

## FORM A

### NON-PRICE PROPOSAL NAGOG HILL ORCHARD LEASE

Submit this form in a separate envelope clearly marked on the outside as  
"Non-Price Proposal – NAGOG HILL ORCHARD LEASE" Use additional paper as  
necessary

**A. RESPONDANT:** Jonathan Bransfield

Contact Person (if other than Respondent) \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
stow mass 01775

Telephone: 978-760-1882

E-Mail: jonathan@bransfieldtree.com

### **B. CURRENT AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS**

This section is if you are currently operating your own agricultural business. If you do not own an agricultural business, leave this section blank.

Legal Name of Business: Bransfield Tree Co LLC

Name(s) of Owner: Jonathan Bransfield

Date Established: 5/2001

Type of Business (Sole Proprietorship, General Partnership, LLP, LLC, Corporation 501(c)(3), etc.)

LLC

For consideration, all proposals must provide the following information for further evaluation:

1. A narrative describing:

- (a) Respondent's current agricultural business, including the ownership interest, number of acres, description of crops and/or goods respondent grows and sells and the livestock Respondent raises;

- (b) the number of employees Respondent has;
  - (c) how Respondent intends to use Nagog Hill Orchard in conjunction with their existing business in a manner that will comply with the APR;
  - (d) an equipment investment plan describing the farming equipment respondent owns, leases or intends to procure that would be used in the operation and maintenance of the Orchard;
  - (e) the experience and licensing of the Respondent to perform pesticide management;
  - (f) which of the parcels and Buildings/structures the Respondent proposes to lease and for what purpose;
  - (g) Respondent's educational background
2. Proposal contains a Preliminary Management Plan for the Orchard, equipment and Building/structures, based on what the respondent knows about the property, which may be developed into a formal Management Plan during lease negotiations if respondent is selected to lease the property.
  3. The Preliminary Management Plan should contain any information that the respondent considers important for their vision for the property and also provide for (a) pesticide management; (b) periodic reporting to the Town of the number and types of plantings, crop yields, and prices; (c) a schedule and description of best management practices that will be utilized; (d) a schedule and description of all minor/routine maintenance activities that respondent intends to perform on structures included with the lease; and (e) annual inspections by the Town.

The Town is not seeking a fully developed Management Plan at this stage. A plan in outline form that covers the identified topics, to the best of respondent's knowledge and ability at this stage, is sufficient.

I understand that Proposals that do not meet the Minimum Evaluation Criteria will be judged non-responsive and will not be reviewed further. I also understand that this nonprice proposal information will be evaluated by the Town and separate from the price proposal.

Signature:



Print Name:

Jonathan Bransfield

Date:

9/20/2024

# Proposal to Lease, Manage and Operate the Nagog Hill Orchard

## **Introduction & Personal Mission Statement:**

My name is Jonathan Bransfield, and I am an Arborist and tree preservation specialist of 30 years. I am the sole owner of Bransfield Tree Co LLC for 22 years—BTC LLC operates in the \$1 to \$1.5m annual revenue range and has 6-9 employees. I grew up working in a family greenhouse business in Malden Mass from age 8 to 18 then transitioned to a career in tree care after I got a degree in English Literature from Bentley College in the early '90s. I live in Stow Mass with my 2 children, 2 cats, 3 dogs, and many many trees.

My mission is to be a leader among tree loving people and caretaker of the New England ecosystems and the ecological services they provide. I work daily for the preservation of plant and soil integrity by fighting against the invasive pests and plants that threaten them. I believe we are living through a terrible ecosystem and biodiversity challenge, and I see my role as someone working to preserve and spread as much local biodiversity as possible with the tools available until such time as better solutions are developed.

I am a people and plant loving person who loves to get people together for fun and work with trees and nature. After having had some success as an arboricultural business owner, I am now looking to start my second act as a leader in ecosystem rejuvenation through native plant propagation, production, and installation via novel and innovative production processes.

## **Nagog Hill Vision Statement:**

My vision for the agricultural (APR) acreage at Nagog Hill is to create a container based native tree and shrub farm, utilizing modern air pruning containers, pot in pot, and Root-Maker containers—a native tree and shrub production facility that *does not* mine away the existing soil, but grows its plants in containers filled with a compost potting soil mix. The benefits of seed grown native trees and shrubs to local ecosystems are enormous, especially when compared to the typical clonal production of the usual non-native nursery selections that presently make up much of our urban/suburban landscapes. Demand for natives has surged as awareness of their benefits has grown, and many enlightened communities around greater Boston have begun demanding natives be used exclusively when replacing trees removed for construction and wetland reconstruction projects. Normal nursery production and harvesting procedures do not work well for many native plants like: hickories, many oaks, sourwood, black walnut, chestnut, etc. Air-pruning container propagation and production is a way to avoid many of the pitfalls that limit the production and harvesting of these increasingly in-demand tree species. Lots 104, 105, and 102a would be the locus of these uses.

Along with producing native trees and shrubs, I want to plant several acres for fruit—likely the southern lots 110 & 111. Paw Paw trees, blueberry, red mulberry, blackberry,

etc for low to no pesticide fruit and fruit tree production. Paw paw is a gem of a North American native fruit tree that is becoming ever more popular with local gardeners. Unlike all the fruit trees presently on the site now, paw paw attract almost no pests or diseases and so require little to no pesticide inputs—even deer seem to have no interest in them! This fruit producing section would serve as a public accommodation providing pick-your-own fresh, local fruit.

In addition to the production of native trees and shrubs, I would like to dedicate a small area to use to contribute to the extant, ongoing efforts to breed pest resistant varieties of Ash, Hemlock, Elm, and Chestnut trees. I assume everyone reading this understands these native species are under threat from introduced pests and diseases and various groups are working on breeding genetic resistance solutions.

Lastly, in the 'what's old is new again' category, the ancient practices of hedge laying, pleaching, coppicing, and espalier are being rediscovered and re-utilized in our modern landscapes. I would seek to find commercial utility for these practices and their products both on the farm and in the surrounding communities. A laid hedge of native plants would serve as deer exclusion infrastructure while also acting as a dense habitat for birds and pollinators.

A tree farm along with the other tree-centric uses I listed above would, in many ways, align quite nicely with the historical orchard use. We would mostly just be trading rows of apple trees for rows of *different* trees. Most of these trees will only live onsite for 2-6 years, but in that time they will be a part of the local ecosystem producing flowers, homes, and food for all the birds and pollinators that share a niche with these native species. In a very real way, apple and stone fruit orchards in New England, Organic or not, are pesticide and fungicide intensive ecological deserts. Conversely, my crops will contribute to the local environment though their ecological relations and amazing beauty. The diversity of the farm trees and shrubs with all their different flowers and foliage will be a sight to see all year long. A tree farm with a composting site and poly tunnels may be a little busier than how it has been used in previous decades, but it will also be a thorough break from the intensive spraying that goes with fruit trees. It appears to me that most, if not all, of the contemporary and successful fruit orchards become pick-your-own, goat rodeo, donut circuses every fall precipitating an intense boost in local car trips in a short period of time; my use earns its way in the world without that neighborhood disruption.

I would seek to use my trees and shrubs to make the neighborhood even more beautiful by planting many many permanent roadside trees to help calm the local traffic and obscure any of the working infrastructure of the farm, while paying close attention to not obscure any of the amazing vistas that presently exist.

My tree business already purchases thousands of trees and shrubs for resale, so I have built in, immediate demand for the products of the tree farm. BTC also already has all the equipment, skilled labor, and administrative organization to manage this property. I

personally, and BTC, have been practicing IPM tree and shrub management for 22 years.

#### **House and Main Barn Vision:**

I am only willing to engage in leasing the APR land if the town will sell me the house and barn. It appears to me that the town has no money budgeted to bring both structures back into safe and useful standing and I cannot operate the farm without those structures at the core of operations, both for sales and distribution through the barn and housing for farm laborers in the house.

Regarding the house, it should be codified as a legal 3 family structure, be allowed to install code worthy egress doors and stairs where necessary, and allow for sufficient parking space that reflects its 7 bedroom status. I am inclined to make one of the apartments into my primary residence.

Regarding the barn: The old apple barn and its 1.5 acre lot have been, and should remain, the commercial hub of the farm—the spot where people and materials are collected and distributed. . . where cars and trucks will pick up and deliver. It is the furthest from the local domiciles and so the rattle and hum of such a hub to neighbors is at its nadir. This commercial usage should be codified durably so to prevent any future legal challenge. It is presently residentially zoned and is not under any special permit for commercial activities. The entire space has been a ghost town for 4 years and I suspect all the neighbors will have gotten used to that quiescence, any efforts to enliven the spot at all could well create some friction. A meaningful measure of insurance to secure the commercial use into the future is smart and required.