

Newton Community Farm

at the historic Angino farm

*Status Report of the
Newton Community Farm Group*

January 26, 2005

What is the Newton Community Farm Group?

- We are a group of Newton citizens who support preserving the last operating farm in Newton as an historic and culturally valuable landscape
- We worked with the Newton Conservators to develop the Angino Farm CPC Proposal, approved by the Board of Aldermen in December 2004
- We seek to create a non-profit organization that would operate a sustainable organic farm and related educational programming for the benefit of Newton citizens

Our Advisors

- Professional Farmers:
 - Kerisa Fitzgerald, Asst. Farmer, Stearns Farm CSA
 - Kathy Huckins, Manager, Stearns Farm, Framingham
 - Chris Yoder, Owner, Vanguarden CSA, Dover
 - » Also on Board of Waltham Community Farm
 - Brian Donahue, Founder, Land's Sake, Weston
 - » Professor of Environmental Studies, Brandeis
 - » Author of *Reclaiming the Commons: Community Farms and Forests in a New England Town*
- Newton Architects and Structural Engineers
 - Donald Lang
 - Louis Muhlfelder
 - David Odeh
- Newton Attorneys
 - Jenny Outman
 - Jeff Hurwit
- Members of:
 - Newton Conservators, Inc.
 - Newton Green Decade Coalition
 - Ledgebrook Condominium Association

Goals

- Preserve the cultural and historic landscape of Angino Farm
- Grow organic produce for the benefit of Newton residents
- Provide the Newton community a model and educational center for sustainable land use and energy practices
- Use green or sustainable methods for renovation and operation of the farmhouse, the barn, and the fields

Achieved To Date

- Developed Angino Farm CPC Proposal approved in December 2004
- Researched alternative community farm models
- Developed preliminary operational plan for farm and buildings
- Obtained pledges of \$55,000 first year and \$10,000/yr. for 4 additional years.
- Enlisted 80 Newton families to participate in the first year of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) distribution network.

Progress Underway

- Retained lawyer to file articles of incorporation and file application for tax-exempt status as the **Newton Community Farm**
- Established donation fund for start-up costs (utilizing the Newton Conservators as the temporary conduit)
- Initiated evaluation of potential sustainable technologies appropriate for the farm
- Instituted a Cultural Landscape Report for the Angino Property

Proposed Operations

- Grow organic produce (60% of crops grown on site; 40% purchased from other locations)
- Distribute produce through
 - Cold Spring Farmers' Market
 - Booth on City Hall Green with early/late hours
 - Pre-sale of produce through CSA shares
 - Limited on site sales of produce, plants?
 - Mobile farm stand
- Donate 5% of produce
- Educate Newton citizens
 - Integration with public school green education programs
 - Summer and after-school programs
 - On site adult-education
- Install and demonstrate sustainable energy technology
- Conduct educational tours, festivals, workshops, and special events

Projected Operating Budget - Year One

Income		Amount	Percentage	
	Farm			
		Shares	\$40,500	44%
		Membership	\$10,800	12%
		Grants	\$10,000	11%
		Direct Sales	\$8,500	9%
		Education/Camp	\$7,500	8%
	Buildings	Building Rental	\$15,600	17%
	Total		\$92,900	
Expenses				
	Farm			
		Farmer	\$35,000	40%
		Other Labor	\$13,500	16%
		Wholesale Produce	\$12,000	14%
		Seed Supplies	\$8,700	10%
		Admin	\$3,300	4%
		Utilities	\$2,300	3%
		Education Program	\$800	1%
	Buildings	Maintenance; Utilities	\$10,900	13%
	Total Expense		\$86,500	
		Surplus	\$6,400	

Prioritized Next Steps

- Establish NCF Board of Directors and Committee Chairs; coalesce team efforts into a Mission Statement
- Work cooperatively with Mayor's Office/Farm Commission to build Master Plan and Budget for farm renovation, operation, and enhancement
 - Phase I, 2005:
 - o Feasibility Study & Renovation of buildings; MTC grant application
 - o Hire farmer, planning and land preparation for first year operation
 - o Educational outreach at modest level
 - Phase II, 2006: Full operation, with 1st growing season and preliminary educational programming
 - Phase III, 2007: Building enhancements and extending educational programming

Unique Aspects of Newton Community Farm Site

- Cultural and historical significance
- Small acreage
- Large interest in educational programming
- Independent of city \$ support
- Limited dependence on fundraising
- CSA - dependable income stream
- Buildings - opportunity for modeling sustainable energy practice

Comparative Farm Models

see Appendix for more detailed descriptions

	Mission	Operations	Ownership	Income	Evaluation
Lincoln <i>The Food Project</i> 22 acres	Teen development; urban-suburban exchange; donations to urban families in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSA • Donations • Youth programs • Urban Farmers' Markets 	Town owned; leased to independent non-profit	CSA 56% Fundraising 39% Other 5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependable CSA income • Diversity of programming
Weston <i>Land's Sake</i> 12 acres	Ecologically sound land mgmt; environmental education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm stand • Membership • Education • Town contracts-forestry, etc. 	Town owned; leased to independent non-profit	Fundraising 24% Membership 23% Town/private contracts 21% Farm stand 16% Endowment 8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site sales • Education Programs • Unique Town Farm Relationship • Large Payroll
Natick <i>Natick Community Organic Farm</i> 3 acres	Provide organic food; productive open space; education for K through adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic farm stand • Garden plots • Education • Events; parties 	Town owned; non-profit run; farmer & assistant farmer are town employees	Programs 37% Membership/Appeal 15% Produce sales 13% Livestock products 11% Festivals,tours,events 10% Wood,syrup,products 7% Rent and other 8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town operated • Access through diverse programming • Farm Stand • Community Gardens
Framingham <i>Stearns Farm CSA</i> 3+ acres	Preserve historic farm Provide naturally-grown food to community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSA • Volunteer Groups 	Sudbury Valley Trustees Land Trust; leased to independent non-profit	CSA 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive land use • Highly involved working membership
Newton* <i>Newton Community Farm</i> 1.5 acres	Retain historical property; produce organic food; utilize sustainable energy & waste recycling; education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSA • Farmers' Market • Education (Phase III) 	Town owned; leased to independent non-profit	CSA 44% Grants/Membership 22% Rental 17% Market Sales 9% Programs 8%	See assessment on previous page

Appendix – Farm Comparisons

Lincoln: The Food Project

Mission: To create a thoughtful and productive community of youth and adults from diverse backgrounds who work together to build a sustainable food system

Operations: since 1991

CSA

Donation program to Families in Need

Farmers' Markets in Dorchester and Roxbury

Summer Youth; Academic Year Program; Internships; Fellowships (14-16 yr olds)

Individual volunteer program

Ownership/Management: Town owned; leased to independent non-profit

Town role: leases 20 acres for \$30/acre. The Food Project must provide its own worker's compensation, liability insurance, etc. Must also adhere to special conditions re soil testing, fertilizer/pesticide application; cover cropping, etc.

Income sources:

CSA subscriptions 56%

Fundraising 49%

Farmers' Markets and other: 5%

Advantages in Newton

The CSA provides substantial, dependable income as well as visibility for their primary mission - to involve youth in building a sustainable food system. Diversity of programs, including urban farmers markets, spreads the reach of the great farm programs/resources in the Boston area.

Disadvantages in Newton

Limited acreage limits ability for highly developed youth programs.

Appendix – Farm Comparisons

Weston: Land's Sake

Mission: Combining ecologically sound land management with hands-on environmental education to provide a powerful model of how public open space can be effectively used and enjoyed by the community.

Operations: since 1980

- Farm stand
- Membership
- Donation program
- Green Power summer camp, seasonal kindergarten tours, middle school maple sugaring, high school environmental science, internships, kid and adult workshops
- Town forest management

Ownership/Management: Town owned; leased to independent non-profit

Town role: Land's Sake leases the 12-acre Case Farm, other fields, and the house that serves as the office, farmer housing, and greenhouse location. Land's Sake contracts with the town to perform specific functions including maintaining the farm, implementing educational programs, and donating a specific amount of produce to homeless shelters and food pantries; holds other contracts for sustainable forest management and similar work done for homeowners.

Income sources:

Donations	24%	Festival/events	3%
Homeowners	23%	Maple syrup	3%
Farm	16%	Green Power	1%
Town contracts	21%	Firewood sales	1%
Endowment	8%		

Advantages in Newton

Model for integration of school and outdoor curriculum working with Weston teachers. Green Power aims to make kids part of the "crew" at the farm, involved in the real work of the farm as it is happening. Working relationship with the town mutually beneficial, where the farm receives sure income through its contracts with Weston, and the town gains the work of a permanent subcontractor. Ensures Land's Sake's permanence in a town highly desired for development.

Disadvantages in Newton

Farm stand a volatile income source influenced by weather and consumer demand. Must be staffed at all times. Insufficient parking. Workers sometimes "spread thin" to fulfill all town contract work. Difficult to find dedicated educational staff for short-term Green Power program, sometimes creating a drain on farm staff.

Appendix – Farm Comparisons

Natick: Natick Community Organic Farm

Mission: The Natick Community Organic Farm is a non-profit, certified organic farm providing productive open space, food to the public, and hands-on education for all ages, year-round.

Operations: since 1976

Farm stand

Membership

Maple Syrup production

Garden plot rentals

Kid and adult classes (summer/school vacations); in-school programs; internships

Birthday parties, events

Ownership/Management: Town owned; non-profit run; farmer & assistant farmer are town employees

Town role: School Dept. land over which they maintain control. No formal lease agreement between town and farm. Farmer and assistant farmer are paid through town's Rec. Dept; all other expenses paid by non-profit income

Income sources:

Programs	37%	Festivals,tours,events	10%
Membership/Appeal	15%	Wood,syrup,products	7%
Produce sales	13%	Apartment and Education Center Rental	5%
Livestock products	11%	Interest and Miscellaneous.	3%

Advantages in Newton

Farmer and assistant farmer receive salaries and benefits from town. Diversity of educational programs ensures access to a large population of children and adults. Major income from programs.

Disadvantages in Newton

Farm stand is a volatile income source influenced by weather and consumer demand. Impermanence of land-use agreement discourages major donors.

Appendix – Farm Comparisons

Framingham: Stearns Farm CSA

Mission:

Preserving the historic Stearns farm as a sustainable garden while providing locally and naturally grown food in partnership between the land, the farmer, and the community.

Operations: since 1954

CSA

Volunteer groups

Ownership/Management: Owned by Sudbury Valley Trustees land trust; leased to non-profit farm (\$256/yr) to run and manage independently

Town role: NA

Income sources:

CSA 100%

Advantages in Newton

Small size of intensively managed land provides the total income for the organization. CSA allows for very careful planning/use of limited resources. Celebrations, events, volunteer program and work-for-share program allow for tremendous community involvement and learning, while still getting the work done with limited staff.

Disadvantages in Newton

Have no specific focus of staff or resources on education programs for children. Challenges originate from working with a land trust that has no specific agricultural focus.