

Lampson Brook Farm Board of Directors
Minutes: November 17, 2021

Board Attendance: David Haines, Jonathan Spiegel, Tammy Ryan, Gerard Kennedy, Bob O'Connor

Introductions: Each person introduced themselves.

Kurt Gaertner of EEA gave an update on the meeting between EEA and its agencies and DCAMM regarding the Lampson Brook Farm. DCAMM was updated on the recent activities regarding the management plan and survey and DCAMM is supportive of these actions. DCAMM staff did mention they are hoping to have the remaining material at the compost site and the remaining biochar materials at the Enterprise Zone removed as the parcels are readied for conveyance. DCAMM let EEA staff know that they were aware of interest by the Nipmuc Tribe in parcels at LBF and at the former Templeton Developmental Center. The issue of demolition of buildings at the Enterprise Zone was discussed and DCAMM is aware of this issue but did not make a commitment to participate in removal of the material. DCAMM is expecting the Request for Proposals to go through the state's "ComBuys" web site. The Board would seek proposals and select the applicant(s) that best meet the criteria laid out in the RFR and in support of the Management Plan. DCAMM would then approve the Board's selection.

There was a question raised by the Board regarding how the New England Small Farms Institute Lease would be handled (it expires in July, 2023). It was agreed to discuss the NESFI lease at the next meeting.

Pete Westover of Conservation Works gave an update on the management plan. The plan will guide the RFR process and the Board and DCAMM's review of the applications. The plan will also be useful to the new owners of the LBF parcels. The Board raised two issues to add to the draft plan – the steps involved in the transfer of the parcels and policy guidance on where farmer housing might be allowed and how it would be restricted. This might include a definition of farmer housing and what % of parcels might be used for housing. If there were housing, would the parcels be subdivided? The plan should be organized with sections for the background, vision, operations guide and protocols for the RFP's. It is hoped that the plan could be approved as a draft at the next Board meeting so it could be circulated for the January public meeting. It was agreed that the public meeting would be on January 12th at 6:30-8:30 with a two-week comment period afterwards.

Under the topic of bylaws, there was a discussion of the future role of the Board after the parcels have been conveyed to new owners. The Board will use the management plan to outline its vision for the farm. This vision can be incorporated into the conservation and historic preservation restrictions to be held over the Community Farm, the Forest and Jepson Homestead parcels and possibly in a deed restriction for the Enterprise Zone. Additionally, the Board may sign an agreement with the owners of the parcels, where the owners and the Board agree to implement the vision of the management plan. The management plan would be

included as an appendix in the agreement. The concept of an agreement with the Board could be included in the RFP. The Board can also influence future actions by how future funds in the Trust are utilized. The zoning for the farm developed with the input from the Board will also guide the future use and stewardship of the farm. The concept of a “right of first refusal” in the deeds conveyed to the new owners was discussed. The ROFR might be held by the Belchertown Agriculture Commission. It was agreed that the draft bylaws should have an added provision that allows the Board to amend the management plan in the future. It is hoped that the Board can vote to approve the bylaws at the December meeting.

The Board discussed the role of the Farm Manager as described in Chapter 355 acts of 2020. What is the scope of the Farm Manager? The Farm Manager’s role can be incorporated into the agreement between the Board and the new parcel owners so that the role is understood and agreed by the Board and the new owners. The Farm Manager would work with the owners and the CR/HPR holders and the Board with the goal of implementing the vision for the Farm included in the Management Plan.

The Board discussed the draft zoning ordinance for the farm parcels being drafted by town staff. The zoning ordinance should include more specifics on farmer housing. The zoning ordinance needs to be finalized by March so it can be submitted for Belchertown Town Meeting.