



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Department of Parks and Recreation

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

for

**Management and Operation of Commercial, Chemical-Free
Farming at Manatawna Farm**

March 19, 2010

SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Introduction

The City of Philadelphia acting through its Department of Parks and Recreation (the “City”) is issuing this Request for Information (“RFI”) to gather indications of interest and experience in operating and managing sub-acre commercial, chemical-free farming plots on a City property called Manatawna Farm, located at 100 Spring Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19131. The City anticipates issuing a Request for Proposal subsequent to receiving and evaluating responses to this RFI. Proposals submitted under the Request for Proposal will be reviewed and selected Respondents will be awarded a license to operate commercial, chemical-free farm plot(s) at Manatawna Farm.

B. Background

In 2008, Mayor Michael Nutter articulated his commitment to making Philadelphia The Greenest City in America and the City adopted sustainability as a fundamental approach for all of the City’s operations. Fostering further growth of a regional food and urban agriculture system is a key component of achieving this goal and is supported by Mayor Nutter’s food initiative, *Philadelphia Food Charter*, which calls for the use of City-owned spaces for urban agriculture, and Mayor Nutter’s sustainability plan, *Greenworks Philadelphia*, which recommends 12 commercial agriculture projects be established in the City by 2015. To that end, the City is initiating a pilot program to offer farmers or teams of farmers the opportunity to operate and manage sub-acre commercial, chemical-free farming plots for the purposes of fostering sustainable, urban agricultural businesses in Philadelphia and enhancing the direct, locally grown market of produce for the citizens of Philadelphia (the “Program”). Specifically, the institution of commercial, chemical-free agriculture at Manatawna Farm is intended to maximize the potential use of the property, demonstrate the viability and sustainability of commercial farming businesses in Philadelphia, and support efforts to bring local produce to Philadelphians and surrounding communities.

C. Program

The Program at Manatawna Farm offers emerging or established farmers the opportunity to explore the advantages of commercial, chemical-free urban farming by providing farmers more land than is traditionally available in the City for growing crops. The Program removes many of the start-up barriers farmers typically encounter, including, but not limited to, access to land, capital improvements, equipment and utilities, and isolation. The site is zoned and primed for agricultural use and will be prepared for commercial farming through identified grant funds. The site will be operated as a commercial farming venture and in turn support entrepreneurial farming initiatives.

D. Anticipated Schedule

The close date pursuant to this RFI is April 12, 2010 at 5 p.m. EST. The City anticipates issuing a Request for Proposal thereafter with the intention of contracting with selected Respondent(s) by late spring.

E. Primary Contact

The name, address and contact information for the Primary Contact for this RFI is as follows:

Joan S.Blaustein,
City of Philadelphia
Department of Parks and Recreation
Director of Environment, Stewardship and Education
One Parkway, 10th Floor
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215.683.0215
Joan.blaustein@phila.gov

F. General Disclaimer of City

This Request for Information and the process it describes are proprietary to the City and are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the City. This RFI is not binding on the City. No other party, including any respondent to this RFI, or any future proposer to any RFP which may be issued by the City for commercial farming operations at Manatawna Farm is intended to be granted any rights hereunder.

Any response and other materials submitted in response to this RFI, including written documents and verbal communications, may be subject to public disclosure by the City, or by any authorized agent of the City. Any response or other materials submitted, or ideas or information elicited, in response to this RFI shall be the sole and absolute property of the City, and the City shall have title thereto and unrestricted use thereof. The City shall have the right to disclose the responses, materials and any ideas to any person or entity including, employees of the City, its consultants and contractors, and authorized agents, as required to carry out this RFI. Any such response, materials, and ideas may be publicly disclosed by the City or any authorized agent of the City, for any reason the City, in its sole discretion, deems appropriate, or pursuant to the Pennsylvania Right To Know Act or other applicable law. The Respondent acknowledges and agrees that the City and its authorized agents shall have the foregoing right of public disclosure notwithstanding any notice or statement by the Respondent (whether made in the response or otherwise) asserting the confidential or proprietary nature of the response or of any materials submitted or ideas elicited in response to the RFI.

The City shall not be liable for any costs associated with the development, preparation, transmittal or presentation of any information or material submitted in

response to this RFI. All information/material submitted becomes the sole property of the City and will be retained, returned, or destroyed at the City's discretion.

G. Reservation of Rights

The City reserves the right to reject any and all submissions and re-issue the RFI at any time prior to execution of a final contract, issue a new RFI or RFP with terms and conditions substantially different from those set forth herein, extend the time period for responding to this RFI, or cancel this RFI with or without issuing another.

SECTION II – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Site Description

Manatawna Farm is a 76 acre site in Northwestern Philadelphia which is under jurisdiction of the City's Department of Parks and Recreation. Currently, approximately 50-acres are dedicated to farming, community gardening, hay raising and animal husbandry. The farm, which rests along the Schuylkill River in the Upper Roxborough neighborhood lies directly north of The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education. Soil analysis reveals that the area is prime for farmland, mainly consisting of Chester silt loam, Urbana silt loam, and Manor loam, e.g. soils with organic material. Permanent structures at Manatawna Farm include a barn and farm house. A public road is adjacent to Manatawna Farm, allowing access to the barn and farm house.

Manatawna Farm is currently utilized by two (2) entities: Saul High School of Philadelphia and the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education. Saul High School mainly uses the property to grow hay for its animal husbandry program and to provide support for the 4-H program and animals which are housed in the barn. Saul High School employs an individual to manage the hay raising. The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education manages the on-site community gardens.

B. Program Scope

It is the intention of the Department of Parks and Recreation to dedicate up to five (5) acres of Manatawna property to commercial, chemical-free farming. The dedicated premises shall be divided into ½ acre farm plots, totaling up to ten (10) farm plots. Farmers will be permitted to submit proposals for one (1) or more farm plots. Please See **Attachment A** for a site map of the dedicated farm plots at Manatawna Farm.

C. License Terms

Initial Term: One (1) year with projected start date of June 1, 2010

Renewal Term: Three (3) one (1) year periods, beginning March 1, exercised at the sole discretion of the City.

D. Business Terms

Each farmer will be required to pay a fee of \$500 per farm plot for the opportunity to develop and operate a farming enterprise at Manatawna Farm.

E. Site Preparation

The City has identified grant funds that it will use to make improvements to Manatawna Farm for preparation of commercial, chemical-free farming. The City intends to use the grant funds to undertake the improvements to Manatawna Farm listed below. The site will be self-managed and it is expected that all farmers will cooperatively use the facilities and provided equipment.

- Irrigation and watering hook ups;
- Walk-in Cooler;
- Fencing;
- Post Harvesting Station;
- BCS Rototillers;
- Composting Toilet.

The City will also apply appropriate amendments to the farm plots to prepare them for general vegetable crop growth. Farmers planning to grow crops that require different amendments will be required to do so at their sole cost and expense.

F. Utilities

The City is responsible for paying charges or fees for all public utilities and utility service used at Manatawna Farm in connection with the commercial farming operations.

SECTION III – DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL FARMING OPERATIONS

A. Scope of Work

Selected farmers or teams of farmers licensed under the Request for Proposal to manage and operate commercial, chemical-free farm plots at Manatawna Farm (collectively, “**Farmers**”) will assume complete responsibility for managing, operating and maintaining their farm plots including, but not limited to, growing crops, marketing their business, selling produce to outlets, and maintaining and repairing any fixtures or equipment related to the commercial farming operations at Manatawna Farm.

In addition to the above responsibilities, Farmers will also be required to adhere to the following:

1. Equipment, Materials, and Supplies

Farmers will be responsible, at their sole cost and expense, to provide, install and use all necessary fixtures, improvements, equipment, materials, and supplies necessary and prudent for the safe, efficient and successful performance of its activities on Manatawna Farm.

2. Weed Management
Farmers must not use herbicides to control weeds unless approved in advance by the City.
3. Insect Management
Farmers must understand current pest management methods of control and be versed in Integrated Pest Management (“IPM”) monitoring techniques such as scouting. IPM is defined as a sustainable approach to managing pests by combining biological, cultural and physical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health, and environmental risks.
4. Disease Management
Farmers are required to be familiar with plant diseases and be able to identify them. Farmers are not permitted to use chemicals, fungicides, or bactericides on Manatawna Farm for disease management.
5. Cleaning; Trash Collection; Recycling; Composting
Farmers must, at their sole cost and expense, clean-up all waste, garbage, refuse, rubbish, organic debris generated by and related to their activities on Manatawna Farm. Farmers must provide proper waste and recycling receptacles throughout Manatawna Farm including, but not limited to, providing separate trash containers for recyclable materials. Farmers must make best efforts to compost organic waste generated by their activities on Manatawna Farm.

B. Additional Requirements

In addition to the Scope of Work described above, Farmers will also be required to meet the following requirements:

1. Taxes and Licenses
Farmers will be subject to City tax requirements, including, without limitation, one or more of the following taxes:
 - a. Business Privilege Taxes
 - b. Net Profits Tax
 - c. City Wage Tax
 - d. All applicable City licenses and permits, e.g., business privilege license
2. Insurance
Farmers will procure and maintain, at their sole cost and expense, insurance of the types and minimum limits of coverage specified by the City.
3. Records and Reporting
Farmers must keep complete and accurate books of accounts, financial records, and other records within the City of Philadelphia relating to its

activities at and use of Manatawna Farm. Farmers must also provide an activity report that includes a description of all activities undertaken at Manatawna Farm including, but not limited to, the amounts and types of produce produced, financial information related to the sales of the produce and land management protocols.

SECTION IV – SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. Form of Application

Respondents may submit their applications and required forms electronically or via hard copy. Electronic and hard copy applications and required forms must be submitted to the Primary Contact listed in Section I, Part E of this RFI. All documents **MUST** be received by the City by **5 p.m. on April 12**. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Applications must be typed on 8-1/2" x 11" paper and marked clearly on the cover page with Respondent's name and the number of this RFI. Pages should be numbered clearly. **Respondents must seal their application and required forms in envelopes, packets, or boxes, as the case may be, to ensure confidentiality of the information prior to the RFI Submittals Closing Date, which is provided in Section I, Part D of this RFI.**

Respondents are ***strongly*** encouraged to review the RFP website, eContract Philly at <http://ework.phila.gov/econtractphilly>. The subsequent RFP will be posted on this site and each applicant will need to be registered and complete certain campaign disclosure forms in order to submit their proposals to the City.

B. Letter of Interest

Complete **Form A, Expression of Interest**, indicating your desire to perform the work required under this RFI, submit a Proposal in response to a subsequent RFP and the number of sub-acre commercial, chemical-free farming plots you are interested in operating and managing.

C. Experience

Submit a resume or detailed description of your professional qualifications, demonstrating experience in farming, or affiliation with individuals and farming enterprises, or either of them, with such expertise.

D. References

List up to three (3) references, indicating previous work experience and public participation. Farmers must include the name of the reference entity, a description of the nature of the listed reference's experience with the farmer, and the name, title, address, email address, and telephone number of a contact person at the reference entity.

E. Work/Business Plan

Each Respondent must provide a detailed vision and strategic overview of the project, including:

1. Farmer or farming team description, work to be completed and goals to be met;
2. Crop(s) to be grown;
3. Procedures, methods and practices to be implemented to complete the Scope of Work requested in this RFI;
4. Work schedule, including time frames for each major work element and target dates for harvesting and marketing;
5. Outlets to sell goods and marketing efforts;
6. Any other information to explain the Respondent's business and farming goals and plans.