



Proposal to the Busa Land Use Proposal Committee

Submitted November, 2010

by the Lexington Community Farm Coalition, Inc.

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Farming can change people's lives...

“We had one kid who did 100 hours of court-mandated community service, and he came back this year demanding to be an intern.
Farming can change people's lives.”

“In America, we've been losing more than an acre of farmland per minute, between 2002 and 2007, 4,080,300 acres of agricultural land were converted to developed uses—an area nearly the size of Massachusetts.”

“Anybody can have a good time going to a back yard barbeque or playing ball or going to the beach. But what really brings us together as a community is not common leisure, but common labor. What we work together to accomplish is very, very important, and I think community farms are an incredible opportunity for that kind of common labor.”

Verena Wieloch, Gaining Ground Community Farm, Concord MA; and American Farmland Trust

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Lexington Community Farm Coalition Proposal Committee

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Executive Summary

The Busa Land Use Proposal Committee (BLUPC) is charged with making a recommendation on how the Town will use the Busa Farm property that it acquired through the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Our answer to the question of how best to manage the property for now and into the future is simple: Let's keep farming Busa Farm!

The Lexington Community Farm Coalition proposes to transform the Busa Farm into the Lexington Community Farm (LCF), a professionally managed, working, community supported agriculture (CSA) farm with educational programs. These programs would be shaped via an ongoing and active engagement with the Town of Lexington and its residents. The farm would be open and accessible to the entire Lexington community as well as surrounding towns. It would require no financial input from the town, now or in the future.

Lexington Community Farm would be managed by a non-profit corporation with governance by a board of directors that would include community stakeholders. The farming would be carried out by a paid, professional farmer. The farmer would be assisted by a staff of volunteers and paid seasonal employees. Farm production activities would be combined with open-space access and recreation activities for all Lexington residents. Further, the mixed use of this land would include the historic preservation of the farm landscape, helping to reclaim the farming heritage of the former "Cambridge Farms".

Our vision and plan create a self-sustaining, financially sound, environmentally beneficial, and fully accessible landscape on which food may be grown for sale through purchased shares (CSA), through a farm stand, at farmers markets and through "pick-your-own" opportunities. A percentage of the food grown would be donated to local food pantries.

Our plan recognizes and promotes the role that such a farm can play not only in promoting health and food affordability, but as a place for educational and participatory programs for school age groups, adults and seniors, and for recreation and enjoyment of nature and open space.

We believe that no other proposal can provide benefits for as large a cross-section of the Lexington community. In contrast, ball-field focused and affordable housing proposals would serve a narrower demographic and benefit much smaller constituencies and numbers. They would require tear down and construction activities and other environmental impacts on the site. They would create immediate and future Town obligations for maintenance and capital investments (upgrades, repairs) into perpetuity.

In short, we understand that the BLUPC has been charged with identifying options that will not drain Town financial resources, that will protect rather than harm the natural environment, and that will provide benefits to as broad a cross section of the Lexington community as possible. This proposal describes how Lexington Community Farm would meet these objectives.

Why Continuity of Farm Operations Makes Sense

In many respects the most natural step is to maintain Busa Farm as a working farm into the future.

In its current form, Busa Farm is an ideal location and facility for a community farm. Busa Farm is a 7.85 acre property that has been a working farm for many generations (as described in detail in Section 5). As this proposal shows (Section 2), the Busa Farm has sufficient acreage to support a sustainable community farm operation and thereby also preserve open space. It has many unique assets suitable for a farm, including its greenhouse, artesian well, and fertile fields. The opportunity cost of removing some or all of these assets in favor of a ball field or a housing complex is high. It is unlikely that any future property acquired through the CPA would have such an ideal combination of assets for establishment of a community farm, while there may be other reasonable options for rehabilitating or purchasing other property for ball fields or affordable housing.

Continuity of farm operations in the context of a community farm is therefore a least cost path to meeting the objectives identified by the BLUPC; tear down, grading, building, and other construction activities will not be required for the success of our plan. Continuity of the farming use would be the least likely to disturb the existing habitats and open spaces within and surrounding the farm, something that no other plan can claim. Finally, continuity of farming provides a direct and tangible link with the agricultural history of Lexington's settlers and of the Busa Farm site in particular.

Why a Community Farm Makes Sense

We live in a time of considerable concern about the environment ranging from global concerns about planetary climate change and fossil fuel (nonrenewable) energy, to regional concerns about the safety and quality of the food supply, to local concerns about conservation and habitat preservation. A community farm is part of the answer to these concerns. It provides a supply of locally grown, high quality food that connects communities with the land in a way that promotes awareness, conservation, and stewardship. Lexington residents and others in our region are already expressing their support for local agriculture through participation in farmers markets, and demand for CSA shares is high in our region. A community farm in Lexington would give our town an opportunity to contribute to and participate in this important transformation of economic and environmental thought and practice.

Lexington Community Farm would also support Lexington's environmental initiatives. In June, a Sustainable Lexington committee was established to "advise the Selectmen on proposals which affect Lexington's sustainability and resilience...". Expertise sought for membership on the committee includes "food supply and agriculture." A community farm in Lexington would be an example of "putting sustainability concepts into action." The Lexington Community Farm would offer education and provoke conversations about sustainability through experimentation with sustainable farming practices, informational events, and school programs.

Why a Community Farm is Right for Lexington

The purchase of Busa Farm comes at an opportune time. In making its decision, the BLUPC and the Town can reflect on the many studies in the past few years (such as cataloged in the 2007 Community Preservation Plan Needs Assessment) that provide perspective and context. The BLUPC and the Town will face a choice between adding to the current stock of playing fields and/or affordable housing, and allowing for the establishment of a community farm. All of these options provide valuable benefits of different sorts to the Town, and it is challenging but not impossible to compare these options. We ask that the BLUPC consider the following three points:

What is clear is that the Town has done a good job of meeting its obligations for affordable housing and for providing high quality playing fields that are distributed around town. What is equally clear is that once these assets are created they require periodic capital outlays for their repair and upgrades as well as sustained maintenance. For playing fields in particular, a balance needs to be struck between the number of fields, the demand for playing fields, and the cost of their maintenance and capital outlays. In contrast, we have done the business analysis and put together a plan for the Lexington Community Farm operations and management that is viable and sustainable, and that does not create a financial burden on the town in return for the benefits it provides (Section 2).

As described above, the Lexington Community Farm plan provides for continuity of use of the Busa Farm site without the inevitable disruption and environmental impact associated with tear-down, grading, construction and other activities necessary for site transformation for other uses. Thus we believe the Lexington Community Farm proposal to be superior from an environmental standpoint.

The Lexington Community Farm plan is for a site that is accessible to as broad a cross-section of Lexington residents as possible. As described above and in Sections 3 and 4 below, the farm will involve school-aged children, adults, and seniors of all levels of physical ability. Educational programs,

participatory programs, and recreation opportunities will be integral to the site plan and operations. Making locally grown food affordable by setting aside a percentage of CSA shares for low-income families and individuals is also part of our plan. We believe no other approach, even a combined athletic field and housing plan, can be designed to serve such a broad cross-section of Lexington's population.

Finally, the idea of a Lexington Community Farm has received wide support. This support is evidenced by the attendance and testimony of supporters of the community farm concept at BLUPC meetings, the 1,200 Lexington residents who signed a petition in support of a farm on the Busa land, and the many Lexington residents who have raised funds, done research, and contributed to planning the Lexington Community Farm.

In sum, we believe there is a groundswell of substantial support for this idea. It is a gift to the future in the form of preserved, protected, and productive land. This land could both produce food and serve as an example for young and old alike of how we can practice environmental stewardship. We hope that you will agree with us that the best choice is to keep farming Busa Farm.

Organization of this Proposal

This proposal describes the three components of a Lexington community farm: maintaining a sustainable working farm, providing farm-based community education and outreach, and providing access for all to open space. It presents an overview of the activities, management, financing, and rationale for establishing a community farm on the Busa Farm property, as well as the unique benefits the farm would offer to Lexington residents. It is organized into sections as follows:

- Section 1. Response to the BLUPC Evaluation Criteria
- Section 2. Plan for a Sustainable Working Farm
- Section 3. Plan for Farm-based Community Outreach and Education
- Section 4. Plan for Accessible Community Space
- Section 5. A Current and Historical View of Local Agriculture

Section 1. Response to BLUPC Evaluation Criteria

The following table contains our responses to the questions put forth by the Busa Land Use Proposal Committee.

BLUPC Criteria		LexFarm Response
1	Name of the group making the proposal including the primary contact name, email, and phone.	Lexington Community Farm Coalition Janet Kern 781-861-7102 janet@lexfarm.org
2	Mission of the group and any affiliated organizations.	The Lexington Community Farm Coalition, Inc. is a nonprofit community-centered organization dedicated to promoting farming, farm-based education, and sustainable land use in Lexington, Massachusetts.
3	Primary land use; any secondary land uses? How much land is required for the use (in square feet)? What is the minimum amount of land you need to	This proposal provides for "mixed" use. The primary land use proposed is open space (agricultural); secondary uses are recreational, including educational community gardens, and historic preservation, i.e., preservation of real property

BLUPC Criteria	LexFarm Response
accomplish your goal?	<p>with a documented farming use since the 1600's.</p> <p>Our goal is to provide the community with an ecologically and economically sustainable farm that offers fresh produce for sale as well as for donation to food banks, and provides educational programs for the community.</p> <p>To achieve this goal, the operation would require a minimum of approximately 6 acres; this is largely due to the need for a minimum of 5 acres under production for economic sustainability.</p> <p>Farm production: 5 acres arable land (minimum) This land is used to produce crops for sale.</p> <p>Farm infrastructure: 0.25 acres (est.)</p> <p>Includes existing greenhouse (~3400 sq ft), irrigation , i.e., existing pump house for artesian well (~370 sq ft), existing farm stand and produce holding and distribution area: (~2200 sq ft); existing customer parking (~4775 sq ft) farm vehicle parking (1000 sq ft)</p> <p>Recreational/Educational programming: 0.5 acres for educational gardens This land is set aside specifically for community gardens used for education.</p> <p>Additional recreational areas: 0.25 – 0.5 acres (est) This land includes existing paths/trails and new paths running the perimeter of fields, along with picnic areas and sitting areas.</p> <p>Note: Historic preservation use does not require additional land; it is accomplished with the continuation of the agricultural use.</p>
4 Where are the points of public access? Where would public access be restricted?	The public would be able to access the land from multiple locations: via the parking lot/farm stand on Lowell Street and via walking trails from Lowell St and the Arlington Reservoir/ Munroe Brook area.
5 How many parking spaces would be needed?	Parking needs would be comparable to parking needs of current farm operation (approx. 15 spaces).
6 Will walls, fencing, or structures need to be built for your proposal? If so, please describe.	This proposal would require no additional walls or fencing than is currently on site.
7 What is your proposed use, including rehabilitation or removal, of the existing greenhouse buildings?	We propose to use and improve all existing structures on the property, including the permanent greenhouse and the seasonal greenhouse. The heated, permanent greenhouse would serve a combined use: for early seedling production

BLUPC Criteria	LexFarm Response
	and as a meeting place for educational programs in the off-season.
<p>8 What utility infrastructure is needed (sewer, water, gas, electric, communications, drainage, etc).</p>	<p>This use requires no additional utility infrastructure beyond the existing artesian well and electricity currently on site. A portable sanitary facility would be necessary for hosting programs for the public; in the longer term, we propose to improve the site with composting sanitary facilities.</p> <p>Existing electric service to the site and buildings is sufficient for use.</p>
<p>9 How would the land use vary by weekday or weekend, and during different seasons?</p>	<p>During spring, summer, and autumn months (March–October), the community farm would be used daily by the farmer and seasonal staff. Educational programs would likely run during the week, and some Saturdays during weekday and evening hours. Pick-ups of community supported agriculture farm produce shares would likely be scheduled to offer both convenience to some commuter shareholders (weekday evening), and also to those who prefer weekend pickup. Winter use (November–February) would include work and educational programs in the greenhouse. The public would have access to cross-country skiing on the site during winter months.</p>
<p>10 How does the land use respond to the abutter’s property lines, the Arlington reservoir and the environmentally sensitive areas that are currently known?</p>	<p>The community farm would maintain existing boundaries and seek to enhance the area with appropriate landscaping in consultation with abutters</p> <p>The Arlington Reservoir would continue to benefit from a farming use. According to a statement by Arlington Selectwoman Clarissa Rowe, over the last decade improved farming practices on the property have dramatically improved water quality in the Arlington Reservoir. One of the aims of this proposal is to continue such best practices and continue to research and implement improved farming methods for maintaining the Arlington Reservoir's quality.</p> <p>Lexington's <i>2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update</i> cited the Busa Farm as one of Lexington's few open meadows, which provides “habitat variety in Lexington and is particularly important for certain butterfly, bird, and small mammal species....” Continued farm use would maintain this valuable meadow habitat.</p>
<p>11 What are the impacts of your proposal relative to the neighborhood, noise, lighting, connectivity and sustainability, both during construction and for the</p>	<p>Lexington Community Farm would continue to enhance the neighborhood by providing access to walking trails around the farm to the Arlington reservoir, sitting and picnic areas, a garden with shade and seating, and attractive</p>

BLUPC Criteria	LexFarm Response
completed project?	open views of farm fields and sunsets from Lowell Street. There would be no new sources of noise and no outdoor lighting required. The farm paths would enhance connectivity to the Munroe Brook area which currently shows evidence of neglect. Farm stewards from the community would help to maintain the entire site, and work with Lexington's conservation stewards in the sensitive wetland areas.
12 What is the timeframe for the implementation of your proposal?	Lexington Community Farm is a continuation of the existing use. It can be established immediately upon the expiration of the current tenant's lease. It would be wonderful to have an established community farm for celebrations of Lexington's 300 th anniversary in 2013—a proud time for all in Lexington to reclaim the farming heritage of the former “Cambridge Farms.”
13 Approximately how much would your land use proposal cost to construct, and how is that cost allocated between public and private development dollars? What funding amount is expected from the Town? What would the source of private donations be?	Lexington Community Farm is a re-use of the existing farm; it does not require any additional development, apart from construction of a shade shelter, which would be funded via donations. No funding is expected from the Town. Funding for non-operating costs (startup, educational programming) would be raised from Lexington Community Farm Coalition members and grants and a small, low interest loan.
14 What annual maintenance would be required for your proposal, in terms of types of maintenance and preliminary projected costs? Who would maintain the site once your proposal is constructed?	The Lexington Community Farm Coalition would undertake all maintenance, including maintaining field fertility and necessary repairs to the greenhouses, well, and farm stand. In addition, LexFarm would manage a volunteer Farm Stewards program for the purposes of maintaining trails and open space.
15 What are the estimated annual financial benefits or costs to the Town?	The Lexington Community Farm Coalition would expect to have an agreement with the town to manage the property as a community farm on behalf of the town. All financial benefits and costs associated with managing the community farm would be included in the agreement.
16 How do the people of Lexington benefit from your proposal?	Lexington Community Farm would contribute to Lexington's long-term economic and environmental sustainability as a source of local food and a place where residents can utilize a unique resource for learning about food production as well how they can maintain their own landscapes with less water, fertilizer, and energy inputs. Lexington Community Farm would provide public access to a working farm, and all the benefits of gathering in

BLUPC Criteria	LexFarm Response
	community for recreation and volunteer work together.

Section 2. Plan for a Sustainable Working Farm

In addition to its community benefits, Lexington Community Farm would provide highly valued products, services, and opportunities that are not available from any other sources in Lexington.

Market Analysis

Lexington has two private, working farms and a public farmers market. While these outlets offer wonderful access to fresh produce in a retail setting, neither offers opportunities for regular public access and participation on a farm.

Today, Lexington residents leave town to participate in CSA programs, pick their own produce on working farms, and engage in the many enriching activities a farm supports. Many residents would appreciate not having to drive to other towns for access to agriculture- and nature-based camps, classes, activities, and festivals. At Lexington Community Farm, Lexington residents could be in the fields picking peas or forking carrots, tending seedlings in a greenhouse, or leading youth groups in community service, just to name a few examples.

Similarly, Lexington has first-rate educational organizations in town, yet none offers the unique benefits of hands-on, farm-based education. The Lexington Community Farm would be well positioned to collaborate with existing organizations to provide experiential learning: see Farm-based Community Education and Outreach (below) for details.

Business Case

There is extremely high demand for CSA shares in our area. Waltham Fields sells out its 300 shares a year in advance and has a waiting list. Smaller farms like Newton Community Farm typically sell out their CSA shares in a week. These sales are even more impressive given that consumers pay up to \$700 per share months before they receive any produce. With limited land available, these farms cannot keep up with demand.

In light of this highly competitive market, Lexington Community Farm's business plan does not require any additional financial support from the town. For details, see the Lexington Community Farm Business Plan Outline below.

Farming and Food Distribution

Lexington Community Farm would grow and distribute fresh produce through multiple channels, which could include CSA shares, a farm stand, school lunch programs, pick-your-own passes, and donations of fresh produce to low-income families and individuals.

CSA

The centerpiece of LCF would be 5 acres of farmland under cultivation and a permanent greenhouse which would support a community-supported agriculture (CSA) model of produce sales. Local consumers would buy a share of the farm's output in advance of the growing season for a fixed price and receive a weekly share of the harvest. In addition to providing full priced shares, LCF would offer 5% of its shares at a significant discount to low-income families. See the Lexington Community Farm Business Plan Outline below for more information about the Lexington Community Farm business model.

Farm Stand

The farm would allocate a percentage of its harvest to be sold at a public farm stand on the property during the growing season. The farm stand would also sell seedlings and plants, and produce purchased wholesale from other area farms to provide for more diverse offerings.

Food Donations

Coordinating with organizations such as the Lexington Interfaith Garden, The Food Project or Wholesome Wave, Lexington Community Farm would donate 10% of its produce to local food pantries or other outlets that provide produce for low-income households. These programs would help bring the nutritional benefits of fresh produce to a population whose needs are well documented and often acute.

Lexington Community Farm Business Plan Outline

The following bullet points summarize the business plan for the farm.

- **Financial** – Farm operations would generate enough revenue to cover all operating expenses, including supplies, equipment, salaries, and administrative costs. The budget has been reviewed by four professional farm managers who believe it is both viable and sustainable; see the Acknowledgements section.
- **Business Structure and Terms** – The Lexington Community Farm Coalition, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that would manage the Busa farmland in cooperation with the Town of Lexington to operate Lexington Community Farm.
- **Sources of Revenue**
 - CSA shares, which are pre-paid annually, farm stand sales, farmers market sales
 - Seedling and plant sales on site
 - Educational programming
 - “Friends of the Farm” membership fees and program fees
 - Grants and other fund-raising
 - Low interest startup loan
- **Farm Staffing and Labor**
 - A full-time, year-round professional farm manager
 - Seasonal staff and apprentices
 - Professional educator in Year 2
 - Field manager in Year 3
 - Volunteers
- **Acreage and Produce Yields**
 - 4 acres cultivated in Year 1 with a planned yield of \$22,000 of produce per acre
 - 5 acres under cultivation by Year 5 with a target of \$30,000 per acre
- **Equipment** – In its first year the farm would purchase or borrow primary and cultivating tractors, cultivation implements, disc harrow, tiller, transplanter, and compost spreader.

Sustainability

“Sustainable land management (SLM) is the foundation of sustainable agriculture... and practicing sustainable land management principles is one of the few options for land users to generate income without destroying the quality of the land as a basis of production,” according to a teaching module on sustainable land management provided by the Earth Institute of Columbia University. Lexington Community Farm would practice, demonstrate, and teach others about sustainable land management.

Lexington Community Farm's sustainable land management techniques would include organic soil amendments, composting, crop rotation, the use of physical barriers to defend against pests and weeds, and other best practices in farming and ecology. Carbon inputs and outputs will be carefully considered in farming decisions. Visitors will also learn about how the farm's sustainable practices can be applied in residential settings thus extending the farm's environmental benefits well beyond its acreage. The farm's holistic approach to sustainability will encompass care not just for the soil, but also for water and air. This approach will ensure healthy land, healthy food, and a healthy watershed area and wildlife corridor that supports a diversity of life.

Section 3. Plan for Farm-based Community Education and Outreach

Lexington Community Farm would provide educational programs for adults and children about farming, nutrition, environmental science, the history of farming and food in New England. The hands-on programs would provide practical skills for home gardening and opportunities to learn with neighbors and friends in a relaxed community setting.

In the words of Verena Wieloch, the pioneering farmer and educator at Gaining Ground in Concord, “Learning is not just in the classroom; learning is a whole-body experience. There are an immense number of lessons that come from working together on a farm.”

Lexington Community Farm would offer the farm as a resource for other organizations to be on-site and offer their own educational programs and curricula. We anticipate being able to partner with both public and private schools to identify ways that Lexington Community Farm can best serve various student populations. A number of programs for students at all levels could benefit from Lexington Community Farm. Minuteman Regional High School's agriculture, horticulture and food service programs are already well positioned to take advantage of the on-site opportunities; and Lexington K-12 science and social studies programs would find a rich educational resource in Lexington Community Farm.

Lexington Community Farm would have accessible raised garden beds in its educational community garden area to provide hands-on access for all ranges of physical ability. This would allow the farm to serve an even greater breadth of the population with its on-site programs. Educational programming would be funded through program fees and subsidies from farm produce sales.

Sample Educational Programming

The table below was constructed in consultation with teachers, curriculum developers, and staff at area community farms that have successful educational programs. It lists examples of the types of activities that would be offered for children, young adults, and adults, including seniors.

Age Group	Activity
Pre-school aged children	Weekly story time, crafts, and farm exploration time for preschoolers and their parents
School-aged children	School field trip programs such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Colonial and Native American Farming practices

Age Group	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil & Plants: Characteristics of a Living System • Close to the Ground: Eating for your Health • After-school Farmer's Helper program <p>Visits from Lexington's Kids Cooking Green and similar after-school programs centered around fresh, local food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home schooling groups, 4-H, scouts and other groups could investigate topics including agriculture, soil science, botany, business of local food systems, math in the greenhouse, farm/field/forest watershed studies, and insects.
Young adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community service opportunities • Internship opportunities to learn about farming and farm-based education • Ongoing research projects in the watershed system and water and soil quality • Engineering and design projects—irrigation, composting systems
Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible vegetable and flower gardening with adaptive tools and raised beds • Art and science of composting • Canning and pickling workshops • Edible weed study group • Herb and flower drying
Multi-generational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tending cutting garden (flowers) • Multi-generational community work days • Letter boxing and geo-caching self-guided activities • Raised beds and walking paths that make the farm accessible to all • Monthly farm e-news with calendar of events, recipes, programs, etc.

In addition to community outreach through educational programming, Lexington Community Farm would offer intergenerational events such as potlucks and farm tours to encourage all those interested to be actively involved in the life of the community farm. It is through the active engagement of those in the community that a community farm is successful.

Section 4. Plan for Accessible Community Space

The farm site is part of a greater ecosystem encompassing the Arlington Reservoir and the Munroe Brook and part of wildlife corridors that extend to Arlington's Great Meadows. The Menotomy Bird Club has recorded more than 190 species of birds visiting the Arlington Reservoir and Busa Farm, and the farm's open fields provide food for dozens of species of insect-eating birds such as the farm's barn swallows. With trails and accessible paths, the Lexington Community Farm would continue to provide birdwatchers and other nature enthusiasts a chance to encounter wildlife.

In addition to Farm programs, Lexington Community Farm would provide outdoor space for recreation and community events. Lexington Community Farm would be a public common - a community meeting place where people of all ages and abilities are invited to enjoy the landscape. Town celebrations such as those being planned for Lexington's 300th anniversary in 2013 – would have a special venue for gathering and celebrating our farming history.

More and more people are coming to understand the breadth of physical activity, recreational pleasure, and health benefits of working on a farm—or just being on a farm. Lexington Community Farm will become a favorite place to visit and spend time with people of all ages and backgrounds.

Lexington Community Farm would provide recreation for the wide community in many ways:

- Volunteer opportunities for farm work of all types
- Visits to the fields to pick vegetables and berries and to cut field-grown flowers and herbs.
- Access to trails and accessible paths for independent recreation, bird watching, and photography
- Cross-country skiing
- Connection to Arlington Reservoir's paths for walking or skiing
- Opportunities to enjoy the open air and watch farm activities while sitting in the shade
- Views of the farm and spectacular sunsets

The farm would welcome people who make a short detour off the bike path, arrive by van from the senior center, come by bus from school, or just happen upon it driving, biking, or walking by.

We expect that there would many opportunities for residents to participate in the life of the farm.

Sample Calendar of Volunteer Opportunities

This calendar presents a sampling of the opportunities for participation that the farm would offer to area citizens.

Groups	Activities	Months
Seniors, adults, teens, older youth	Seed plants in the greenhouse	January-September
Pre-school and school-aged children	Pick rocks out of the field	March
Teens and adults	Remove brush and debris from fields	April
Teens and adults	Stake tomatoes	May
Teens and adults	Mulch with straw	June
All ages	Harvest garlic	July
Older children through adults	Harvest onions	August
All ages	Harvest potatoes	September
Teens and adults	Plant greens in the greenhouse	October
All ages	Plant garlic	November
Teens and adults	Harvest kale	December

Section 5. A Current and Historical View of Local Agriculture

The time has come to bring farming back as an active component of community life. The benefits are compelling, and many growing national trends support establishing local farms.

Michael Pollan, a widely recognized expert on agricultural practice and policy, wrote in the *New York Times* (“Farmer in Chief,” October 9, 2008) “The American people are paying more attention to food today than they have in decades, worrying not only about its price but about its safety, its provenance and its healthfulness. There is a gathering sense among the public that the industrial-food system is broken. Markets for alternative kinds of food — organic, local, pasture-based, humane — are thriving as never before.”

Public enthusiasm for local food and sustainable agriculture can be measured in the rapid growth of CSAs (community-supported agriculture). Local Harvest.org, an information resource on the local food movement, reports that there are more than 2,500 CSA programs nationwide, with hundreds of new CSAs forming each year. In a feature story on CSAs, the *New York Times* wrote, “... more people [are] drawn to the taste and quality of local food, and they increasingly want to know where their food [is] coming from.” Echoing this sentiment, Time Magazine’s cover two years ago declared “Forget Organic. Eat Local.”

The success of community farms in towns around Lexington underscores this surge in enthusiasm for local food and personal connection to local farms. Waltham Fields sells out its CSA shares a year in advance and has a waiting list. Newton Community Farm also has a waiting list for its farm shares. Gaining Ground in Concord, a non-profit farm that donates 20,000 pounds of fresh produce annually to local food pantries, has more volunteer interest than it can manage. According to Verena Wieloch, farmer at Gaining Ground, “We are flooded with volunteers; we turn people away every day.”

As these varied examples attest, we are witnessing the confluence of many powerful and growing trends – the increasing value placed on local food; concern over food safety and food-borne illness; the desire to live sustainably; and the sense that as a society, we are becoming increasingly (and uncomfortably) disconnected from the land that supports us – and from one another.

Lexington's informed and involved citizens, agricultural heritage, and available farmland at the Busa site make our town ideally poised to take advantage of these trends and create a thriving local resource. Lexington Community Farm would not only further the town’s mission of increased sustainability at the local level; it would be a social, educational and recreational treasure. It is our gift to the future.

History of the Busa Farm in Lexington

The Busa land has been used for farming for almost 400 years. Edward Winship, one of the first European landholders in Lexington, was granted the farm site in 1648 by the Proprietors of Cambridge. His family continued farming there for nearly 250 years.

Farming was Lexington's main occupation during the Winship's era and it continued to dominate the town's economy through the 1920's. By 1876, Lexington was “a first-class agricultural town,” according to local historian Charles Hudson.

In the early 1700s, the expanding Winship clan sold part of their land to the Reed family for a dairy farm which operated through the mid-1940's; the Reeds' farm house, built in 1789, still stands at 72 Lowell Street. Lexington was the second-largest milk producer in the state in 1875, and in 1890 a local historian proclaimed milk production was the “most prominent industry in the town.”

When the town's economy started to diversify in the late 19th century, Lexington's farms were transformed from inherited family businesses to economic opportunities for a new wave of European immigrants. These immigrants included the Busa family.

Sometime after 1895, the Winships sold the land to the Shay family. The Shays rented the farm to Italian immigrants Anthony, Frank, Guy, and John Busa starting in 1916. The Busa brothers were successful enough to buy the farm in 1919. They purchased a 12-acre parcel including a barn, storage buildings, and a colonial-era farmhouse.

By the time the Busas bought their farm, Lexington had become a center for “truck farming,” supplying the expanding Boston wholesale produce markets. In the 1920's, Lexington was a leader in farm production in Middlesex County—and Middlesex County was ranked fifth in the United States for the market value of its produce.

The Busa families grew vegetables for the wholesale market at Faneuil Hall, including prize-winning “Boston celery” and tomatoes. As the Busa families grew, they divided the land into four parcels.

By the 1940's Lexington's farms began to decline. Many farmers had trouble finding labor during World War II. After the war, they faced competition from large-scale agribusiness and from produce shipped from warmer climates. In the 1950s the Busas started growing flowers in greenhouses and established a roadside farm stand to sell directly to consumers.

At the same time, post-war land values soared due to the expansion of the regional economy, the rise of “high-tech” employment in the Boston area, and the construction of Route 128. Many of the town's farm families sold their land for real estate development, and about 30% of the town's current housing stock was built in this decade. Still, the Busas persisted and kept their family farm.

In the late 20th century, the demand for local produce continued to shrink, and Faneuil Hall was transformed from a wholesale produce market into a shopping mall. The Busa family managed to hold on to almost eight acres of the family farm long enough to witness a reversal of this trend. In 2005, Dennis Busa began selling produce at the new Lexington Farmer's Market and also to offer community supported agriculture (CSA) shares, sharing his locally-grown food with a new generation of consumers.

The Busas sold their parcel of land to the town of Lexington in 2009.

Sources: www.busafarm.com, Ashley Busa, “The Busa Family: Four Generations in Lexington,” unpublished research paper; Investigating Lexington's History, 2003, Special Collections, Cary Memorial Library; Samuel Adams Drake, *History of Middlesex County, Volume 2*, (Boston: Estes & Lauriat, 1880); Alice Hinkle, “Harvesting Historical Farms,” *Lexington Minuteman*, 10/9/1980; Charles Hudson, *Abstract of the History of Lexington, Mass. from its First Settlement to the Centennial Anniversary of the Declaration of our National Independence*, (Boston: T.R. Marvin & Son, 1876); Duane Hamilton Hurd, *Middlesex County History*, (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis & Co., 1890); Richard Kollen, *Lexington: From Liberty's Birthplace to Progressive Suburb*, (Arcadia, 2004); Brooke Leister, “Tilling the Land,” *Lexington Minuteman*, 9/14/2006; Thomas Sileo, *Historical Guide to Open Space in Lexington*; “A Farmer's Market is coming to Lexington Center,” *Lexington Minuteman*, 4/28/05.

Appendix A: Lexington Community Farm Coalition, Inc.

The Lexington Community Farm Coalition, Inc. (LexFarm) is a registered nonprofit corporation in Massachusetts. We are dedicated to promoting farming, farm-based education, and sustainable land use in Lexington, Massachusetts.

The community is at the center of our work. We provide information and resources for individuals and organizations concerned about local food and sustainable agriculture in a suburban environment. We organize and offer public events and forums about farming in our town and the many benefits of local farms and farming. The Lexington Community Farm Coalition's Board of Directors currently includes community organizers, educators, writers, and financial and technical professionals focused on developing a proposal for a community farm in Lexington. Should the Town of Lexington accept this proposal, the board would expand to include representatives and professionals from the community in areas such as agriculture, conservation, recreation, and health and human services. The Lexington Community Farm Coalition's board would work to engage all interested residents and town government to develop the desired programming, determine the operational details, and hire the necessary staff to accomplish the goals for Lexington Community Farm.

Board of Directors

Janet Kern, President

Janet is a former software quality manager who is dedicated to helping teams of people make connections in communities. She was a market manager and website designer for the Lexington Farmers' Market from 2005 - 2009 and worked with LexMedia and Lexington Community Education to produce the "Lexington Localvore" program in 2010. She and her family live in the 1789 farmhouse of the former Reed Dairy Farm and host a CSA micro-farm for Rad Urban Farmers in their back yard. Janet also serves as a Lexington Town Meeting member from Precinct 1.

Jay Luker, Vice-President

Jay is an IT specialist for the Smithsonian Astrophysics Data System and a member of the Board of Directors of the [Waltham Fields Community Farm](#).

Derek Moody, Treasurer

Derek, a certified public accountant, is a finance and accounting manager. He moved with his family to Lexington in 2008. His family, including two pre-school girls, receives a CSA share from the Food Project in Lincoln and host a Rad Urban Farmers micro-farm in their back yard.

Margaret Heitz, Clerk

Margaret is a technical and business writer. Margaret moved to Lexington from Cambridge with her husband and two young daughters in 1993. She is a Precinct 4 Town Meeting member, cofounder in 2007 of One Lexington Dialogue, a player (retired) with Lexpressas women's soccer, a perpetual gardener-in-training, and an enthusiastic CSA shareholder with Waltham Fields Community Farm.

Ellen Frye

Ellen has been involved in environmental outreach since 1975, when she was Outreach Coordinator at the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. She is now a partner at Enosis—the Environmental Outreach Group in Lexington and a member of the Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition. She has lived in Lexington since 1984.

Meg Muckenhaupt

Meg is a professional writer and editor specializing in urban planning and open space. She writes the “Lexington Landscapes” column for the *Lexington Patch* and volunteers with the Harrington School Big Back Yard program and Green Team, the Lexington Interfaith Garden, and the Follen Church Society's Green Sanctuary. Her latest book, *Boston Gardens and Green Spaces*, was published in April, 2010 by Union Park Press.

Kristen Reed

Kristen is a Senior Research Associate at the Education Development Center, Inc (EDC). Her research focuses on the implementation of mathematics instructional materials and mathematics professional development for elementary and secondary teachers and administrators. Prior to working at EDC, Kristen taught elementary school in Boston. She grew up in Lexington and returned with her husband and two young children in 2007. Her family participates in a variety of CSA programs for produce, meat, and fish as well as hosting a Rad Urban Farmers micro-farm in their backyard..

Rosemarie Sansone

Rosemarie is a Lexington resident and '62 graduate of Lexington High School. She is President of the Downtown Crossing Partnership, a private nonprofit organization committed to the civic and economic vitality of Boston's vibrant, mixed-use downtown district. Her professional career spans over three decades in government, public affairs, and fundraising. Rosemarie has been a member of Waltham Fields Community Farm for seven years.

Appendix B: Summary of Farm Budget

FARMING		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Income	CSA Shares	81,284	92,368	115,461	115,461	138,553
	Donated Food Value	(10,884)	(12,368)	(15,461)	(15,461)	(18,553)
Expense	Direct Sales	31,600	41,636	51,045	53,045	63,455
	Payroll	58,400	59,400	74,200	76,800	78,200
	Produce Supplies	26,700	29,895	35,832	38,382	42,318
	Property Costs	18,184	23,778	19,000	19,000	19,000
	Admin	11,800	13,000	14,200	15,400	16,600
Yearly Farming Surplus (Loss)		(13,084)	(4,438)	7,814	3,464	27,336
EDUCATION						
Income		750	852	1,065	1,065	1,278
Expense		0	10,000	20,000	20,500	21,000
Yearly Education Surplus (Loss)		750	(9,148)	(18,935)	(19,435)	(19,722)
EVENTS & MEMBERSHIP						
Income		32,500	27,227	19,545	23,807	33,182
Expense		47,700	6,050	6,700	6,850	7,500
Yearly Events & Membership Surplus (Loss)		(15,200)	21,177	12,845	16,957	25,682
TOTAL						
Income		135,250	149,716	171,656	177,918	217,915
Expense		162,784	142,124	169,932	176,932	184,618
Yearly Total Surplus (Loss)		(27,534)	7,592	1,724	986	33,297
Cumulative Total Surplus		(27,534)	(19,942)	(18,218)	(17,232)	16,064

Appendix C: Soil Survey Summary

Busa Farm Soil Map

52 Lowell Rd.
Lexington, MA 02420
Approx. Acres: 11.1

Field Office: NRCS Westford Service Center
Agency: MA Assoc. of Conservation Districts
Assisted by: Elizabeth McGuire 10/14/2010





0 100 200 300 400 Feet

1 inch equals 167 feet

Legend

Busa Soils Map

-  253B Hinckley loamy sand, 3-8% slopes
-  36A Saco mucky silt loam, 0-2% slopes



Soils Inventory Report

Busa Farm

Map Unit Symbol	Acres	Percent
253B	11.1	100%
36A	0	0%
Total:	11.1	

HINCKLEY series consists of nearly level to very steep, deep (5+ ft.), excessively drained soils on glacial outwash plain, terraces, kames, and eskers. They formed in gravelly and cobbly coarse textured glacial outwash. Hinckley soils have friable or loose, gravelly and very gravelly sandy loam to loamy coarse sand surface soil and subsoil with rapid permeability, with loose stratified sands and gravels in the substratum at 12 to 30 inches which have very rapid permeability. Major limitations are related to slope and droughtiness.

Hinckley soils are of State and Local Importance as farmland. It fails to meet the requirements of prime farmland, but is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, or forage crops. This farmland can economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

Appendix D: Site Plan



Appendix E: Area Community Farms

Many ideas in this proposal originate with successful community farms in the towns surrounding Lexington. Below are overviews of a few of these farms. Each farm is unique, but they all share a story of successful, sustainable local agriculture, and have all earned tremendous popularity, respect, and influence within their communities.

Waltham Fields Community Farm

Waltham Fields Community Farm is a non-profit organization supporting farmland preservation, hunger relief, and education. WFCF cultivates a total of 11 acres in Waltham, most of which is leased from the UMass Extension school, and leases another three acres from the nearby Lyman Estate. The farm is run by a non-profit foundation which is governed by a Board of Directors.

Mission Statement: Waltham Fields Community Farm (WFCF) promotes local agriculture and food access for people in need through growing and educational programs that are socially, ecologically, and economically sustainable.

Features: CSA, educational programs, food donations, farmer training programs.

Additional Information: Waltham Fields was founded in 1996 by Arlington resident and long-time local farming advocate Oakes Plimpton.

Address: 240 Beaver Street, Waltham, MA

Website: <http://communityfarms.org/>

Newton Angino Community Farm

Newton Community Farm is an educational, not-for-profit farm dedicated to teaching and modeling sustainable, intensive farming. The farm is run by a non-profit organization which is overseen by the Newton Farm Commission.

Mission Statement: The mission of Newton Community Farm is to nurture a community that teaches and models sustainable agricultural and environmental practices on the historic Angino Farm.

Features: CSA, farmers' markets, on-site farm stand, food donations, educational programs.

Additional Information: Part of the Newton farm manager's compensation is the housing provided by the historic farmhouse on site.

Address: 303 Nahanton Street, Newton, MA

Website: <http://newtoncommunityfarm.org>

Codman Community Farm

Founded in 1973 by citizens interested in continuing Lincoln's farming tradition, CCF is a non-profit agricultural enterprise. The farm has 30 acres of farmland and tends another 130 acres of town-owned and private land. The Town of Lincoln owns the Codman Farm land and leases the land and buildings to the Farm at no cost. The Town also maintains all of the farm structures. Farm products and fundraisers pay the farm production and farm staff including three farmers, a farm director, and a part-time book-keeper.

Mission Statement: Codman Community Farms provides a living connection to our agricultural past. Our purpose is to teach and advance farming practices and to maintain rural beauty in Lincoln, MA.

Features: Farm store, heritage livestock breeding, community garden plots, educational programs.

Additional Information: Among the livestock denizens of the farm are a water buffalo named Herman and a donkey named Opal.

Address: 58 Codman Road, Lincoln, MA

Website: <http://www.codmanfarm.org>

Gaining Ground Community Farm

Gaining Ground raises organic vegetables and fruit with the help of hundreds of community volunteers and donates all produce grown on the farm to area meal programs and food pantries. Based in historic Concord, Massachusetts, Gaining Ground raises and distributes approximately 20,000 pounds of produce each growing season.

Mission Statement: Gaining Ground's mission is to grow and distribute fresh, organic produce to Boston-area meal programs, shelters, and food pantries with the help of community volunteers.

Features: Hunger relief, education and volunteer programs

Additional Information: Gaining Ground operates a one-half-acre kitchen garden at the Old Manse in Concord that is modeled on the vegetable garden planted by Henry David Thoreau as a wedding present for Nathaniel & Sophia Hawthorne in 1842.

Address: 315 Virginia Road, Concord, MA

Website: <http://www.gainingground.org>

Land's Sake Community Farm

A 501c3 nonprofit corporation, Land's Sake is a public farm that hosts educational programming for all ages, maintains the town forest for recreational and production uses, and cares for both public conservation and private land.

Mission Statement: Land's Sake combines ecologically-sound land management practices with hands-on environmental education to model how public open space can be used and enjoyed by the community.

Features: CSA, forestry programs, land management services, adult, family and youth workshops, innovative Rent-a-Chicken program, hunger relief donations, farm stand.

Additional Information: The Town of Weston pays school-aged children and young adults \$2.50 an hour to participate in work on the Farm.

Address: 90 Wellesley Street, Weston, MA

Website: <http://www.landssake.org>