

Nagog Hill Orchard Working Group

Date: October 17th

Time: 7:35 PM

1. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.
- A quorum was confirmed.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Sarah requested to hold off on approving the previous meeting minutes until she could submit some changes.
- The group agreed to approve the minutes at the next meeting.

3. Review of RFP Responses

- Discussion on sharing the RFP responses publicly and consulting with Town Council.
- Town Council confirmed that responses were supposed to be redacted and posted on the website that day, though it was uncertain if they had been posted.

Review of the Evaluation Process

- The group's role is to review RFPs based on criteria and recommend a candidate to the Select Board.
- It was clarified that they could:
 - Recommend one or more candidates.
 - Decide not to recommend any if none met the necessary criteria.
- Outside factors, such as purchasing options, were discussed but noted as separate from the RFP evaluation process.

Confidentiality and Fair Discussion

- Members agreed to refer to proposals as numbers (1, 2, and 4) rather than naming applicants publicly.
- It was clarified that Proposal #3 was deemed non-compliant.

Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal was evaluated based on:

1. Experience in operating or managing a farm (15 points).
2. Capital investment plan (40 points).
3. Licensing for pesticide application (5 points).
4. Comprehensiveness and quality of the management plan (40 points).

Scoring of Applicants

- The committee discussed each applicant's strengths and weaknesses in detail.
- Scores were assigned to each proposal based on the evaluation criteria.
- Applicant #4 emerged as the strongest candidate due to their comprehensive plan and experience.
- Applicant #1 was seen as a viable alternative, though concerns were raised about experience and capitalization.
- Applicant #2 lacked details in their proposal, leading to mixed opinions on whether they should be recommended.

4. Recommendation to the Select Board

- Motion to recommend Applicant #4 to the Select Board, with the caveat that ownership interest may impact lease negotiations.
- If negotiations with Applicant #4 fail, the committee would consider Applicant #2.
- Concerns were raised about delaying the process and potentially missing an opportunity to move forward with a viable candidate.
- Ultimately, the motion to recommend Applicant #4 passed with a vote of 4-0.

5. Discussion on Property Sale & Future Planning

- Brief discussion on whether the town should consider selling the property in the future.
- Members debated potential restrictions on the house and barn, including options like historical preservation or agricultural restrictions.
- It was decided that this topic would be revisited in a future meeting, potentially in December.

6. Public Input

- A resident expressed concerns about funding and the feasibility of some proposals.
- Another resident inquired about accessing the redacted RFPs before the Select Board meeting.
- The committee confirmed they would follow up to ensure the documents were available online.

7. Other Business

- Concern was raised about work that was supposed to be done to secure buildings on the property but had not yet been completed.
- The committee agreed to follow up with the appropriate parties.

8. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn made at 8:32 PM.
- Motion seconded and passed unanimously.