

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Farm Plan Sub-Committee

At its meeting on Wednesday, June 4, the Conservation Commission appointed a sub-committee to gather input from interested town bodies and the public in order to craft a set of goals and objectives desired by the town to be incorporated into the farm plan which, under the terms of the lease with the grower, is to be in place by January 1, 2009. To that end, the farm plan sub-committee met on Monday, June 9 to determine the process by which this charge could be accomplished and to set forth a time line.

It is not the purpose of this committee to write the farm plan, but rather to draft a concise statement of goals, objectives, and priorities with a proposed timeline for their implementation on which the parties can agree. This broad statement shall be incorporated into the final farm plan, and the committee intends the final document on goals to run to one to two pages. This statement will be consistent with the provisions of the lease, particularly those articles of the lease noted below.

Therefore, we invite interested groups and individuals to articulate and prioritize those goals from their perspective in a *concise bullet format*. The deadline for getting that information to the Sub-Committee is Wednesday, July 9 by the end of the day. Input should be e-mailed directly to the Conservation Commission office at concom@falmouthmass.us.

We will then distill the input we receive into a first draft which shall be posted on the concom farm plan webpage, <http://www.falmouthmass.us/depart.php?dekey=farmplan>, and will be available in the concom office in hard copy by Wednesday, July 16th.

On Monday, July 21st, the Farm Plan Sub-Committee will hold a public meeting to solicit comment from interested parties on the draft. The time and location of the meeting will be posted on this site a week in advance. We will then take that comment and make any necessary revisions to the draft and post the revised version on the concom website and have it available in hard copy at the concom office. We will schedule additional sub-committee meetings if necessary. The draft goals will then be considered by the Conservation Commission as a whole at its meeting on Wednesday, August 6th.

If the final draft is adopted by the Commission, it will be forwarded to NRCS to be incorporated into the farm plan. Once a draft farm plan is written, the sub-committee will invite comment on it from all interested parties and those comments will be considered by NRCS, the grower and the commission before the final iteration of the farm plan is adopted. We envision that phase of the farm plan development process to take place in the fall of this year with a goal of having it completed by the end of November.

Courtney Bird
Chair, Farm Plan Sub-Committee

Relevant Articles from the Lease

10. Farm Plan. The Town has a vital public interest in the improved agricultural viability and productivity of the premises in an environmentally sound manner. In its Request for Proposals, the Town invited the Grower to submit a cranberry bog development plan which sets forth the actions the Grower shall undertake to achieve these goals. In its proposal the Grower submitted a cranberry bog development plan which the Town has found satisfactory. The Grower has proposed a plan to farm the Premises consistent with NOFA and USDA certified organic cultivation practices and the Town has indicated its agreement with this proposal. The parties shall continue to develop a Farm Plan which the parties presently contemplate will include organic farming that is consistent with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) program and expect to complete the plan by January 1, 2009.

11. River/Bog Improvement Project. The Grower acknowledges that in its response to the Request for Proposals it executed a statement of intent/willingness to cooperate with the Town in a proposed Coonamessett River improvement project. The Grower and the Town agree that the Grower will assist the Town's efforts to obtain approvals and funding for the project but the Grower shall not be responsible for planning, executing or funding work associated with the project.

12F. Agricultural Exemptions. The Town acknowledges agricultural exemptions are granted to the Grower under the State Wetlands Protection Act, G.L. ch. 131, § 40, the Falmouth Wetlands Protection By-law, ch. 235 of the Code of Falmouth and its implementing regulations and the Falmouth Zoning By-law, ch. 240 of the Code of Falmouth, and this lease does not invalidate or diminish these exemptions as they apply to the Grower. The Grower shall notify the Town when it intends to perform any normal improvement activities, as described in the Cranberry Growers Association's Grower's Advisory, in the river, wetland, bordering vegetative wetland or buffer areas to allow the Town to review and comment on the construction practices and to recommend protective actions and to further enhance the conservation values of the property.