

RFP For Agricultural Lease at the historic Phillip Walker House 432 Massasoit Ave., East Providence, RI 02914

RFP Announcement: May 4, 2020

Property Viewing: By Invitation Only

Proposals Due: June 15, 2020

Calling all Farmers!

Preserve Rhode Island (PRI) is seeking a farmer and resident for the land and historic house at 432 Massasoit Ave., East Providence, RI. Residential quarters are in the historic Phillip Walker House, which is situated on a roughly 1+ acre parcel. PRI, a statewide advocate for historic preservation, owns the land and house and is requesting proposals from farmers in order to find a sustainable new use for the property. Currently the lot is mowed as a lawn, and PRI would like to find a tenant who can make more productive use of the land, while also appreciating and taking good care of the historic house.

About the Property

The Phillip Walker House is an early 18th century building situated on a large lot of roughly one and a half acres in an otherwise heavily built up neighborhood of both residential and commercial buildings at the corner of Massasoit Avenue and North Broadway. The house is the oldest surviving in East Providence and a familiar local icon. Occupying one of the few remaining large green spaces in the area, Walker House is a tangible reminder of the historic rural character of this now urban setting. The house in its current state exhibits a blend of modern updates and original architectural details, including many significant examples of 18th century construction techniques and design features.

This property is about 10 minutes from downtown Providence by car, and is accessible by public transportation. A map of the parcel with approximate boundaries of the land available for farming is included with this memo. The entire parcel is about 1.2 acres in size, divided into two separate lots, with a 1950s garage/shop outbuilding also on site. Based on the orientation of the house and garage and surrounding mature trees, approximately .57 acres are available for gardens and buffer strips. There is a dug well on the property that may be accessible for irrigation, although the well has not been used for water for decades. Municipal water service is available. Soil testing has not yet been conducted.

Rent for the house and land is \$1,700/month + all utilities (including water) in a 'as-is' condition. If the tenant requires changes to the land, house or garage, rent will need to be adjusted to pay for capital improvements (see "Existing Conditions Assessment" section below). The house is unfurnished and has up to 4 bedrooms, a living room, dining room, modern kitchen and 1 full bathroom with laundry appliances. A modern HVAC system with gas heat and

air conditioning was installed approximately 10 years ago. The garage has room for two small cars or farming equipment and the driveway has room for two vehicles. There is an attached shop space that currently has neither operational heat or water service.

Land Use

PRI has had initial conversations with the East Providence Planning Department and they have expressed support for the proposed farming model for the land. Before any lease is signed, Preserve Rhode Island and the prospective tenant must present and review plans for use of the property, including on-site sales, with the Planning Department to ensure that they meet zoning requirements.

Property Viewing

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, PRI is not planning an Open House for farmers. Farmers who are interested in viewing the property and land before submitting a proposal should contact Grace Gielink at PRI via e-mail at ggielink@preserveri.org. Individual appointments will be made by invitation only in May 2020.

Please include the following items in your proposal:

1. A map detailing the section of the property you wish to farm (see attached aerial photo of primary farming area). This can include a portion of the yard, or the whole yard. A plot plan that includes enough information to determine what the mature operation would look like from the street and surrounding properties would be ideal.
2. A description of the crops you wish to grow, and the farming methods you plan to utilize. Please be as detailed as possible. Include specific amendments like types of fertilizers, composts, etc., as well as how you intend to deal with soil health and conservation.
3. A description of the facilities you wish to construct including sheds, farm stands, utility distribution including irrigation, and any greenhouses, or other growing structures planned for the project.
4. Proposed terms of leasing. The time frame, financial terms, plans for liability insurance, and any specific requirements should be spelled out here. For example, do you want a 1-year term, or a 5-year term?
5. Please also include information on the agricultural and business experience of the principal applicant(s) and a brief description of business plans for the operation. Do you plan to have on-site sales, and what might that look like?
6. Experience and/or interest living in an historic house, including any DIY/trade skills.

Existing Conditions Assessment

Preserve RI will consider making certain capital investments required for successful farm operations and living conditions in the house; however, repaying the costs of such investments will likely mean an upwards adjustment of rent. In advance of a private showing, please keep

the following items in mind as you frame your proposal. These items can be discussed and/or negotiated with PRI as needed on an individual basis.

1. Need for well water
2. Need for more than one bathroom in the house
3. Heat in garage shop area – current furnace is inoperable
4. Water service in garage – currently not available
5. Tree removal
6. Additional on-site parking

Tenant Responsibilities

Tenants will be responsible for:

1. Snow removal (PRI will provide snow blowers and de-icer)
2. All other landscape maintenance as needed, including pruning, mowing and leaf raking
3. All house/garage utilities

Please include e-mail, phone and mail contact information for the applicant. **Entire proposals should not exceed 5 pages.** PDF format for the application is preferred, but an MSWord file is acceptable. Proposals should be emailed to ggielink@perserveri.org.

ATTACHMENT III: EXTERIOR/INTERIOR PHOTOS

Front yard looking west



Front yard looking south



Front yard looking north



Garage/Shop



Kitchen



Bathroom/Laundry



Dining Room



Living Room



Bedroom Example I



Bedroom Example II

