



Town of Orleans Conservation Commission

Town Hall • 19 School Road • Orleans, Massachusetts 02653-3699

Tel: (508) 240-3700 Ext. 2425 / Fax: (508) 240-3388

MEMO

To: Walter North, Chair, Community Preservation Committee

From: Virginia Farber, Conservation Commission Chair

Date: Monday, November 22, 2021

Re: Community Preservation Project Application

At its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, November 16th, 2021, the Conservation Commission voted to submit an application for Community Preservation funds for infrastructure improvements at the Putnam Farm property. Attached is a completed application.

Thank you for your consideration.



Town of Orleans

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COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PROJECT APPLICATION

Project Title: Putnam Farm Agricultural Restoration

Submission Date: November 19, 2021

Applicant (Town): Orleans Conservation Commission
Address: 19 School Road - Orleans, MA - 02653

Co-Applicant, if any (note if Town, individual or non-profit):
Address:

Project Contact Person: Rick Francolini – Community Volunteer; Drusy Henson - Orleans Conservation Commission
Telephone: 917-699-8738 **E-mail:** rick_francolini@yahoo.com

Federal Tax Identification Number (if non-profit):

Project purpose (Check all that apply):

Open Space Historic Preservation Community Housing Recreation

Project Location/Address: Putnam Farm – 237 Rock Harbor Road – Orleans, MA - 02653

Community Preservation Funding Request: TBD and not to exceed \$75K. Details in attached spreadsheet.

Brief Project Summary, Including Justification of Project Category Checked Above:

This is a request to fund infrastructure investments that will enable Putnam Farm to achieve the agricultural objectives outlined in the Orleans Conservation Commission Putnam Farm Management Plan. These enhancements will provide the water and power needed to service approximately three acres of agricultural fields.

Agriculture is a primary form of passive recreation for which the Putnam property was acquired and outdoor, recreational, infrastructure enhancements are eligible for Community Preservation Grant funding. Putnam Farm's agricultural expansion has also made it an increasingly-popular destination for both walkers and bikers alike thanks, in part, to its adjacency to the Cape Cod Rail Trail. All requested funding will be invested to optimize the usefulness of this conservation land as an outdoor, passive recreation destination.

Please attach the following information with all applications:

- **Detailed Narrative:** A complete and detailed description of the project including goals and objectives, consistency with Community Preservation Act goals, compatibility with the Orleans Community Preservation Plan and the Orleans Comprehensive Long Range Plan, and relevance to the community and its needs.
- **Action Plan and Timeline:** Note the estimated dates for project commencement and completion and list (with an explanation) all action and steps that will be required for project completion, including any legal requirements or any impediments to implementation.

- **Financial Data:** Provide financial information for the project including total cost, additional revenue sources (public, private, in-kind, volunteer time and services), basis for the fiscal estimates and any other fiscal details currently available. Applicants are encouraged to submit more than one quotation from potential contractors.

GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT SUBMISSION

Please submit **one paper copy** of the application materials to the Community Preservation Committee, c/o Town Administrator, Town of Orleans, 19 School Road, Orleans, MA 02653 by Nov. 22, 2021. **Applicants must also email complete applications in PDF** to Jennifer Fountain, Administrative Assistant, at genuinejenfountain@gmail.com. A single PDF file which appends materials described in item 3 to the application form is preferred.

1. Applications must be received by Monday, November 22 to be considered for recommendation at the Annual Town Meeting.
2. Funds will be available on July 1st following the Annual Town Meeting.
3. Applicants may include any maps, diagrams, and/or photographs pertaining to the project. Letters of Support for the project from community organizations or other sources may also be submitted.
4. The Community Preservation Committee may require additional (or more detailed) information or further clarification to a submitted application.
5. Prior to submission of funding applications, applicants should review the Community Preservation Act (MGL, Chapter 44B, through the Community Preservation Coalition Web site), the Orleans Community Preservation Plan and the Orleans Community Preservation Bylaw, copies of which are available on the Town Web site at <https://www.town.orleans.ma.us/community-preservation-committee>. Nonprofit organizations applying for historic preservation funds for historic structures should obtain a sample copy of an acceptable historic preservation deed restriction (available from the Town Administrator's office) since this type of document will be required. Applicants other than the Town of Orleans should also obtain a sample copy of the Agreement with the Town of Orleans that all successful nonprofit applicants will be required to sign. Please contact the Administrative Assistant by email with any questions.
6. Eligible projects must address one or more of the uses outlined in the Community Preservation Act, Sections 2 and 5 (2), as follows:

Open Space

Acquisition, creation and preservation of land to protect existing water supply/aquifer areas, agricultural and forest land, coastal lands, frontage to inland water bodies, wildlife habitat, nature preserves and scenic vistas.

Community Housing

Acquisition, creation, preservation and support of community housing defined as housing for low and moderate income individuals and families, including low and moderate income senior housing. The Community Preservation Committee is required to recommend, wherever possible, the reuse of existing buildings or construction of new buildings on previously developed sites.

Historic Preservation

Acquisition, restoration, rehabilitation and restoration of historic structures and landscapes that have been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of the Town or that are listed on the State Register of Historic Places.

Recreation

Acquisition, creation, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of land for active and passive recreational uses, including land for community gardens, trails and noncommercial youth and adult sports and the use of land as a park, playground or athletic field and for preservation and restoration of recreational facilities.

(Community Preservation funds cannot be used for a stadium, gymnasium or similar structure or for the acquisition of artificial turf for athletic fields.)

Sept 10, 2021

Putnam Farm Agricultural Restoration

Detailed Narrative and Alignment with Published Community Objectives

Putnam Farm is a fourteen-acre parcel of conservation land purchased by the Town of Orleans in 2010. A portion of the property had previously been utilized as farmland and the intent upon purchase was to restore some of the land for agricultural use. The Orleans Conservation Commission Management Plan, outlining that vision, is excerpted below.

There are currently five plot holders managing individual plots of about 3,900 square feet each, for a total of about one-half acre. Based upon recent mapping exercises with the Town's Conservation Agent, Putnam has the potential to support approximately three acres of farmland once the needed infrastructure is created.

Although there are currently just five plot holders, Putnam's impact on the community reaches far beyond these five individuals. Three of the five growers are providing freshly-grown produce at the Orleans Farmers Market – a market that had a record summer season with weekly attendance sometimes exceeding 1,000 visitors. Demand for locally-grown produce continues to outpace supply, and Putnam's growers are helping close the gap. The other two plot holders grow for and with family members and friends.

During the past year, recreational use at Putnam has included well-attended visits with the Orleans Conservation Trust and Mass Audubon. Students have also made the rounds both formally and informally. Dog walkers, bikers, and nature lovers are frequent visitors to the property, and its proximity to the rail trail provides easy access for all.

Demand for plots is strong and has driven fresh momentum for additional restoration. Two new plots were created earlier this year and were awarded to growers who will start in the spring of 2022. Five more plots were approved for restoration this past September and tree removal is currently under way. Prep work will continue through early next year with new plot holders assigned some time in 2022. Thirteen "hopefuls" are currently on the waiting list and as the word gets out, the list continues to grow.

Although irrigation for existing plots is provided by a town-managed connection to municipal water, careful consideration has been given to how the growing demand for irrigation should be met. Prior to the Town's acquisition, Putnam was irrigated with well water, and re-establishing well water is called for in the Management Plan. The Conservation Commission recently decided to support the change to well water – a decision that was formally endorsed by the Agriculture Council and informally recommended by the Town's water department.

A potential design for the well-driven irrigation system – and a suggested conservation plan - is being provided at no charge by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The NRCS is a division of the US Department of Agriculture which offers science-based solutions to help farmers conserve soil, water, air, and other natural resources. Our ability to leverage their conservation-driven expertise should be a benefit to the land while also reducing the expenses associated with this restoration. No funds for this project are included in this application.

Reactivating the well will require the reactivation of electricity which is also called for in the Management Plan. Eversource has provided preliminary pricing for connectivity but there are still decisions to be made regarding the installation of transmission lines. Underground burial is one option, pole installation is another and a combination of the two is yet another. Town Conservation Agent John Jannell is currently assessing the details associated with each so that the Conservation Commission can be provided with the details necessary to make their final recommendation.

Currently, plot holders are charged an annual “user fee” of \$500, which has been assessed to cover the cost of municipal water. Going forward, the user fee will remain in place and be applied to the cost of electricity instead. Any surplus realized will be earmarked for maintenance and investment expenses associated with the management of Putnam Farm.

Water is currently provided seasonally but there is interest in considering the potential of making it available year round. This would enable four-season growing for plot holders interested in doing so. It would also optimize Putnam’s agricultural potential. The current municipal water infrastructure does not allow for this option but once well water is installed, the possibility will exist. To be clear, this grant submission **does not** include a request for year-round water, **nor** does it request the irrigation pipeline infrastructure that would be associated with that decision. For now, the priority is to re-establish the water and the power so that the **current** agricultural offerings at Putnam Farm can be maximized. However, a frost-free hydrant will be installed at the well head to provide limited year-round water.

Putnam Farm has rapidly evolved into a multi-generational destination attracting both growers and non-growers alike. An investment in both water and power will enable its agricultural potential to be maximized. The attached spreadsheet provides the details of this request and will be completed in time for full consideration by the Community Preservation Committee.

The Conservation Commission is eager to maintain the momentum that’s been established at Putnam and thanks you for your commitment to this process and for your consideration of this initiative.

The following excerpts have been provided to illustrate alignment with published community objectives:

Orleans Comprehensive Plan – Amended 2006:

Section 11-2: Open Space and Recreation – Goals & Policies

“Management plans should be created and maintained for all open space land under Town stewardship”

Town of Orleans - Conservation, Recreation and Open Space – Published 2016

Section 9: Five-Year Action Plan - Conservation Objectives and Actions

“Utilize administrative skills and efforts to manage existing resources more effectively”

“Continue to promote community gardens at Putnam Farm”

“Work with interested citizens”

Putnam Farm Land Management Plan – Published 2010

Section 1-1: Property Description

“The Putnam Farm Property, located at 50 Bridge Road, Orleans, Assessors’ map 10 lot 1 is owned by the Town of Orleans, under care and control of the Conservation Commission, for the purposes of conservation, agriculture and passive recreation, in perpetuity.”

Section 1-5: Permitted Uses

“Walking, nature study including the preservation of trees as in an arboretum, cross country skiing, birding, picnicking, wildlife observation and agriculture”

Section 3-2-A: Conditions of the Property Relevant to the Purposes of the Management Plan

“The previous owner installed a well at the property to support the agricultural uses. The management plan proposes to reactivate the water supply to support the agricultural uses”

“The management plan proposes to reinstall and activate electrical power to the site to support the agricultural uses”

Section 3-1: General Information – Alternative Energy Option

“Passive solar might be allowed under certain conditions”

Section 3-2-D: Additional Remarks Regarding the Present Condition of the Property

“Putnam Farm is a very special site to be under public use and control. It is large enough and remote enough to give one a true feeling of former agriculture sites on Cape Cod. On March 30, 2011 the Orleans Historical Commission voted unanimously that Putnam Farm was significant to the history of the Town of Orleans because of its long history of farming and its relationship to Jerimiah’s Gutter, the first canal though Cape Cod.”

Please note that all cost estimates are being finalized by Town Conservation Agent John Jannell and will be submitted in time for full consideration by the Community Preservation Committee

Putnam Farm Agricultural Restoration - Community Preservation Grant Request - 11-19-21

Task/Item	Cost	Timeframe	Work Done By	Notes
Well Installation	TBD	Fall '22	Well Installer - TBD	Preliminary quote has been received from Desmond Well - reconfirmation underway
Grid Connection	TBD	Fall '22	Eversource	Preliminary quote has been received from Eversource - reconfirmation underway
TOTAL				