

Date: 8/24/20

To: Files

From: Sharon Ware, Deputy RM

Subject: FY20 Pink House Sequence of Events up to July 2020

- **September 18, 2019** – Congressman Moulton sends letter to USFWS Regional Director Weber requesting that USFWS continue to work with partners to preserve the 'Pink House'. Letter detailed 4 alternatives to consider.
- **September 20, 2019** - Meeting at Greenbelt HQ with State Senator Tarr, Micheal Dougherty (Tarr office), Kelly Bovio (Congressman Moulton office), Support the Pink House (Rochelle Joseph and several supporting members), Refuge Supervisor Taylor, Acting Refuge Mgr Parisi, Deputy RM Ware.
 - a) Group discussion about elements of Moulton letter, limits of equalization payment, STPH fundraising efforts, status of Agreement to Initiate Exchange (unsigned by Greenbelt), pending NAWCA conservation restrictions.
- **November 13** - USFWS response to Congressman Moulton with history of Pink House efforts to date. November 1, 2020 deadline set to assess progress on land exchange process.
- **December 14, 2019** – Follow up phone conversation between Kate Bowditch and S.Ware regarding the status of AIE. Kate stated Greenbelt would not be signing the document due to a loss of confidence in the STPH group. Kate also mentioned that she really appreciated Graham's summary at the September meeting of the key issue regarding the gap in appraisal values. She said they only have about 150 - 200 acres of saltmarsh with clear title to swap - so the option for a larger equalization payment was great to hear. She also informed me that the CR for the NAWCA grant on the primary Greenbelt saltmarsh parcel happened in November 2019.
- **January 31, 2020** – Refuge receives inquiry from Joan Clemens, former STPH member who is forming group to support demolition of the Pink House. Refuge responded to Clemens in 3/5/20 letter.

- **February 14, 2020** – Open House for potential Future Stewards of Pink House to tour the interior and grounds. Kelly Bovio, Michael Dougherty, and STPH supporting members.
- **April 9, 2020** – Conference call with Kelly Bovio, G.Taylor, and S.Ware to discuss minimum acreage acceptable for Pink House parcel (1 acre upland). Discussion focused on the minimum number of acres that USFWS would need to be offered in order for land exchange to move process forward. Taylor explained importance of avoiding 'perception of selling land' if actual land exchange and conservation benefit of exchange is small compared to equalization payment. Assuming saltmarsh habitat, reasonable minimum exchange acreage would be approximately 100 acres (or, in other words, 25% of value of Pink House parcel).

Partner developments of note:

- a) STPH has incorporated at the state level and applied for 501©3 status at the federal level
 - b) STPH has secured \$50k in fundraising pledges and a willing 'Future Steward' who is willing to pay \$400k for the Pink House
 - c) Greenbelt plans to submit the AIE for Board approval on 4/21 mtg.
 - d) What is the minimum number of acres that would need to be offered to USFWS in order to initiate the exchange?
- **May 12, 2020** – Phone conversation with Bowditch (Greenbelt) and Ware (USFWS) as follow-up to earlier call that Kelly Bovio/Michael Dougherty had with Greenbelt
 - a) Discussed possibility that May 2019 AIE could be revised and made more generic similar to earlier version dated 2/11/2019.
 - b) Greenbelt Board is OK with AIE with understanding that it is not a binding document and that this agreement aligns with their conservation mission. Board is especially concerned with public perception should the document be shared with the public and then the project falls through for some reason.
 - c) Informed Kate of selection of new Refuge Manager Matt Hillman
 - d) Kate pointed out that STPH did not pay for the informal appraisal that was done on Pink House in June 2019 as promised.

- **May 15, 2020** – Conference call with Kelly Bovio (Moulton office), Micheal Dougherty (Tarr office) Greenbelt (Kate Bowditch, Chris Lapointe), and USFWS (G.Taylor, S.Ware).
 - a) Problematic NAWCA conservation restriction easements on Greenbelt's 'Graf Reservation' parcels were discussed while Kate and Chris were on the line. Bottomline, CR is too burdensome and would not be approved by USFWS Solicitor. Taylor pointed out that while MA Wildlife and USFWS have similar missions, our agencies have different approach to land mgt. Lapointe asked if problem was with the terms or the scale; Taylor responded that both were an issue. Ware relayed the back history of former RM Peterson's research on CR impacts for this potential land exchange -

Peterson recognized early on (2017) that CR on Greenbelt lands identified for exchange would be problem for USFWS. In April 2019, NAWCA Coordinator Mitch Hartley stated in email that CR was unnecessary if lands went to USFWS. He also confirmed that an exemption could be provided for this NAWCA grant requirement.

Moving forward, Greenbelt preferred to look for other parcels to exchange that were unencumbered by easements or conservation restrictions rather than try to 'un-do' the NAWCA CR.

- b) After Greenbelt left the call, the recent STPH 'surprise' application for State historic designation of Pink House was discussed. The lack of advance communication between STPH and the USFWS on this was highlighted as highly inappropriate in a partner relationship.