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CITY OF DANBURY

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
155 DEER HILL AVENUE
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810

MARK D. BOUGHTON
MAYOR

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November 21, 2013

Honorable Members of the City Council
City of Danbury
155 Deer Hill Avenue
Danbury Ct 06810

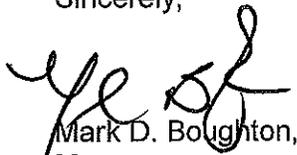
Re: Chow House at Farrington Woods

Dear Council Members:

In June 2013, the Council approved a proposed lease on this property with a monthly rental set at \$1,000. The Public Buildings Department has not been able to rent this house at this asking price and will need permission from you to negotiate a reasonable rent.

The City has received the attached letter from Michael Ahearn who is interested in renting the Chow House. He is working with the Conservation Commission for the City of Danbury to create a multi use trail network on this property. Mr. Ahearn has an interesting approach for providing in-kind services together with paying a monthly rent. I ask that you consider his proposal and allow the Public Buildings Department to negotiate the rent and this office to prepare a final lease agreement. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Mark D. Boughton,
Mayor

Attachment

cc: Rick Palanzo, Superintendent Public Buildings

Michael C. Ahearn
120 Prospect St, Unit #58
Ridgefield, CT 06877
(203) 482-0069
corneliusahearn@gmail.com

Richard M Palanzo
Public Buildings Superintendent
City of Danbury, Connecticut
53 Newtown Rd
Danbury, CT 06810

November 11, 2013

Dear Mr. Palanzo,

It has come to my attention that the town of Danbury owns a domestic rental property on the Farrington Woods Open Space, commonly referred to as 'the Chow House', which, to date, remains vacant. I'm writing to you to formally introduce myself, state my interest in leasing 'the Chow House', and outline reasons why my habitation there will prove beneficial to town of Danbury.

My name is Michael Ahearn, and I have been a Danbury resident for the vast majority of my 30-year life. I grew up off Great Plain Rd, in Aqua Vista and was educated in the Danbury Public School system at Great Plain Elementary, Broadview Middle School, and Danbury High School. After college, I returned to the area to start a small business, and now manage the service department at a bike shop in Ridgefield. In addition to over 12 years of mountain bike experience and instruction, I'm on the board of directors of Fairfield County's chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (FC NEMBA), where I am a Trail School Instructor, group-ride leader, and have personally logged over 1000 hours of trail building and maintenance.

As part of the area's mountain bike advocacy group, I am well versed in both the design and implementation of new trail projects, as well as the rerouting and/or reclamation of eroded or substandard trail segments and have experience working with land managers in Ridgefield, Easton, Redding, Bethel, Southbury, and most recently, Danbury. Under the guidance of Linda Murray at Danbury Parks & Recreation, I am the lead trail builder of FC NEMBA's commission to bring a sustainable multi-use trail network to the Farrington Woods Open Space, which we broke ground on over the summer. To date, and in part due to inclement weather in early summer, we have devoted just under 100 volunteer man-hours of labor to project, though the finished product will, at best guess, require at least 1000 man-hours to produce a finished network of 6-8 miles.

Creating a sustainable trail system is both time and labor intensive, and while I work at least 40 hours a week in the shop, I am currently devoting a considerable portion of my free-time each week to chipping away at this project, with the hope that each 2-3 hour session will bring about its completion that much sooner. Unfortunately, travel to and from the park eats a good portion of the potential time I have, so when I heard about the vacant property on-site at Farrington, in conjunction with my current month-to-month living situation, I thought it couldn't hurt to explore the possibility of making this new park in which I spend so much time also my home.

Up to and upon completion of the trail system's construction, my permanent resident at the front of the park can aid in overseeing visitor traffic, as well as help to ensure motorized vehicles and other unauthorized usage is kept to a minimum. Having grown up next to a community beach that closed at dusk and prohibited certain activities, I am comfortable approaching strangers and politely making them aware of park rules, regulations and closing times, and can readily recognize if/when notification of proper authorities is required. Also, after the park's new trails are built, they may need fairly routine maintenance (brush/tree clearing, remediation of troubled areas, litter removal), which I am also confident I can provide, along with GPS data for the creation of a park trail map.

It has also been made known to me that the town is finding it somewhat difficult to find a suitable tenant for the Chow House, and in conjunction with the aforementioned trailbuilding and stewardship/ranger responsibilities, I believe my leasing of the property on a yearly (or multi-year) basis would prove very beneficial for the town. I was also provided with the lease agreement of the 'existing ranger cottage' at the Bear Mountain Reservation, and with it in mind, I would like to propose the following:

A monthly rental fee of \$450 (not including utilities), paid on the first of each month, for no less than 1 year, which takes into consideration the reduced rent (previous to my involvement) and extensive in-kind services listed below

- An agreement to continue trail construction of the aforementioned network, and arrange trail work by others under my supervision, and the supervision of FC NEMBA
- Upon trail system completion, I will GPS-track/map all trails and provide all 'of interest' information needed to produce a complete and suitable trail map
- Continued maintenance and daily upkeep of the trail system once the construction project is complete
- The undertaking of all duties set forth in the Bear Mountain Reservation 'ranger cottage' lease agreement such as, but not limited to:
 - Keeping the parking lot gates (should any eventually be installed) open during all hours in which the facility is open to the public
 - Distribute trail maps and keep pamphlets in appropriate sign boxes
 - Check parking lot, morning and evening
 - Check the Farrington Woods property daily, weather permitting, by walking/riding trails and/or boundaries
 - Report any violations of the rules and regulations to the appropriate enforcement authorities, including police and the Director of the Department of Recreation
 - Call appropriate emergency personnel (fire, ambulance, etc.) as needed to respond to emergency situation
 - Maintain Chow House property and surrounding grounds in a neat, orderly condition
 - Contact and act as a liaison with the Parks and Recreation Department to obtain services approved by the CITY, including mowing, snow plowing, etc.
 - Provide the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation with monthly activity reports in the form and content as reasonably requested from time to time by him: attend Park and Recreation Commission meetings as requested and report on activities at the facility
 - Open gates (should they be installed) and maintain parking during special events as may be arranged from time to time by the Department of Park and Recreation or the Parks and Recreation Commission
 - Perform other duties as mutually agreed to from time to time

- o Notify the Director of the Department of Recreation when I am going to be away for a period of time in excess of seven (7) days

In closing, I believe the Farrington Woods Open Space has the potential to provide the residents of, and visitors to, Danbury with a truly unique natural experience, and my habitation at the town-owned Chow House will, without question, ensure a more timely construction of the new trails and be of continued value to the town once construction is complete. I can also, at your request, provide both character and rental history references that can attest to the trail work claims made herein and my dependability as a tenant. It is my hope you find this proposal suitable, though in the event there is an issue, please let me know. Thank you for your consideration and time, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Michael C. Ahearn