

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING: JANUARY 9, 2024**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**First Name Last Name      Street Address      Comments: Per Council rules and procedures, please limit comments to what can reasonably be read to the meeting record in three (3) minutes or less. Please be mindful that this form is for public comment only. Please direct questions/general inquiries to Council members directly.**

Sandy      Gondek      87 Ferry Lane, South Glastonbury, CT 06073

I am an owner and farmer of Rose’s Berry Farm, 280 & 300 Matson Hill Rd. I am asking for consideration of our farm in the lease of 297 Matson Hill Rd. Much of the town land at 297 Matson Hill Rd consists of farm support buildings, residential rental buildings, parking lots, steep grades along with minimal acreage of farmland. This parcel housed the infrastructure for Rose’s Berry Farm, providing utilities such as electricity and running water for Rose’s, structures used for fruit sorting, refrigeration and freezers along with farm equipment storage, maintenance and repair, an irrigation system with lines running from the pond, and gravel parking lots, and structures for “Breakfast with a View.” Last summer we farmed 21 acres across the street along with a few acres of fruit that we own abutting the town piece. Farming without inclusion in the Town Council’s decision to lease 297 parcel, a hardship was created. We were cut off from the irrigation system running to our crops. We were denied any use of the multiple farm structures on the property. We had no utilities. The last minute denial of our farm to use any of the infrastructure supporting the farm for decades was shocking. Why was Rose’s Beery Farm denied any share of the lease? We applied for a share of the lease as did two other farms. We expressed our need to you and the Town Manager. Why is the Town Council drafting leases with two farms that applied and leaving our farm out, again? Many council members publicly boast about supporting farmers yet privately make deals for personal reasons. Publicly in The Glastonbury Citizen Tom Gullotta wrote that he is trying to keep land from developers, but directly made a decision that is causing our farm hardship. Please question his and other colleagues reasoning for excluding our farm. I am requesting the Glastonbury Town Council reconsider and allow a share of the lease to include Rose’s Berry Farm for some of 297 Matson Hill Rd.

Paul      Gondek      87 Ferry Lane

1/9/24 meeting My family and I contracted to purchased 5 of the 6 parcels of Rose’s Berry Farm. Belltown Orchards purchased 1 of the 6 in 2018 and sold development rights to the Town of Glastonbury. Shortly after going into contract with Sandi Rose, former Town Manager Richard Johnson called us to negotiate giving up development rights to have a deal similar to Belltown’s. During negotiations Mr. Johnson told us the council was going in a different direction. Eventually the town purchased 1 of the 6 parcels, leaving us with 4 of the 6 parcels. We invested a great deal of money to continue the legacy of Rose’s Berry Farm, with no intention of developing. The parcel that the town purchased was the parcel with the infrastructure to run the farm. Without the infrastructure chances are the farm will fail. In the case of the farm failing, we would be forced to sell the 21 acres of farmland. The 21 acres abuts the property that the Draghi farm sold to developers. That land now has many houses on Foote Rd and Chamberlain Rd was created on the former farm. I am asking the Town Council to work with us to save Rose’s Berry Farm. If we could lease some of the infrastructure at 297 Matson Hill Rd. parcel, Rose’s Berry Farm could survive.

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Brittney Gondek 35 Dickinson rd

My family has been trying to make a deal with the town since Richard Johnson reached out to us with an offer for the development rights. We were under contract with Sandi Rose for all remaining parcels of Roses Berry Farm. We not only want to preserve this land but to keep the farm running as we did this past year. The town has refused to help us in our many attempts. The farms utilities, irrigation, and infrastructure have been kept from us creating a hardship. We again ask to be considered to use some of the resources needed to run Roses. In running for the election I heard many town council members boast about "saving Roses" yet here we are again telling you about our hardship with no response. Yes some land will be preserved but a working farm known as Roses Berry Farm is being mistreated and kept from their resources. Personally the treatment from some of the council members has been extremely eye opening, with nothing but respect given in return even after the 11/22/22 meeting. We ask for some consideration to keep a farm running as members of this council have told this town they would do. Why is the town setting this precedence of not supporting families that are willing to take on and keep farms running? Don't we want to promote this for the future? We have many farming families that do not have future generations available to run their farms. We need to promote running farms not just open space. How many other farms have offered the town the development rights? Most farms want to keep their options open for the best interest of their families. Why isn't Roses being considered to lease some of the farm that holds all the infrastructure and water they need to successfully run their farm? Why isn't a deal for all three farmers who are willing to take care of this parcel for this town being considered? Why did the town turn down the chance to preserve all of Roses Berry Farm? Let's promote running farms, sustainability and inclusion.

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Jake Scoville 35 Dickinson rd

As a citizen of this town I have questions about the towns recent acquisition of 297 Matson Hill. Why were yards & yards of fertile blueberry bushes ripped out of the ground on the towns land? The before & after photos are devastating. Where can citizens obtain the study the town did to get approvals to put a curb cut on Matson hill rd? As well as proper drainage for this new asphalt driveway? Matson hill has been covered in ice and water since this was put in. Why wouldn't you use the driveway Roses Berry Farm has been letting you use? When will the town spending the tax dollars stop? The land with buildings was purchased with approx 3 acres of farmland on the 17 AC piece? The town funded an asphalt driveway? Now the town will have to add drainage? Then the town will fund all building maintenance? The current proposed lease is vague, what repairs are the tax payers going to be responsible for? Would the purchase of the development rights save the town people a lot of tax dollars over time? Where is the rent money going to from the income producing houses on the towns parcel? The trailer with landscape employees, with 8 tenants paying \$250 a month (\$2,000) which is \$24,000 per year and the 2 bedroom ranch house conservatively could bring in \$2,500 monthly, \$30,000 per year. With no property taxes being collected or mortgage bring paid. A \$1.00 per year investment. There would be opportunity to lease out several other buildings for profit to the lessor with the towns approval. Will the tenants need to be farmers or could it be anyone? If the lessor choses to move into the house, would they pay rent to the town at the market rate or would they be allowed to live there for free? Shouldn't any town resident be able to bid on this being that it is an income producing property and/or other farming families in town once they know the details?

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