



## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: Land and Facility Development Committee

FROM: General Manager

DATE: February 3, 2016

RE: February 9, 2016 Land and Facility Development Committee Meeting

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### **Presentation on Morning Harvest Farm**

This is an opportunity to meet Jack Cortis, who is currently the President of the Master Gardeners of Contra Costa County. He has an interesting proposal regarding the Morning Harvest Farm. There is information attached I have included for your review. It is a draft, he indicated that he still has to finish it. What Jack is requesting is one acre somewhere on District property that could be utilized for a farm working together with the foster youth Program to produce vegetables and fruit on the property to sell. As it indicates, the primary purpose of Morning Harvest Farm is to give jobs to foster youth. As Jack indicates, it will function as a community garden where youth will work to support the farms, revenue goals and the sale of produce. It sounds like a very interesting proposal and program and I wanted the Land and Facility Development Committee to review his proposal.

I do not have a recommendation at this time as I would like to study the proposal and review areas within the District that could be utilized for a program like this. This agenda item is for discussion purposes today and to see if we should continue further discussion with Jack Cortis and consider this program.

**DRAFT**

## MORNING HARVEST FARM (DRAFT)

### BUSINESS PLAN

December, 2015

#### Mission Statement

To employ traumatized, aging out foster youth and give them a place to heal as they transition into independence and adulthood.

#### Executive Summary

Morning Harvest Farm (“Morning Harvest”) will be a non-profit urban farm and culinary garden in Contra Costa County, California operating for the benefit of traumatized transition age (18 – 22) foster youth. Youth transitioning out of foster care are some of the most at-risk youth in California and the United States. When leaving the foster care system, these youth are often left without family, adequate housing, income, and other support systems. Statistics for these youth demonstrate an unfortunate reality in our society. Four years after aging out of the foster care system:

- 25% have been homeless
- 42% have become parents themselves
- Less than half have graduated from high school
- More than 80% are unable to support themselves<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, foster youth with histories of physical and sexual abuse, substance dependency, and other psychological issues are especially vulnerable. Morning Harvest will employ these more traumatized youth, in collaboration with Youth Homes, Pleasant Hill, California <http://youthhomes.org> Youth Homes has been in operation for over 50 years and works with severely traumatized foster youth, providing counseling, housing, and support to these youth while in the foster care system. As these

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youth transition out of foster care, they need continuing support, especially jobs, so they can continue in school or begin work in a chosen field. Youth Homes will provide transitioning youth employees to Morning Harvest while also continuing to provide them with counseling, housing assistance and other supporting services.

Many studies have shown the value of gardening and horticultural work for people dealing with trauma, substance abuse issues, and other psychological and emotional disorders. Gardening and horticultural work have shown benefits such as:

- Increasing self-esteem
- Improving sense of well-being and personal worth
- Improving sense of control
- Decreasing anxiety
- Improving social integration and patterns of social functioning<sup>2</sup>

All of these life-supporting values and more will be derived from the trainees' work at the farm. Additionally, the farm will prepare these youth for adulthood and functioning members of society, either by continuing their education or finding permanent employment.

The farm will encourage volunteer community involvement in the work at the farm and interaction with the youth. It will function as a community garden in addition to a place where youth will work to support the farm's revenue goals from the sale of produce. The organizer's experience as a Master Gardener in Contra Costa, and as that organization's current President, knows from experience that a good number of the public will want to interact with other volunteers and work at the farm to receive horticultural training and to work in a community development activity that benefits the youth employed there. It is expected that volunteers will eventually number between 25 - 50 people, working in various capacities including manual farm work, seed propagation, beekeeping, produce delivery, food preparation and event planning.

Morning Harvest will hire youth from Youth Homes as trainees. Each youth will work at the farm for 12 - 18 months. This will give the trainees enough

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time to “get their feet on the ground” after what for many have been years shuffling from foster home to foster home or group homes, without the normal anchors of family and extended family to guide them through adolescence. Morning Harvest will train them in sustainable horticultural practices, and they will work in plant propagation, plant maintenance, harvesting and other related activities. Trainees also will receive nutritional and other culinary training to broaden their skill set to open up other career opportunities. Trainees will learn to work with the public who tour the farm, and volunteers, with whom they will work side-by-side. They of course will experience the discipline needed in holding a job and meeting employer expectations.

### **Organization Description**

The farm will be approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 1 acre, preferably in a visible location, and close to public transportation. The preferred site (not yet located) will be in Contra Costa County, where a favorable lease is given by a city or other public entity to support this community development activity.

Visibility and public access are important, as the trainees will benefit from open and on-going interaction with the public. From experience gained by the organizer, the general public is curious and interested in seeing a small farm in an urban or sub-urban location. In addition to the public’s visits to the farm where the trainees can conduct informal tours and educate the public on the farm’s mission, the visibility also will help add volunteers or “Friends of Morning Harvest Farm” who want to assist in the operations of the farm and help the trainees.

There also will be educational opportunities, both in a classroom setting and in the actual farm, to those members of the public wanting to learn sustainable horticultural practices. In return for this education, volunteers will agree to work a certain number of hours as “compensation” for the education.

Trainee interaction with the public is a key component of the operations of the farm. Volunteers will supplement the work of the trainees, operate ancillary businesses there to help generate more farm revenue and, most importantly, provide the trainees with important experiences working in a model community enterprise where they are a key contributing component.

Lunches prepared from food grown at the farm will be served daily to trainees, volunteers, interns and other special guests at the farm. The communal aspects of harvesting, preparing, and eating as a group will be part of the healing process for the trainees and others.

The farm will sell the produce grown to institutional buyers. These include restaurants, schools, and other organizations where quality produce is valued. The farm will specialize in growing hard-to-buy greens and other vegetables where the highest quality and unique character are valued.

Other revenue generating activities will be considered, including cut and dried flowers, fresh eggs, raw honey, and other goods that the farm and its volunteer network can support.

The farm will use organic techniques and possibly seek organic certification.

### **Market Analysis**

The market for high quality, locally grown greens and vegetables in the San Francisco Bay Area is very strong. The market is expected to grow substantially as public awareness of healthy nutrition and the need for high quality greens continues to grow. The market of institutional buyers is also expected to grow as more consumers seek healthy, safe, and higher nutritional qualities in their food. The farm's mission also is expected to help with sales, as the purpose of the farm resonates strongly with a large percentage of people and prospective produce buyers.

### **Organization and Management**

The organizer, Jack Cortis, is a certified Master Gardener in Contra Costa County. Currently, he is President of the organization. In addition, he has a long career in successful management in both profit and non-profit organizations. Please see his resume as Exhibit A. His experience as an organizer, manager, fund-raiser, and gardener is significant in this undertaking, as his experience covers nearly every facet of the organization's needs. In this capacity, he is a volunteer receiving no compensation.

The farm will hire a full-time farm manager to supervise the trainees, volunteers and interns. The trainees will work 20 hours per week. This

allows them time to go to school, which will be encouraged. Traumatized youth in transition also cannot be expected to work full time until they become more adjusted to the work environment and as they overcome other personal hurdles.

Volunteers will supplement the work of the trainees. A permanent base of volunteers will be recruited from the Contra Costa community, and other strategic volunteer relationships will be cultivated. Volunteers will be motivated by the social mission of the farm, the opportunities to learn how to farm and grow healthy vegetables, and the collegial atmosphere that will be present at the farm. These include the Master Gardeners of Contra Costa, whose assistance will be sought in educating the trainees and other volunteers in sustainable horticultural practices. Interns from local schools, AmeriCorps, and other groups will also be available and encouraged to work on the farm, including special projects.

Youth Homes, an incorporated 501(c)(3), will act as fiscal sponsor for Morning Harvest, providing payroll processing, tax work and other administrative assistance.

### **Marketing and Sales**

The farm will sell high quality, organic produce to institutional buyers. These include restaurants, school and hospital cafeterias, and other institutions, such as retirement community cafeterias, and corporate cafeterias. Other revenue sources will be developed, depending on the farm's location. These could include an on-site farm stand, farmers markets, and CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) boxes.

The market is competitive. Morning Harvest will distinguish itself by the quality and freshness of its food and packaging, and its uniqueness. Diverse and difficult to acquire mixed greens will be a staple.

Mixed greens include lettuces, kale, chard, mustards, chicories and other greens. During the prime summer months, produce such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, etc. will be grown and sold based on market needs and trends. Relationships with these institutions will be driven by regular dialogue regarding what buyers want vs. what is generally available.

Morning Harvest will adjust to market demand quickly because of its local presence and ongoing communications.

Other possible products will be fresh eggs, local honey, cut and dried flowers and herbs.

### **Purpose and Goals**

As described above, the primary purpose of Morning Farms is to give jobs to traumatized foster youth. These jobs, and almost more importantly, a safe place, will provide them with an environment where they can begin to earn a living and develop the life skills that will assist them as they transition into society. Morning Farms also will function as a community garden, where the public can learn sustainable horticultural practices, while helping aging out foster youth. If we are able to successfully help even one youth transition into healthy adulthood, we will be successful. Obviously, we want more than this, but the stakes are high for each youth.

The number of youth to benefit from the farm will be the initial group of four, who will work for 12 – 18 months. It is expected that some of the employed youth may find other employment or decide to devote more time to school or other endeavors. These will then be replaced by other youth from Youth Homes. The farm in the future may employ more than four youth at one time, based on the success of obtaining sources of contributed and earned income. We forecast that over a three-year period, we will have employed at least sixteen youth at the farm. We also expect at least fifty members of the public to receive sustainable horticultural training in the first two years.

### **Time Plan**

Groundbreaking is planned for September, 2016. A site still needs to be located. Sites are being researched in areas where infrastructure is already in place. The site should have ready access to water and electrical power.

## **Financial Projections**

The Year 1 financial projection is below. (Still in development and dependent on exact site)

### **Capital Budget – Year 1**

Fencing	20,000
Irrigation equipment	6,000
Tools	6,000
Greenhouses (2)	15,000
Hoop Houses (3)	8,000
Canopies (4)	1,000
Tables and Chairs	3,000
Training and audio equipment	2,000
Propagation equipment and materials	3,000
Bed covers and netting	2,000
Signage	1,000
Vegetable cleaning and prep area	2,000
Refrigeration for harvested vegetables	1,000
Kitchen equipment	2,000
Sheds (4)	<u>3,000</u>
Total	75,000

### **Working Capital/Expenses – Year 1**

Salaries/Wages	- Farm Manager	50,000
	- Trainees (4)	59,040 <sup>3</sup>
Employee Benefits @25%		27,000
Utilities (water and electrical)		10,000
Soil amendments/compost		7,000
Packaging and supplies		2,000
Marketing Expenses		5,000
Produce Delivery		5,000
Food Safety Cert. (GAP)		3,000
Fundraising		5,000
Volunteer Development/Support		3,000
Miscellaneous Reserve		<u>25,000</u>

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<sup>3</sup> 4 Trainees each 20 hrs. per week @ \$15 per hr.

Total Expenses – Year One 202,040

Total Capital Budget & Expenses Year One \$277,040

Exhibit A

**JACK CORTIS – EXPERIENCE SUMMARY**

Present: President, Master Gardeners of Contra Costa County

Consultant (pro bono), Pacific Community Ventures, (small business and non-profit financial and organizational consultant firm), San Francisco

Prior: Regional President, BNY Mellon Private Wealth Management, San Francisco and Seattle (1994 – 2010)

- Responsible for all aspects of this national financial services firm's operations in San Francisco and Seattle. This included marketing and sales, organizational management, budgeting, personnel management, new initiatives, and overall leadership of both regions.

Board Chair, American Conservatory Theater (ACT), San Francisco (2007 - 2010)

- During three-year tenure led all Board activities for this nationally recognized regional theater. Oversaw budget of over \$20 million; assisted in endowment campaign that raised over \$20 million. Led the 40 plus member Board and Executive Committee during the recession of 2007 – 2009.

Board of Governors, Commonwealth Club of California, San Francisco (2007 – 2010)

Trustee, Seattle Repertory Theater, Seattle (2001- 2006)

Board of Governors, United Way of King County, Seattle (2003 – 2005)

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- 25% have been homeless
- 42% have become parents themselves
- Less than half have graduated from high school
- More than 80% are unable to support themselves<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, foster youth with histories of physical and sexual abuse, substance dependency, and other psychological issues are especially vulnerable. Morning Harvest will employ these more traumatized youth, in collaboration with Youth Homes (YH), Pleasant Hill, California. Youth Homes has been in operation for over 50 years and works with severely traumatized foster youth, providing counseling, housing, and support to these youth while in the foster care system. As these youth transition out of foster care, they need continuing support, especially jobs, so they can continue in school or begin work in a chosen field. Youth Homes will provide transitioning youth employees to Morning Harvest while also continuing to provide them with counseling, housing assistance and other supporting services.

Many studies have shown the value of gardening and horticultural work for people dealing with trauma, substance abuse issues, and other psychological and emotional disorders. Gardening and horticultural work have shown benefits such as:

- Increasing self-esteem
- Improving sense of well-being and personal worth
- Improving sense of control

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- Improving social integration and patterns of social functioning<sup>2</sup>

All of these life-supporting values and more will be derived from the trainees' work at the farm. Additionally, the farm will prepare these youth for adulthood and functioning as a member of society, either for continuing their education or finding permanent employment

The farm will encourage volunteer community involvement in the work at the farm and interaction with the youth. It will function as a community garden in addition to a place where youth will work to support the garden's revenue goals from the sale of produce. It is expected that volunteers will eventually number between 50 - 75 people, working in various capacities including manual farm work, seed propagation, beekeeping, produce delivery, food preparation and event planning.

Morning Harvest will hire youth from Youth Homes as trainees. Each youth will work at the farm for a maximum of 18 months. This will give the trainees enough time to "get their feet on the ground" after what for many have been years shuffling from foster home to foster home or group homes, without the normal anchors of family and extended family to guide them through adolescence. Morning Harvest will train them in sustainable horticultural practices, and they will work in plant propagation, plant maintenance, harvesting and other related activities. Trainees also will receive nutritional and other culinary training to broaden their skill set to open up other career opportunities. Trainees will learn to work with the public who tour the farm and volunteers, with whom they will work side-by-side. They of course will experience the discipline needed in holding a job and meeting employer expectations.

The organizer, Jack Cortis, has extensive related background in non-profit management, fund-raising, and organizational development and management. His experience includes board positions at United Way of King County (Seattle), Commonwealth Club of California, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and American Conservatory Theatre, where he was Board Chair from 2007 - 2010. He currently is President of Master Gardeners of Contra Costa County. He has a 40+ year business career, including Regional

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## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: Land and Facility Development Committee

FROM: General Manager

DATE: February 3, 2016

RE: February 9, 2016 Land and Facility Development Committee Meeting

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### **To Discuss Status of the School House, Chilpancingo Park, and the Winslow Center**

The General Manager will give an update on the appraisal of the School House and plans for Chilpancingo Park. Carrie Miller will be on hand to give an update on the Winslow Center.



## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: Land and Facility Development Committee

FROM: General Manager

DATE: February 3, 2016

RE: February 9, 2016 Land and Facility Development Committee Meeting

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### **Update on Gate at Dinosaur Hill Park**

Park Superintendent Tom Bradley will give the Land and Facility Development Committee an update on the costs involved with securing a gate at Dinosaur Hill Park.

## MEMO

February 4, 2016

To: Bob Berggren, General Manager

From: Tom Bradley, Park Superintendent

Re: Cost of Gate and Locking Service at Dinosaur Hill Park

The cost for a gate to lock the parking area at Dinosaur Hill Park is \$3,504.97. This would be installed by Park Maintenance Staff.

To lock the gate on a nightly basis would be \$22.50 per night. This is a quote from CALWEST PRIVATE SECURITY INC. If they lock the gate every night of the year it would cost \$8,212.50. Park Maintenance Staff would be responsible for unlocking the gate in the mornings.

Martrano Enterprises LLC

P.O. Box 116

Boyes Hot Springs, CA 95416

# Estimate

Date	Estimate #
4/14/2015	4846

Name / Address
Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District Tim Bradley 233 Gregory Lane Pleasant Hill, CA 94523 925-671-4649

Project

Description	Qty	Rate	Total
SPECIAL ORDER BARRIER GATES			0.00
!!! Guardian Traffic Systems 14020.230 SENTINEL 45' Manual Double Leaf Swing Barrier Gate Arm SPECIAL ORDER!!		2,645.00	2,645.00T
SHIPPING-UPS Requires Signature when value 200.00 or more		641.76	641.76

This Estimate is good for 30 Days.

<b>Subtotal</b>	\$3,286.76
<b>Sales Tax (8.25%)</b>	\$218.21
<b>Total</b>	\$3,504.97