



KOULAS FARM TASK FORCE

Filed with Town Clerk:

DATE: Friday, April 26, 2024

TIME: 5:00 p.m.

PLACE: Chelmsford Town Hall
ADDRESS: 50 Billerica Road
Chelmsford, MA 01824

ROOM: Conference Room 204

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees

Town Manager Paul Cohen	present
Michael Raisbeck	present
Phil Stanway	present
John Swenson	present
Sue Obendorf	present
John Ray	present
Michael Chludzinski	present
James Dowd	not present

1. Updates

- Mike Raisbeck noted that DPW has done an excellent job and is complete with their work. Task Force members concurred with great work by DPW on clearing and setting up site.

2. Discussion

- *Pollinator Garden* – Previously established area cleared earlier in the week.
- *Community Garden* – Group discussed that a space shall be allocated for future use by Community Garden. It was noted that it would need to be located near water. Size will be ½ acre for 40 plots. Final documents will reflect ½ acre set aside for a Community Garden
- *Newhouse Wildlife Center* – Update from Manager Cohen, Newhouse is also looking at Misty Meadows owned by the water district but not being utilized. Conversations are exploring options. One reason for looking at Misty Meadows is the secluded area that is a

better location out of the way from public activity which is better for all parties. There are unknowns with state approval of wildlife center while Misty Meadows may not have the same required approvals. Task Force recommendation will reflect recommendation of wildlife center, with understanding there are numerous other town and state approvals required. Task Force supports the concept of a wildlife center on Koulas site.

- *Weston Nurseries* – Weston Nurseries representatives spoke that they met with Newhouse and the parties concluded the two facilities won't fit on the allocated land in the Southeast corner of the main lot "Right Meadow." Weston discussed their "Right Meadow" proposal which would include storage of materials and possibly a 1,000 sf. building including restroom facilities. Henry Parlee noted that a greenhouse is not considered a permanent structure. Weston stated they would propose a lease agreement with reimbursement to the Town. Weston stated they can utilize as many acres as provided. Phil Stanway stated the land would need to go out to a general public bid lease request. It was noted that Weston proposed use would take away from open space for large groups in the Southeast Right Meadow. Town Manager stated Weston and Newhouse are proposing on same location which group agreed is problematic. Entrance to Right Meadow for Weston or Newhouse would need to be from crushed stoned area at former barn. It was discussed that alternative option is that group just leave right meadow alone and endorse neither group proposing. John Ray stated some active use needs to be done with the Right Meadow as the progress made will be once again taken over by invasive species. Henry Parlee stated with bid process the Task Force is only approving/recommending concepts for uses. One possible conclusion is the Task force setting 3 acres in Right Meadow aside for undefined use potential wildlife center or agricultural/nursery. Weston will not need to provide an updated proposal.
- *Soft Opening* – Task Force voted unanimously to open the land to the general public. Cones and no trespassing signs to be removed.

3. Next Steps

- Mike Raisbeck to provide update to next Select Board meeting
- Wetlands are flagged and mapping work is ongoing

4. Set next meeting date(s)

- 5/7 at 7:00 pm (post meeting update)

5. Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10 pm

Meeting Minutes taken by: James Dowd (via video replay)