

Nagog Orchard Working Group - January 17th, 2024

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm

Present: Karen Morrison, Matthew Nordhaus, Brad Mitchell, Amy Tarlow Lewis, Jen Clancy, Sarah Seaward.

Will Pickard arrived at 7:23

Agenda

Amy Tarlow Lewis asked to add discussion of 'tracking interest in the RFI' to the agenda.

Minutes

The Group reviewed the minutes of the meeting on January 3. Clarifications were made: Matthew Nordhaus didn't offer a price for house remediation, he clarified that he only had a price for the asbestos removal of \$35,000

Karen Morrison asked to remove some of the editorial words like 'dismayed'. She suggested replacing them with 'the board noted that this isn't the first time this has been discussed but no action has been taken' The Group also agreed to remove the phrase 'need a call to action ASAP' and clarified that some statements were made by public individuals, not board members.

A motion to approve the minutes of January 3rd was made by Jen Clancy, seconded by Amy Tarlow Lewis. The motion passed 6-0

The Group reviewed the minutes of the meeting on January 10th. The minutes were altered to clarify that on the 10th the group approved a digital advertisement. Sarah Seaward clarified that she had volunteered to be the second recipient of the emails as Brad Mitchell was out of the country.

A motion to approve the minutes of January 10th was made by Matthew Nordhaus, seconded by Amy Tarlow Lewis. The Motion passed 5-0, Brad abstained

RFI distribution

The group discussed the distribution of the RFI. There have been no official responses yet. As the Group had discussed during the previous meeting an advertisement promoting the RFI was now running in the Edible boston electronic newsletter.

Amy Tarlow Lewis also posted a notification to Emass Craft, a listserv, and updated the Group on upcoming advertising:

- New England Farm Finder
- NOFA has agreed to post it as a classified ad.
- Farm Bureau classified may be an option in the future, it would probably cost about \$80

Brad Mitchell advised that we should check the publication date as the Farm Bureau has reduced its distribution dates and the issue might not be available before the deadline for responding to the RFI has passed.

Potential RFI Respondents

Amy Tarlow Lewis shared a spreadsheet to track distribution of the RFI. She wants to track who asks us questions, and would like us to update the spreadsheet with contacts.

Jen Clancy has been in touch with Pat Kriksceoniatis, a vendor who sold all IPM products to Charles Auger for many years.

Brad Mitchell has talked to the Mass Fruit Growers association, and the Vegetable and Berry Growers association

Matthew Nordhaus has spoken to Quiet Storm of the Nashoba Praying Indians

Brad Mitchell may reach out to World Farmers

Matthew Nordhaus spoke to resident Jeanine Wood, who asked about Ugandan Immigrants

Sarah Seaward wanted to confirm that we will ask to do an email blast out to the Town mailing list after the initial round of advertising slows down.

Appraisal

Brad Mitchell updated the Group. Chris is still working on the appraisal. He asked for documentation that the trees weren't viable. Brad commented that Ag land is typically valued at \$2,000-\$3,000 per acre

Property Repairs

Amy Tarlow Lewis discussed a list of issues with the buildings that had been compiled by Cindy Napoli in 2023. The Group then discussed whether or not we were required to test for lead paint. Sherry Gould, resident in the audience and real estate attorney, noted that we are not obligated to test for lead, only to give notice that there may be lead paint. However, since we are a municipality we may want to test for lead anyway.

Brad Mitchell suggested that we focus on repairs only that keep the buildings from degrading further. Sarah Seaward has been talking to Steve Jahnle (DPW Director) and circulated photos from January 15th, showing damage to both barns, upper farmstand, and downed trees. She has documented new damage since the fall, and felt that the condition of the property is deteriorating. She will speak to Steve Jahnle to get estimates for the repairs.

Sarah Seaward also commented that there are still items in both barns need to be disposed of, that the disposal probably needs to be done immediately and that she will create a prioritized list of the repairs.

The Group discussed a funding source for the repairs and other expenses related to leasing the property. The group determined that they will need to create a rough estimate, ask Fincom for a line item in Fiscal Year's 2025 Town budget, and then present it to Fincom with details. Amy Tarlow Lewis wanted to make sure we communicate clearly what the town is willing to do on the property before we lease. Brad Mitchell felt we need to focus on structural integrity.

Jen Clancy pointed out that citizens are noting that the town has never had a line item for the orchard. Matthew Nordhaus stated that it may be possible to find more money for the orchard later in the year if necessary.

The Group agreed that we need to get a price for asbestos testing of the cold storage under the upper barn. The group debated getting a lead test at the same time, and determined we would

get an estimate for doing both tests. Brad Mitchel estimated that the cost for both tests might be \$250 Karen Morrison asked for an expense item for professional facilitation for the RFP process Karen Morrison and Jim Duggan are discussing how we might work with MAPC to help write the RFP. Jen Clancy asked whether we should continue to pay for mowing. The Group agreed to keep money for mowing in the budget. Matthew Nordhaus asked whether CPC funds could be used for some of these items. Sarah Seaward said that she would investigate.

Will Pickett moved that the Group ask Fincom to add a line item to the FY25 budget for repairs, Matthew Nordhaus seconded
Motion passed 7-0

FAQ

Amy Tarlow Lewis created a document with a list of general questions, and added specific questions that some of the potential RFI respondents had asked. Matthew Nordhaus will post the questions to the website after they are approved by the Group

The Group reviewed the questions.

- When was the last time that chemicals were used? The Group estimated around 2020.
- A question was added clarifying that the house and upper barn are not part of the APR
- Language was added clarifying that the RFIs would be evaluated on the financial viability of the proposal
- Language was added that a soil test could be done by appointment at the cost of the applicant, but the soil map will determine most of what is needed.

Walkthrough

The group elected to schedule a walkthrough for potential RFI respondents on a weekday in early February, as well as another date after March 1. Attendees will be able to tour the structures with the Working Group members and can walk the land if they want.

After further discussion the dates of March 8th and 10th were finalized, with a storm date of March 9th if necessary. Sarah Seaward and Matthew Nordhaus will coordinate with Steve Jahnle to be present to open the buildings, and inquire about the weekend day.

The group debated whether or not to allow access to the house given the mold issue. Matthew Nordhaus stated that the dry weather had substantially reduced the smell of mold. Brad Mitchell felt that access to the basement should be banned given the electrical service still present there. Matthew Nordhaus will follow up with Town Counsel to figure out liabilities.

Webpage

The group asked whether the Orchard Working Group webpage could be updated with the USDA map as the acreage map compiled by Jen Clancy. Matthew Nordhaus will upload both documents.

A motion to adjourn was made by Sarah Seaward and seconded by Jen Clancy
Motion passed 7-0, meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm