deductions help encourage such gifts, as do programs like the Commonwealth’s Conservation Land Tax Credit Program, which makes outright payments to CR donors of up to \$75,000 if their land is deemed to be of significant conservation importance. It should be clear that both CRs and APRs (described below) leave ownership of the land in the applicant’s hands but prevent the land’s development in perpetuity.

Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs). Two or three of the properties mentioned above might qualify for the APR program. APRs are entirely voluntary and are funded by a combination of state and Town dollars. Because the Town has an Agricultural Commission and has passed a Right to Farm Bylaw, the Town share is only 10% of the appraised value of the APR. That number would be reduced to 5% if the Town has a tracking system that prevents building permits from being issued on APR land.



The map above shows parcels for which we recommend land protection measures. The numbers are the assessor's map and parcel numbers.

Chapter 61/61A/61B First Refusal Process. The Town has the right to exercise its right of first refusal to purchase lands under one of the Chapter 61 programs whose use has changed or is about to change from open space (forestry, agriculture, recreation) to another use. The Town may assign this right to a local land trust, which in this case would be Kestrel Land Trust.

Trail easements and trail construction funded by the DCR Mass Trails program. See the trails section of this plan above.

EEA (Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs) Programs including LAND (Land Acquisitions for Natural Diversity) and Conservation Partnership programs.

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which has recently seen a large increase in funding.

STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS THAT MAY BE INCLUDED IN FUTURE RFPs FOR THE FOREST PARCEL, COMMUNITY FARM PARCEL, AND ENTERPRISE ZONE

Community Farm Parcel

- Priority will be given to an applicant that proposes to own both the Community Farm Parcel and the Forest Parcel.
- Applicants must have experience in resource stewardship.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate an ability to practice regenerative agriculture.
- Applicants must be prepared to provide farm management services for the entire Lampson Brook Farm.
- Applicants must be non-profit organizations with at least the following purposes: historic preservation, passive recreation, promotion of small-scale farming, local food production and food system development, and farm management services.
- Applicants must be prepared to provide farm management services under the direction of the Board through a Memorandum of Agreement with the other parcel owners.
- Applicants must be prepared to comply with the Management Plan including providing service as the public gateway to the Lampson Brook Farm property.
- Eligible applicants include partnerships among organizations that add to the capacity, knowledge, expertise and long-term stewardship of the proposal.

Forest Parcel

- Priority will be given to an applicant that proposes to own both the Community Farm Parcel and the Forest Parcel.

- Applicants must demonstrate experience and ability in forest resource stewardship and management of passive recreation resources.
- Applicants must be prepared to complete a Forest Stewardship Plan prepared by a licensed forester and approved by the Mass Dept of Conservation & Recreation prior to any timber harvests of more than 10,000 board feet. The Forest Stewardship Plan shall take into consideration the conservation restriction, biodiversity, outdoor recreation, scenic and other values of the forest parcel and includes the sustainable forest management of the parcel.
- Eligible applicants include partnerships among organizations that add to the capacity, knowledge, expertise and long-term stewardship of the proposal.

Enterprise Zone

- Consideration of proposals will be based in part on the total dollar amount proposed for the purchase.
- Applicants must submit a proposed development plan for the parcel that is compatible with the Management Plan. Development must be for a sustainable, natural-resource based enterprise compatible with provision for public access, tourism, public education value, and public benefits.
- The development plan must take into account the need for building demolition, soil testing, and site restoration.
- Applicants must have proven ability to steward the parcel and maintain the parcel sustainable into the future.

Farmer Housing

Farming in the Connecticut River Valley is more likely to be successful and durable if on-site or nearby housing is available for the farmers or farm families. In general, the goal of the legislation governing Lampson Brook Farm is to protect the 430 acres from development and support ongoing farming and conservation, but small amounts of farmer housing to be established in existing or new structures on designated sites on non-farmable land should be compatible with that goal. It will be the responsibility of the future owners of the specific parcels to make such housing available if and when they choose.

The proposed Belchertown Agricultural Value-added (AVA) District, which will include parts of Lampson Brook Farm and is anticipated to be put before Town Meeting again in future, lists among its purposes, benefits, and objectives the following, all of which would be enhanced by available farmer housing. (Note that housing or farmer housing will need to be added to the Schedule of uses permitted by right within the AVA District.)

- (1) To provide opportunities for farmers seeking to process products they grow;
- (2) To promote the retention of farmland in Belchertown;
- (3) To assist in developing a locally-grown food supply;

- (4) To reduce local food insecurity;
- (5) To attract more people to the agricultural economy;
- (6) To allow the relatively intensive use of land in an alternative pattern of development while maintaining existing character.
- (7) Increased financial feasibility for landowners to keep farmland in agriculture by support of the agricultural sector.
- (8) Increased food security by providing local people with locally grown food.
- (9) Retention and celebration of community character and history through continuation of Belchertown's history of local agricultural prominence.
- (10) To provide for an agriculturally based enterprise to be established on the LBF that is compatible with the direction of the entire effort.

Note that at least one potential future owner, an Indigenous tribe, has expressed interest in establishing modest, farm-related residential space somewhere on the farm as part of a vision of an “agrihood” that combines farming and small-scale housing.

Potential Lampson Brook Farm parcel-by-parcel housing sites are as follows and are shown on accompanying maps:

Enterprise Zone:

Housing on either section of the Enterprise Zone (the old dairy complex and the smaller site north of George Hannum Street) must comply with Town zoning and other State and Town regulations and, if built, will be expected to augment a future commercial enterprise on the site. If Town Meeting approves the proposed AVA District, among the relevant AVA provisions are these (in addition to dimensional standards):

- Buildings in the Agricultural Value-Added District must have clear relationship to locally beneficial agriculture.
- Multiple buildings on one parcel are permissible if they are deemed consistent with the intent of this article.
- Building design must be consistent with the Planning Board's Commercial Development Design Guidelines.
- Buildings should meet or exceed LEED or comparable "green" building standards for energy efficiency to the greatest extent possible and economically feasible.
- Physical maintenance of uses and buildings must be assured through restrictive covenants acceptable to the Planning Board.

Commercial Farm Parcel:

MDAR will not allow housing on the Commercial Farm Parcel.

Forest Parcel

The Conservation Restriction that will govern the Forest Parcel will not allow housing.

Jepson Farmstead.

It will be the responsibility of NESFI, the future owner of the Jepson Farmstead parcel, to decide whether and where additional future housing is needed. Housing cannot be mandated for this parcel beyond that which is allowed by legislation. Any new structure will need to be outside the Historic Preservation Area surrounding the existing Jepson House or consistent with the historic restriction.

At present there are farm-related housing units within the Jepson House building. There is also temporary housing in a trailer behind Jepson House. The future Historic Preservation Restriction will protect the appearance of Jepson House and will likely specify that with written approval of the Grantee, a building to replace the derelict structure on the old “root cellar” foundation east of Jepson House may be constructed. Such a building could be used for additional housing provided that it is in compliance with future zoning.

Community Farm Parcel

In general, the Conservation Restriction that will govern the Community Farm Parcel will not allow new housing structures. However, residences in one or more of the Community Farm barns, which could one day be practical and useful, would not be prohibited by the CR. Note that the barns are currently not conducive to housing and would require extensive modification for codes, services, structural integrity, and energy conservation. It would be the responsibility of the future owner of the Community Farm to plan and provide for any such use. Note that the possibility of allowing farmer housing on the site in areas excluded from the future Conservation Restriction needs further exploration by the Board.

The Machine Shop

The machine and equipment shop, run by Ed Go and located on the Community Farm parcel across the driveway from the Enterprise Zone, will be provided a small envelope within the CR boundaries that identifies the building and immediately adjacent work space. Outdoor storage of vehicles other than those being worked on will be prohibited.

Farm Oversight and Farm Manager

The Lampson Brook Farm legislation specifies that “The owner of the Community Farm Parcel shall provide farm management services.” It also states that “Management of the Community Farm Parcel shall include providing service as the public gateway to the Lampson Brook Farm.”

The farm management function could represent a significant challenge to the Community Farm owner. Our recommendation is that such oversight, by either staff or designated volunteer personnel, should focus on assistance with communications among the owners of the five parcels and assistance in interpreting the future Memorandum of Agreement among those five and the LBF Board. The management function could be assigned to an individual farm manager. That

person would probably not be in a position to enforce the restrictions or the provisions of the Management Plan, but should play a valuable role in heading off possible disputes among owners and in encouraging partnerships among the group. It may be that a small voluntary, periodic contribution from the other parcel owners could help compensate a farm manager for that person's farm management time.

For the Commercial Farm parcel, a license with MDAR, the landowner, could contain stewardship standards enforceable by MDAR. The Community Farm owner could lease out land that it owns to a tenant farmer and the lease could contain stewardship standards enforceable by the owner of the Community Farm.

The gateway function of the Community Farm could be developed over time once the parcel owner has a handle on the running of the parcel itself. It will be important to be sure that public use of the farm does not interfere with farm operations. Interior trails that allow visitors to view farm work and crops without getting in the way would be useful. Public parking cannot be forced on the new Community Farm owner, but over time could be developed in a way that accommodates up to 10 or 12 vehicles in a separate space from that used by farmers and farm managers. This will require additional expense for the parcel owner. That and liability issues should be solved before any parking is provided.

Lampson Brook Farm Board

The Lampson Brook Farm Board, established by the legislation, should be continued indefinitely to control the Lampson Brook Fund, supervise the Farm Manager, assist with ongoing interpretation and implementation of a possible future MOA, be on the lookout for grant funds, supervise publicity about the farm for general information purposes, and help attract visitors to farm events.

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APPENDIX. AGRICULTURAL VALUE-ADDED ZONING DISTRICT – ORIGINAL LANGUAGE.

ARTICLE XV Agricultural Value-Added District

§ 145-82. Purpose.

The Agricultural Value-Added District is intended to support and promote local agricultural activity and the retention of active farmland and farmland of local importance, as defined by the US Natural Resource Conservation Service, by providing economic and educational opportunities to add commercial value to local agricultural products. Its design is to provide a base of economic activity and an aesthetic that reflects the town's agricultural heritage, and provide a supportive infrastructure for new agricultural technologies. It is intended to work in concert with the Business Center District that adjoins it.

Lot dimensions in the AV-A District may vary from those permitted in other districts as noted in Article V of this chapter. This is to accommodate current development technologies in the areas of energy efficiency, water conservation, storm water

management, transportation, and building design and construction.

A. The purposes of the Agricultural Value-Added District are:

- (1) To reinforce the town's Right to Farm bylaw, chapter 38 of the Code of the Town of Belchertown.
- (2) To provide opportunities for farmers seeking to process products they grow;
- (3) To provide opportunities for marketing assistance and education;
- (4) To promote the retention of farmland in Belchertown;
- (5) To assist in developing a locally-grown food supply;
- (6) To reduce local food insecurity;
- (7) To attract more people to the agricultural economy;
- (8) To allow the relatively intensive use of land in an alternative pattern of development while maintaining existing character and by which the following benefits and objectives are likely to be attained, as described in Subsection B.

B. Benefits and objectives of the Agricultural Value-Added District:

- (1) Better markets, employment, and educational opportunities for agricultural producers in Belchertown.
- (2) More local economic activity.
- (3) Increased financial feasibility for landowners to keep farmland in agriculture by support of the agricultural sector.
- (4) Increased food security by providing local people with locally grown food.
- (5) Retention and celebration of community character and history through continuation of Belchertown's history of local agricultural prominence.

§ 145-83. Definitions.

Value-added Agricultural Processing:

Treatment that changes the physical state or form of a farm product in order to increase its market value, including such processes as canning, milling, grinding, freezing, heating, and fermenting.

Basic Agricultural Processing:

Processing necessary to store and market farm products. Basic processing does not include treatment that changes the form of the product, but does include treatment such as cutting, drying, and packaging.

Agricultural Manufacturing:

Turning farm products into commercial products through activities such as baking, butchering, brewing, whether for wholesale or retail.

Farm Worker Housing:

The use of a building or portion of a building designed and used exclusively for the housing of farm workers who actively and currently farm on land associated with the housing for at least six months out of the year. Farm worker housing may be used to accommodate people directly connected to one of the farm worker residents.

§ 145-83. Development method.

- A. Site plan approval by the Planning Board is required for each development in the Agricultural Value-Added District.
- B. The planning board may require a deposit of money in escrow to guarantee performance of the development and cover municipal expenses in case of non-performance or public necessity on the site.

§ 145-84. Administration.

- A. To facilitate timely processing, promote better communication and avoid misunderstanding, applicants are encouraged to submit conceptual materials for informal review by the Planning Board prior to formal application for site plan approval.
- B. Site plan approval submission requirements. Each Agricultural Value-Added District site plan approval application and plan shall provide the following information:
 - 1. The location and specific boundaries of the project parcel or parcels.
 - 2. Signatures of authorized representatives of each entity with

ownership interest and each applicant or applicants' agent involved in the project.

3. Written approval from the appropriate governing body certifying the ability to connect to a public sewage system and a public water supply.
 4. Copies of all proposed covenants, easements, agreements and other restrictions the applicant proposes, in draft guideline form, not in final legal form.
 5. Demonstration that the proposed development is consistent with this article.
 6. Any and all other information the Planning Board may require to assist in determining whether the project site plan meets the objectives and standards as set forth in this article.
- C. Review and approval process.
- (1) The review, notice, and public hearing process for site plan approval in the Agricultural Value-Added District shall be conducted in the same manner as would a special permit. After notice and public hearing in accordance with MGL c. 40A, § 9, as amended, the Planning Board shall, after due consideration of the reports and recommendations of the Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Select Board, Director of Public Works, Town Engineer, Belchertown Water District, and any other reviewing authority, approve a site plan, provided that the conditions and standards of this article have been adequately met. The Planning Board may impose reasonable conditions on its approval to ensure compliance with the conditions and standards of this article.
 - (2) Site plan approval granted under this article shall lapse within 24 months if construction has not begun or is not continuing to proceed, except for a good cause shown with an extension approved by the Planning Board. The applicant must apply for an extension at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the site plan approval.
 - (3) Strict compliance with any zoning bylaw governing any individual aspect of a site plan under this article may be waived by the Planning Board where such action is not detrimental to the public good. In such cases, any waiver on a site plan with approval from the Planning Board supersedes the individual bylaw governing the waiver. If the applicant requests a waiver, it is incumbent upon the applicant to demonstrate how the proposed waiver is not detrimental to the public good. The Planning Board reserves the right to waive a requirement or requirements when the Board deems it appropriate to do so, even if the

applicant does not request a waiver.

D. Fees.

- (1) Same as the current site plan filing fee.
- (2) The applicant shall pay all costs incurred by the Planning Board and for all consultants used by the Planning Board in considering the application for site plan approval, including but not limited to engineering, design, and legal services. The Planning Board may require payment of such costs pursuant to MGL c.44, § 53G. The failure or refusal of an applicant to make such payments shall constitute grounds for denial of the application.

§ 145-85. Dimensional standards.

Lots and buildings in the Agricultural Value-Added District shall meet dimensional standards that are appropriate to establish the desired form, mass, public space, and service needs of the site, notwithstanding the requirements of Article V of this chapter. Recommended standards to establish a design basis are the following:

- A. Minimum lot size: 20,000 square feet.
- B. Minimum frontage: 50 feet.
- C. Maximum lot coverage: 80%.
- D. Minimum front setback*: 10 feet.
- E. Minimum rear setback*: 20 feet.
- F. Minimum side setback*: 15 feet.
- G. Minimum lot width: 100 feet.
- H. Maximum building height: 50 feet or three stories, story defined in § 145-2.

Individual dimensional standards may be waived by the Planning Board upon the Planning Board's determination that lesser standards are consistent with the intent of this Agricultural Value-Added District bylaw.

* Setbacks may be as low as zero feet if the Planning Board deems such to be appropriate.

§ 145-86. Development design.

- A. Permitted uses and standards.
 - (1) Buildings in the Agricultural Value-Added District must have clear relationship to locally-beneficial agriculture.

- (2) Multiple buildings on one parcel are permissible if they are deemed consistent with the intent of this article.

B. Overall district design requirements.

- (1) Pedestrian accommodations shall take precedence over vehicular accommodations.
- (2) Parking should be shared as much as possible to minimize curb cuts.
- (3) Solar canopies should be considered for parking lots.
- (4) Lighting must provide a safe pedestrian environment and minimize light trespass. Lights must be aimed downward and not have exposed light sources.
- (5) Landscaping must use only plants native to this region. All reasonable attempts must be made to preserve healthy specimen trees.

C. Building design requirements.

- (1) Building design must be consistent with the Planning Board's Commercial Development Design Guidelines.
- (2) Buildings should meet or exceed LEED or comparable "green" building standards for energy efficiency to the greatest extent possible and economically feasible.
- (3) Maintenance of the site and buildings is a condition of the site plan approval and is enforceable by the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

§ 145-87. Use standards.

Schedule of uses permitted by right within the Agricultural Value-Added District .

- A. Conference center or event space.
- B. Commercial food processing.
- C. Business incubator for agricultural products.
- D. Retail or wholesale outlets for agricultural products.
- E. Commercial enterprise that links agricultural production with tourism in order to attract visitors to Belchertown.
- F. Restaurant.
- G. Brew pub, micro-brewery, smaller brewery or winery, tasting room.
- H. Distillery, tasting room.

- I. Educational uses related to agricultural production or food systems.
- J. Farm worker housing.
- K. Art or craft center.
- L. Laboratory, research, development, and manufacturing of agricultural products.

§ 145-88. Other standards.

- B. Subdivision of land. If within the Agricultural Value-Added District it is desired to create frontage for separate lots, a separate subdivision application to the Planning Board must be made.
- C. All individual lots in the Agricultural Value-Added District must front on ways that are either public ways or approved subdivision ways.
- D. Building design requirements.
 - (1) Building design must be consistent with the Planning Board's Commercial Development Design Guidelines.
 - (2) Buildings should meet or exceed LEED or comparable "green" building standards for energy efficiency to the greatest extent possible and economically feasible.
 - (3) Physical maintenance of uses and buildings must be assured through restricted covenants acceptable to the Planning Board.
- E. Signs.
 - (1) Recognizing that signage needs vary, sign size may vary by business or use in the district. The maximum allowed size for an individual sign in a Agricultural Value-Added District is 80 square feet.
 - (2) Within a Agricultural Value-Added District, intersection directional signs may be erected with arrows indicating the businesses reached via the cross street, with each business sign not exceeding six inches high by 36 inches long, including the arrow.
 - (3) Except as provided in § 145-88C(1) and (2), signs shall conform with Article VI, § 145-22, Signs, of this chapter.
- F. Parking.
 - (1) Parking areas shared by uses are strongly encouraged. Privately held common parking may be restricted to designated users.
 - (2) Parking areas should include solar canopies and electric car charging stations when practicable.
 - (3) Parking and loading requirements should be appropriate to the use so to

be adequate for the use while not excessive.

- G. Nuisances. No obnoxious or offensive trade or activity shall be practiced, nor shall anything be done that may be or may become an annoyance to the occupants of the surrounding area, including but not limited to unsightliness, excess emission of odors, waste, dust, fumes, smoke, noise, vibration, heat, glare, or toxic gases.
- H. Waste Materials. No waste material, rubbish, refuse, garbage, or trash shall be dumped upon or permitted to remain within the AV-A District. All such material must be placed in covered containers. All sewerage use must first be authorized by the appropriate governing municipal and state bodies. All liquid or solid wastes must be treated to conform to applicable standards of the Massachusetts Department of Health or any other regulations of any governing municipal or state body.
- I. Traffic and Trip Generation evaluation must be included in each site plan application. Truck access and maneuvering must be shown on any site plan.
- J. Energy Efficiency – Buildings must be to LEED or other appropriate standard. On-site generation of solar, geothermal, or other non-polluting renewable source is strongly encouraged.
- K. Lighting must meet Dark Sky standards and not shine off the user's site. There shall not be any exposed light sources.
- L. Animals must be humanely secured and kept from disturbing the public or neighboring sites.
- M. Non-car transportation must be accommodated, e.g. bicycle facilities, pedestrian accessibility, van loading and unloading.

§ 145-89. Amendments; recording of plan.

- A. Minor amendments to site plan approval may be granted by the Planning Board upon application and for good cause shown but without necessity of a public hearing; provided, however, that any of the following shall be considered a major amendment and shall be acted upon under the procedures applicable to the initial site plan approval of:
 - (1) Any change in the amount of shared parking and/or the creation of infrastructure intended to be assumed by the Town;
 - (2) Any alteration of building size of more than 400 square feet;
 - (3) Any change in the general layout of the ways as provided in the approved siteplan.

- B. An approved site plan showing the signatures of a majority of the Belchertown Planning Board must be recorded at the Hampshire Registry of Deeds.

§ 145-90. Severability.

A determination that any specific portion of this Article XV is invalid shall not render any other part thereof invalid.

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OTHER APPENDICES available by request

UMass Isenberg School Report
PVPC Lampson Brook Community Vision Report 2014
Conway School of Landscape Design 2014 Master Plan
UMass Design Study State School Report 2008
Conservation Works Baseline Documentation Report 2017
Conservation Works Monitoring Report 2018
Chapter 664 Lease from DCAMM to NESFI (Oct 1, 2003, to Sept 30, 2023)
Copy of the amended legislation
Historic view and heritage landscape designation document
Supplementary maps

DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHS available by request

- *Aerial Drone Photographs of all Parcels*
- *Ground Photographs of all Parcels*
- *Enterprise Zone Building Details*
- *Detailed Photographs of Jepson Farmstead Parcel and Community Farm features*

MAY 9, 2022, SURVEY PLAN OF ALL PARCELS:

See following pages.

PLAN OF LAND IN
BELCHERTOWN, MA
PREPARED FOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

LOT DIVISION PLAN
GEORGE HANNUM STREET,
JACKSON STREET, & BOARDMAN STREET

FIELD WORK: KRP/ESJ	SCALE
COMPS: KJM	HORZ: 1"=200'
DRAFTING: KJM	VERT: N/A
CHECKED: TRE	DATE: 05/09/2022
APPROVED: GGG	

PROJECT NUMBER 21134
SHEET NUMBER 1 OF 2

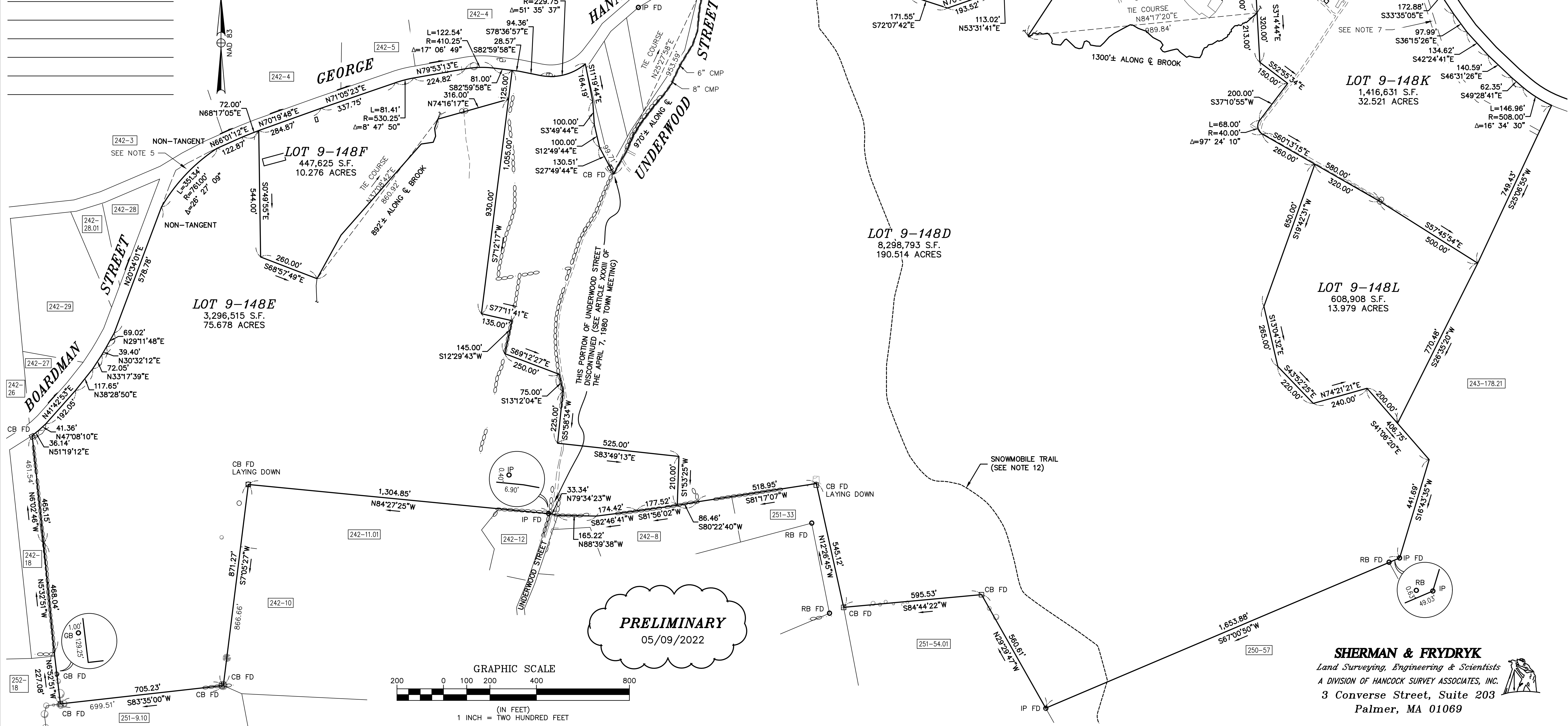
- NOTES:
- OWNER OF RECORD: COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE
BOSTON, MA 02133
 - DEED REFERENCES:
BK. 722 PG. 107, BK. 722 PG. 113, BK. 722 PG. 115,
BK. 848 PG. 497, BK. 843 PG. 497, BK. 848 PG. 499, BK. 851
PG. 168
BK. 686 PG. 529, BK. 933 PG. 143
PL. BK. 183 PG. 108
 - PLAN REFERENCE:
MAP 239 PARCEL 8 (NORTH OF GEORGE HANNUM STREET)
 - ASSESSORS REFERENCE:
MAP 243 PARCEL 178.01 (SOUTH OF GEORGE HANNUM STREET)
MAP 243 PARCEL 1 (EAST OF JACKSON STREET)
MAP 238 PARCEL 1 (EAST OF HAMILTON STREET)
 - SEWER EASEMENT, BK. 3564 PG. 258, PL. BK. 166 PG. 96.
 - UTILITY EASEMENT, BK. 4566 PG. 307, PL. BK. 177 PG. 168.
 - SEWER EASEMENT, BK. 4566 PG. 307, PL. BK. 177 PG. 168.
 - SEWER EASEMENT S-1, AS SHOWN ON PLAN ENTITLED "PLAN OF LAND IN BELCHERTOWN, EASEMENT PLAN JACKSON STREET"
PREPARED BY SHERMAN & FRYDRYK DATED 11/07/2006. STATUS UNKNOWN.
 - LAND IS ZONED AG-A PRIMARY AGRICULTURAL.
 - THIS PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF A TITLE REPORT AND IS
SUBJECT TO ANY ENCUMBRANCES SUCH A REPORT MAY REVEAL.
 - SEE SHEET 2 OF 2 FOR ABUTTER INFORMATION.
 - SNOWMOBILE TRAILS SHOWN APPROXIMATE BASED ON INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY OTHER.

LEGEND

- | | |
|-----|------------------|
| FD | FOUND |
| IP | IRON PIPE |
| RB | REINFORCING BAR |
| IB | IRON BAR |
| CB | CONCRETE BOUND |
| SB | STONE BOUND |
| GB | GUN BARREL |
| DB | DRILL HOLE |
| RR | RAILROAD SPIKE |
| SPK | IRON FENCE |
| X | WOOD FENCE |
| — | CHAIN LINK FENCE |
| — | STONE WALL |
| — | TREE LINE |
| — | WETLAND/BROOK |
| — | SNOWMOBILE TRAIL |

FOR REGISTRY USE

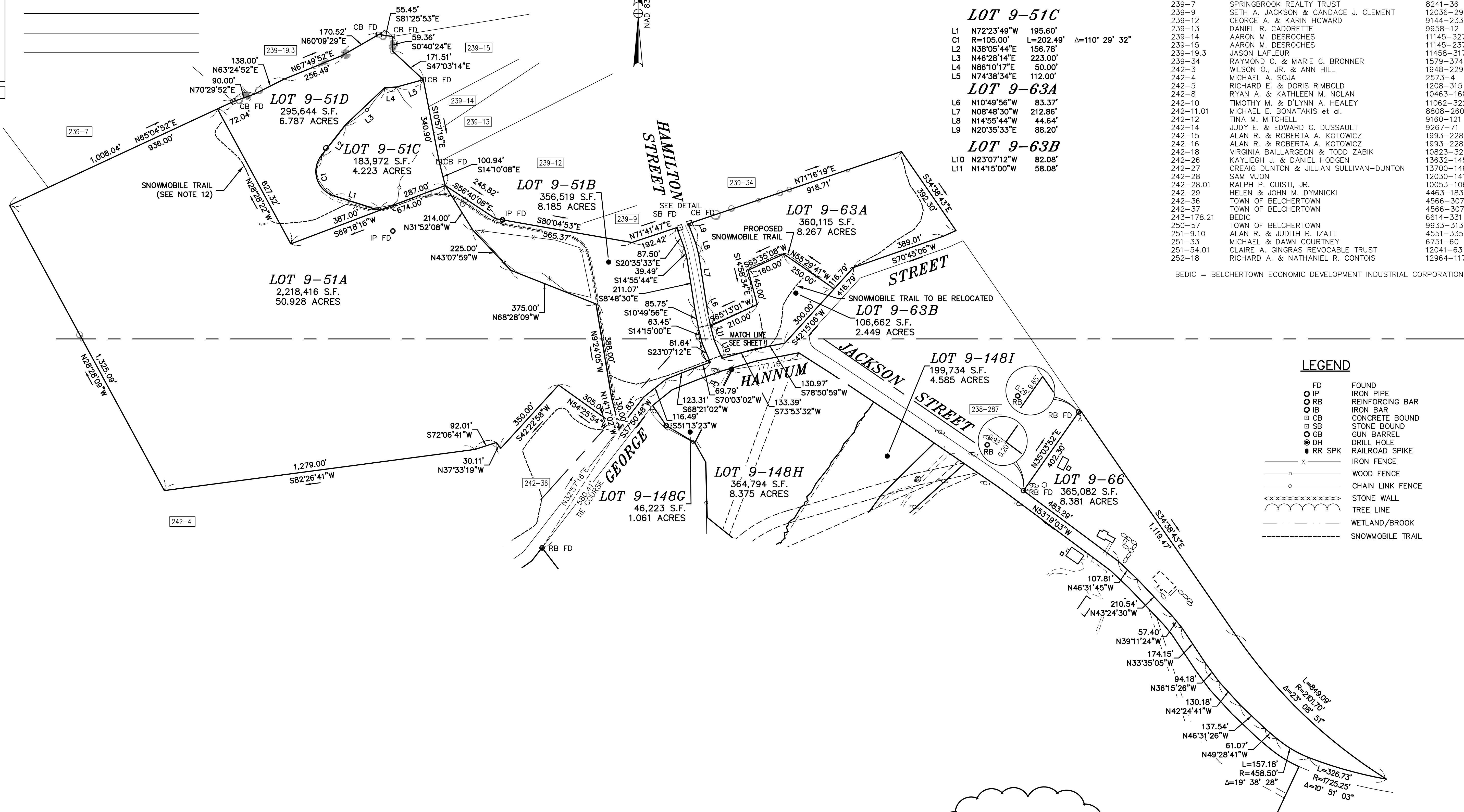
SUBDIVISION APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED
UNDER SUBDIVISION CONTROL LAW.
BELCHERTOWN PLANNING BOARD
DATE:



PRELIMINARY
05/09/2022

SHERMAN & FRYDRYK
Land Surveying, Engineering & Scientists
A DIVISION OF HANCOCK SURVEY ASSOCIATES, INC.
3 Converse Street, Suite 203
Palmer, MA 01069

FOR REGISTRY USE



PRELIMINARY
05/09/2022

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