

January 26, 2021

Dear Chilmark Board of Selectmen,

We aspire for Beetlebung Farm to be a self-sustaining, high-quality, no-till market garden and learning farm providing year-round, nutritious food for our community.

For the past two years, we have been working to restore the farm and to build out our infrastructure in order to grow, store, process and sell a diverse range of crops including vegetables, herbs, fruits and flowers. We presently keep bees and have plans underway to incorporate chickens. We are also evaluating raising quail, a few sheep (ewes only) for fiber and introducing other animals on a short-term basis to help manage the land and build soil health as we did in our first season with working pigs. This past season we began a seed saving operation which we plan to expand in the coming years. And, like other small farms on the island, we will be leasing additional farmland on the Vineyard to grow additional vegetables and other crops including native ancient grains, natural dyes and other plant materials.

Our proposed barn will allow us to run the farm as an enduring, self-sustaining enterprise. From the outset, our intention has always been to become a valued addition to Chilmark and, in particular, to the year-round island community - growing delicious, healthful food twelve months a year in an ecologically positive way. From increased local food availability and hosting field trips for the Chilmark School to participating in local pollinator and seed research and sharing resources with other farmers, we hope to have a positive impact on off-season daily life. Through study, experimentation and demonstration, we also want to contribute to the larger national conversation regarding local food systems, diet, food waste, soil health and land access.

In siting our proposed agricultural barn, our primary focus has been on aesthetics and function: minimizing its visual impact while meeting our storage, processing and livestock needs. Just as we want to work with nature to build our soil, similarly we want to work with the existing land to site our structures. We believe that our appropriately sized slope barn sits nicely in the existing topography while preserving the surrounding mature trees. At the same time, the existing farm stand, wash-area and coolbot will be taken down opening a new beautiful view up towards the fields along Middle Road.

We believe that our farm's unique location in the center of Chilmark sends a powerful message regarding the values of this community. A productive, ecologically beneficial farm visible to all and situated across from the Town Hall, school, library, post office and community center reinforces the fundamental value of local food systems while demonstrating the substantial work that goes into growing food.

We feel fortunate to be a highly visible farm in the center of town because we believe that a productive Beetlebung Farm not only celebrates the agrarian nature of Chilmark

but also invites the public, on a daily basis, to consider farms and farming as integral to community life - even our logo celebrates the manner in which the town envelops our farm on all sides! Over the past two seasons, my favorite memories are of answering questions from impromptu visitors to our fields and hearing their interest in and excitement about our growing techniques. I think everyone on our farm crew would agree.

We intend to be the best possible neighbors, community members, and stewards of this land. Our relationship with the Fischer family continues to grow as we work to honor their legacy. When siting our high tunnels for year-round growing, we worked proactively with our neighbors to understand and address their concerns. Based on our conversations with the community, we will be screening our houses from Middle and South Roads as well as from our neighbor's perspective. We are also working on dulling the finish to the roof of our equipment shed.

We are passionate about history, preservation and craftsmanship. We share a common desire to protect the essential character of Chilmark. Our recent renovation of our 1860's farmhouse hopefully affirms our commitment to beauty and preservation. The barn we've purchased is a dual framed, post and beam antique carriage barn from Walpole, NH. It has hand hewn beams dating from the late 1700's and others dating to the mid-late 1800's - well preserved by its rough-cut slate roof. Originally used to house horses and sleighs, the barn is a marker of a time long past and shows the hand of lumberjacks, craftsmen, and the farming community which interacted with it on a daily basis for over 100 years. The sellers and general Walpole, NH community were greatly relieved to know that the barn was being rebuilt in agrarian Chilmark, MA and repurposed to support our hand scale working farm as opposed to another common fate: having its parts being transformed into a residential "great room" on a private family estate or collapsing in ruin. Instead, we believe that our new repurposed historic barn will provide us with the storage and functional capacity to create a successful, productive farm that will endure for generations and, at the same time, enhance the view from Middle Road.

As a final note, we understand and are sensitive to the concern regarding increased traffic in downtown Chilmark. None of our proposed activity or usage should create any significant traffic that we can foresee.

Thank you for your consideration,

Beetlebung Farm