



# **Warren-Pohl Farm Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Report**

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Presented to the Chelmsford Select Board  
September 28, 2020

# THE SUN

## **Special Town Meeting approves purchase of Warren-Pohl land**

By ALANA MELANSON, August 25, 2020

CHELMSFORD — Special Town Meeting has unanimously approved the purchase of the 54-acre Warren-Pohl property on Boston Road, a site where minutemen mustered during the American Revolution.

Under the preservation restriction, the Chelmsford Land Conservation Trust will enforce the preservation the property, and it will be used for agricultural purposes, walking trails and possibly as municipal water supply in the future, Cohen said.

# Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Charge

“I plan to establish an ad-hoc, short-term advisory committee to assist the Town in providing for orderly public use and maintenance of the 54-acre Warren-Pohl property. The goal is to develop a plan that fulfills the Warren-Pohl family’s desire to permanently protect the land as open space, while maintaining harmony with the neighbors. Issues to be addressed would include identifying parking locations for visitors to the site, providing clearly marked and maintained trails, maintaining active farming/agricultural use, and providing emergency access. The Chelmsford Open Space Stewards (COSS) would expand its rich tradition of land stewardship onto the Warren-Pohl property.”

*~ Town Manager Paul Cohen*

# Mission Statement

Mission is to preserve the Warren-Pohl Farm's as a working agricultural farm and return historical agricultural elements, provide passive recreational and educational opportunities for visitors.

The farm shall also be friendly to seniors, people with disabilities and those with mobility issues where possible.

# Report Background

- 84-page report prepared and reviewed in 23 days.
- Recommendations are the result of extensive public input, including four tours of Warren-Pohl Farm and Sunny Meadow Farm ahead of the Special Town Meeting attended by 78 citizens and Town Meeting Reps, and two post-Town Meeting community input sessions on-site attended by 50 interested parties.
- *Ad Hoc Advisory Committee*: Becky Warren, Karl Bischoff, Phil Stanway
- *Review Committee*: Mike Raisbeck, Max Jordan, Joanne Stanway, Bernard Ready, Eric Sciacca, Steve Mayotte, Caroline Parlee

# Report Key Items

- Agriculture
- Access
- Wildlife
- Walking Trails
- Maintenance

# Agriculture

- Farming will continue on the active fields by a single primary farmer and some smaller artisan farmers on active fields that are not used by the primary farmer..
- Planned repurposing of the barn as a workshop and maintenance building will exclude livestock and swine from the property.
- Chelmsford is a “Right to Farm” community, that has regulations in place for noise, smells, etc.

# Access

- Pros and cons for each possible access point to the property have been noted in detail.
- Onsite parking lot with ADA access to the existing farm roads are recommended.
- Offsite parking is not recommended but if preferred, it must be ADA compliant and have access to an existing farm road.
- Some abutting properties currently encroach on access roads. This needs to be resolved.

# Wildlife

- The site contains multiple turkey flocks, deer and coyotes.
- These animals should remain.
- The wildlife population need to be monitored and managed by the Town.

# Walking Trails

- Passive recreation is rated below agriculture and preservation usage.
- Farms roads should be dual purpose for agriculture and passive recreation.
- Except for a single connected grass path between the two loops, no new roads should be added.
- If farm roads can be upgraded for mobility, it should be done.
- No roads should be paved.
- As needed, some walking roads will be closed for safety reasons when agricultural work is in progress.

# Maintenance

From the work at Sunny Meadow the following can be estimated:

- The site must be either volunteer supported or town supported.
- Volunteer supported site requires an onsite group.
- Lease money goes into the general fund and cannot be used for the site without going before Town Meeting.
- COSS and farmers provide equipment to maintain roads, repair bridges, and move trees. A similar arrangement should be considered for the farm.
- Sunny Meadow Farm requires two or three people onsite for most of the day during the summer. The Warren-Pohl Farm is twice the size of Sunny Meadow but would benefit from the same staffing.
- COSS is not committing resources until a final plan is decided, so the Town should have an alternative plan and funding to maintain and build out the site.
- COSS supports this plan as written.

# Next Step

The next step is to decide on a path forward and draft the Conservation Restriction.

Many on the Committee are also on the Chelmsford Land Conservation Trust and have worked with the Select Board on CR's for both Sunny Meadow and Sheehan Farm. What we have learned through those processes will be applied to the new Conservation Restriction and we are looking forward to working with the Board for a third time.

# **Full Report of the Warren-Pohl Farm Ad Hoc Advisory Committee**

The 84-page report was provided ahead of the September 28, 2020 Select Board meeting and is available on the Town website.