

JOINT HOLLIS CONSERVATION & AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONS

WORKING GROUP

Minutes of Meeting
September 25, 2017
Approved September 29, 2017

Members Present: Mark Post, Dan Harmon, Agricultural Commission; Jonathan Bruneau, Conservation Commission; Connie Cain, Staff

Meeting was called to order at 3:35 pm. M. Post explained that Mary Jeffery has unofficially resigned from the Conservation Commission, and at the Conservation Commission's meeting on September 20, 2017, Cheryl Quaine was appointed to replace Mary Jeffery. C. Quaine was unable to attend today, but M. Post will keep her updated.

BID PROPOSAL REVIEW

A Request for Proposals (RFP) was posted for the 1-year lease of the Stefanowicz Farm property, with a due date of September 8, 2017. In accordance with the RFP, the Town must send the award notices to bidders by October 11, 2017. J. Bruneau asked if there would be an opportunity for bidders to meet with the Workgroup or Selectmen prior to the award letter going out. M. Post thought not. M. Post will be attending the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting on October 2, 2017 to inform them of proposals received and to provide the Workgroup's recommendations, but they will make the award decision(s) or arrange to meet with the bidders if they wish.

M. Post reminded members that the RFP called for a one-year lease to begin on November 2, 2017 and end October 31, 2018. In order to be considered complete, the RFP required that bidders must include: 1.) The area(s) they wish to lease; 2.) What type of crops/uses; 3.) Property management timeline; and 4.) Annual lease payment amount.

Proposal Overview:

3 proposals were received:

- 1.) Larry Poulin, maple sap harvesting for 3 months;
 - 2.) Lull Farm, row crops and orchard harvesting;
 - 3.) Rickety Ranch, horticultural and animal husbandry.
- 1.) Larry Poulin, January 2018-March 2018, calls for tapping approximately 100 trees with buckets for the maple sap production months. He included a diagram of what areas he would utilize. He has quoted a figure of 0.50¢ per tap, and also quoted the present approximate rates using other tap methods, such as hoses.
 - 2.) Lull Farms, would be using same areas that they are currently farming. Uses are for row crops and the existing orchards. Fields were delineated as 1-2-3-4PHEL-6PHEL. He provided the annual lease amount as \$2000.00 to include the annual production and the application of winter cover crops.
 - 3.) Rickety Ranch. They have submitted a proposal for the entire 90 acre lease area. The proposal includes both horticultural grasses and animal husbandry, including the construction of 7 paddock areas and possible buildings for animal use. The proposal is a large document; M. Post did not copy, but would like the other members to read prior to a vote. Based on his review, it appears that the proposal is for a minimum of 3 years but does not specifically say so, and an annual lease payment amount was not included.

Discussion of Proposals

- 1.) Larry Poulin. Members felt the RFP was submitted with the necessary requirements. No improvements listed, but as the RFP is only for the 3-month harvest time, members felt not necessary. D. Harmon asked if Mr. Poulin was aware of liability insurance requirements; M. Post felt yes. Based on the per tap rate provided, the proposed lease amount equals \$50.00 for one-hundred taps, not much revenue to the Town. D. Harmon asked if multiple bids could be awarded; M. Post felt there would not be an issue as long as the uses/areas were not contradictory, and that the farmers could co-exist. Poulin and Lull Farm have used the farm in a similar manner in the past. As subleases are not allowed in the one-year lease agreement, there would need to be a review of any potential issues if two awards are made. If no issues, then the second award could be made.
- 2.) Lull Farm. Members felt the RFP meets the requirements. Areas have been identified along with the crops to be planted/harvested. M. Post noted that the RFP provides the planting of winter cover crops which could help with erosion concerns. Some discussion of short and long term erosion control, Field 4 is large, and would benefit from the placement of some water bars. D. Harmon agreed, but felt it should not be a "make or break" for the 1-year lease. M. Post will discuss with Lull Farm.
- 3.) Rickety Ranch. M. Post felt that the RFP was for longer than the one-year lease requirement. The first page of the proposal discusses long-term plans to use the full 90 acres available for working livestock. They will need

barns and paddocks, which M. Post feels will take longer to construct. Also noted in the proposal is an award of a Federal Equip Grant, which has been approved, but requires a minimum 3-year commitment. Additionally, there are no specific uses listed for the fields; a sample property management plan was attached, but was not created for this property; the proposal calls for a plan to be created "similar" to the attachment. There was no lease payment amount included with the proposal.

M. Post felt that members needed to read the RFP in its entirety before making a formal recommendation on the plan. D. Harmon will review first, then pass on to J. Bruneau. In his brief overview, D. Harmon felt the plan was admirable, but did not think that the items in the proposal could be accomplished in one year. He also felt if no lease amount was included, then it did not meet the RFP requirements. J. Bruneau felt that this proposal spoke more to a long-term plan.

M. Post reminded members that the potential use of the property as recreational field plans has yet to be decided. This may impact the availability of the entire 90 acres in the future, which is why the one-year lease was put forward. He felt that expanding the lease beyond the one-year time frame could be problematic if the recreational field is approved. This was the reason for the one-year lease RFP, so that the property could remain in agricultural use while the Town investigated other potential uses. Row crops were specifically mentioned in the RFP for this reason. The Town is under no obligation to lease the property, regardless of the bid submissions. D. Harmon recommended that if property leased to more than one bidder, that an arrangement be drafted between the parties, so that the Town did not have to manage the relationship.

Members created the following chart for RFP requirements for each bid:

Bidder	Areas Identified?	Specific Uses Listed?	Bid Price Included?	1-Year Crop Scope of Use Met?
Larry Poulin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lull Farm	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rickety Ranch	Yes	Partially	No	No

M. Post proposed meeting again this week for the formal vote on recommendations to allow J. Bruneau and D. Harmon to review the proposals in full. This meeting will occur on Friday, September 29, 2017, and the recommendations of the Workgroup will be passed on the BOS at the October 2, 2017 meeting.

D. Harmon asked if a decision on the future use of the house had been decided to date; C. Cain responded that she believed the BOS was waiting to determine if the Recreational Fields, if approved, could use the structure, but at the last known discussion, the BOS had recommended that it be demolished. The previous plan to sell the house and land had been put on hold due to boundary issues.

MINUTES

J. Bruneau motioned to accept the minutes of the public meeting of June 2, 2017 as written, seconded by D. Harmon. All members in favor, none opposed, and the June 2, 2017 public minutes were approved 3-0-0.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

M. Post made a motion to adjourn, seconded by J. Bruneau. D. Harmon stated that he wished to enter into non-public briefly. Call for vote to adjourn, and the motion to adjourn was defeated by a vote of 0-3-0.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

M. Post motioned to enter into non-public session, in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(c); seconded by J. Bruneau. All members in favor, none opposed. The motion to enter into non-public session carried 3-0-0, and the work group entered non-public session at 4:55 pm.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

J. Bruneau motioned to return to public session and to keep the minutes sealed under RSA 91-A:3, III; seconded by D. Harmon. All members in favor, none opposed. The motion to return to public session carried 3-0-0, the minutes were sealed, and the work group returned to public session at 5:01pm.

ADJOURNMENT

M. Post motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by D. Harmon. All members in favor, none opposed; the motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Cain
Staff