

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 7, 2015
TO: Board of Finance
PREPARED BY: Bill Hawkins, AICP - Town Planner
RE: Request to move Open Space Funds to Town Meeting

BACKGROUND:

In August 2015, the State Department of Agriculture made an offer to purchase the development rights to 60.51 +/- acres of the 63.51 +/- farm owned by Kevin Stiles located at 876 Mapleton Avenue. The property is on the east side of Mapleton Avenue, nearest intersection being Lise Circle with approximately 435 feet of frontage on Mapleton Avenue.

The State also made an offer to purchase the development rights to 119.32 acres of the 119.66 acre Bielonko Farm located at 1043 East Street North. This property is on the west side of East Street and a portion of the property directly abuts the Stiles Farm (see attached map). At this time I am seeking Board of Finance approval to send the purchase of development rights of the Bielonko and Stiles Farm to a town meeting at a date to be determined.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Both farms were rated and ranked on our preservation list several years ago after the owner expressed interest in preserving their properties. The Stiles property is ranked fifth and the Bielonko property is ranked first on our list of 20 properties for farmland preservation. When we started working with these owners two years ago, the other farms ranked ahead of the Stiles piece did not have an application in for farmland preservation which made this our priority. Also, both owners wanted to go through this process at the same time.

The Stiles property has approximately 50 acres or 83 percent of the total land area considered to be either prime or statewide important farmland soils. The farming activities include the cultivation of tobacco, and corn. The owner is leaving out an area of approximately 3 +/- acres which contains the existing house and a 12,500 SF strip of land on the central portion of the northern boundary.

The Bielonko farm has approximately 116.21 acres or 97 percent of the total land area considered prime and important farmland soils. The farming activities include tobacco, corn and other vegetables, as well as a dairy operation. There will be a 12 acre building envelope which will include the existing residence and several buildings associated with the farm. An unrestricted envelope of 0.34 acres will include a garage/apartment residential structure on the property. This "unrestricted" area means that the owner can rebuild or build new non-agricultural structures in this space.

Both farms are located in the R-45 zoning district which means the minimum lot size is 45,000 square feet, or approximately one acre. Utilities are readily available to service the properties as there is public water and sewer on Mapleton and East Street in front of these properties. Without consideration given to configuration, it is estimated the Stiles property could potentially yield 22 lots

and approximately 43 lots on the Bielonko parcel. It is important to recognize that the amount of houses a property can support has a direct effect on the cost of the land for appraisal purposes.

Three appraisals were done for each property. The first two were completed in September of 2014 and the third appraisal was completed in July of this year. The third appraisal for the Stiles farm came back at \$702,000 for the development rights on 60.53 acres (11,601/acre). The State Department of Agriculture offered the owner \$662,240 (10,940/acre) for the development rights which was accepted in October contingent on the Towns contribution. The Town would be responsible for difference between the offer and the appraised value or \$39,760 or 5.6 percent of the total purchase price. The Bielonko farm appraised at \$1,074,000 (\$9,001/acre) for the development rights on 119.32 acres. The State offered \$1,041,042 (\$8,723/acre) which was accepted in November contingent on the Towns contribution. The Town would be responsible for \$32,958 or approximately 3.1 percent of the total purchase price.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

For the Stiles farm, the town is responsible for 5.6 percent of the price, or \$39,760 which is \$657 per acre. For the Bielonko farm, town would be paying \$32,958 or \$276 per acre. If approved at town meeting, a survey will be completed for the project. As has been the practice in the past, if there is a difference in surveyed acreage from what is shown on town maps, an adjustment will need to be made in the offer. The funds will come from the open space fund which has a balance of \$844,090. When the project is complete, there will be a balance of approximately \$771,372 in the open space fund.

OTHER BOARD ACTION:

The Board of Selectman approved the request at their December 2nd regular meeting. This request will also have to be approved at a Town meeting at a date to be determined.

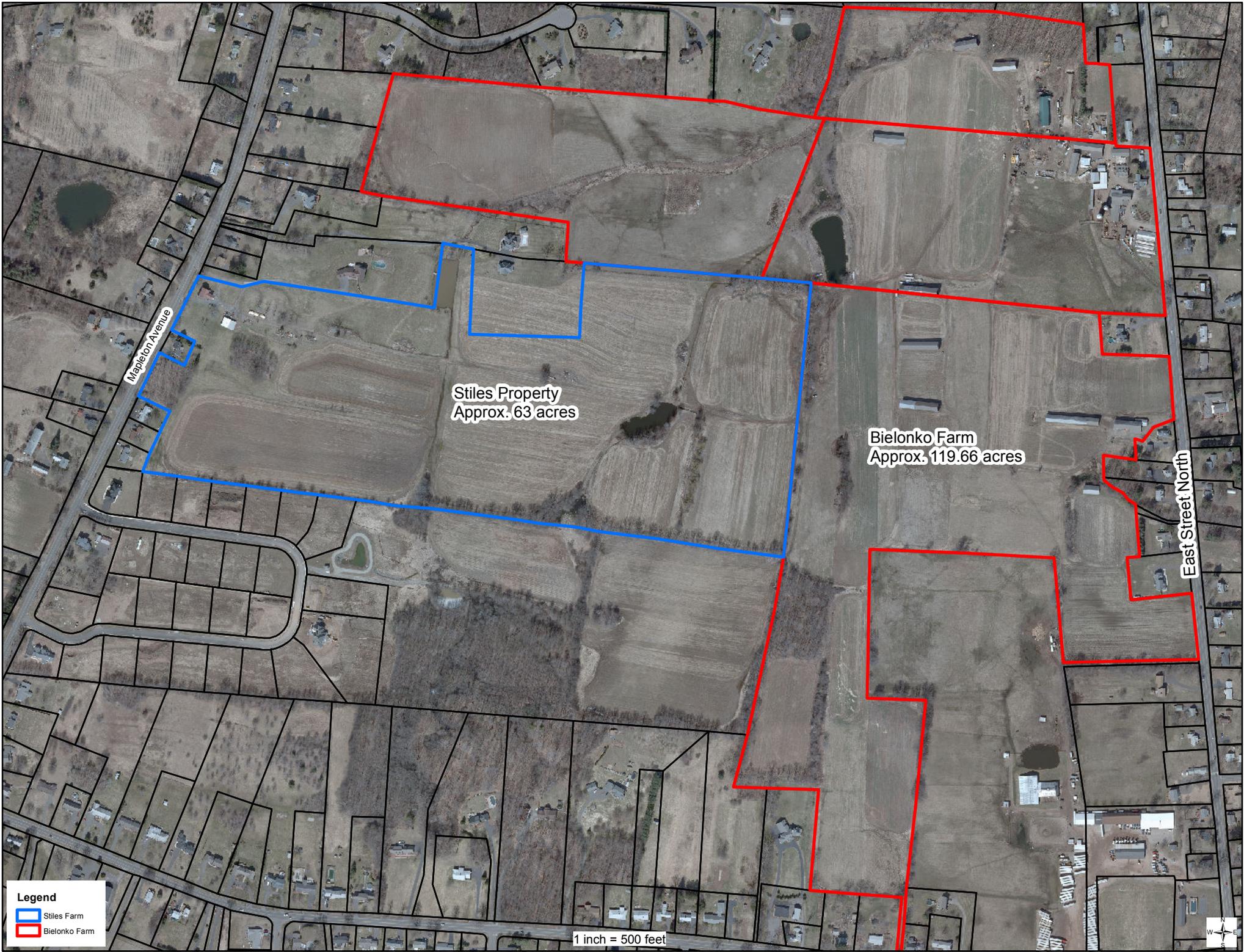
RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board of Finance approves the expenditure of \$39,760 (*subject to any adjustment due to the final survey acreage*) from the open space fund for the purchase of development rights to the 60.51 +/- acre Stiles Farm to a Town Meeting at a date to be set.

The Board of Finance approves the expenditure of \$32,958 (*subject to any adjustment due to the final survey acreage*) from the open space fund for the purchase of development rights to the 119.32 +/- acre Bielonko Farm to a Town Meeting at a date to be set.

ATTACHMENTS:

GIS Map of Farms
Open Space Account Overview



Mapleton Avenue

Stiles Property
Approx. 63 acres

Bielonko Farm
Approx. 119.66 acres

East Street North

Legend

- Stiles Farm
- Bielonko Farm

1 inch = 500 feet



ACCOUNT SOURCES

State Prison Expansion (2001)	\$1,000,000
Town Budget Allocation (FY 1999-2003)	\$385,000
Town Budget Allocation (FY 06-07)	\$500,000
Town Budget Allocation (FY 07-08)	\$500,000
Town Budget Allocation (FY 08-09)	\$400,000
Town Budget Allocation (FY 09-10)	\$150,000
Town Budget Allocation (FY 10-11)	\$200,000
Town Budget Allocation (FY 11-12)	\$200,000
Town Budget Allocation (FY 12-13)	\$0
Town Budget Allocation (FY 13-14)	\$300,000
Town Budget Allocation (FY 14-15)	\$300,000
Town Budget Allocation (FY15-16)	\$100,000
ZPC Fee-in-lieu of open space collected to date	\$219,207 \$18K Added FY14-15

Total Since Inception \$4,254,207

ACCOUNT TRANSACTIONS

	Funding Sources				Total Project Cost	Town Share of Total	Acreage	Approx Lot Yield
	Feds.	State	Town	Other				
Transactions Completed								
Hilltop Farm Open Space - Purchase (2001)	n/a	\$600,000	\$0	\$600,000	\$1,200,000	0.00%	119	83
McKinnon Open Space - Purchase (2002)	n/a	\$122,850	\$147,150	n/a	\$270,000	54.50%	35	15
Dunai Farm - Development Rights (2003)	\$151,125	\$151,125	\$100,750	n/a	\$403,000	25.00%	52	16
Phillips Farm - Development Rights (2003)	\$210,453	\$210,453	\$140,302	n/a	\$561,208	25.00%	64	19
Curtiss Farm - Development Rights (2004)	\$207,270	n/a	\$215,730	n/a	\$423,000	51.00%	42	39
Allen Farm - Development Rights (2005)	\$315,096	\$315,096	\$210,064	n/a	\$840,256	25.00%	110	37
Beneski Farm - Development Rights (2006)	\$260,177	\$260,177	\$173,451	n/a	\$693,805	25.00%	88	12
Zera Farm – Development Rights (2006)	\$221,564	\$221,564	\$147,709	n/a	\$590,837	25.00%	82	20
Fish Farm – Development Rights (2006)	\$297,097	\$297,097	\$245,806	n/a	\$840,000	28.60%	90	42
Zalewski Farm - Development Rights (2007)	\$375,000	n/a	\$386,311	n/a	\$761,311	51.00%	56	48
Miller Farm - Development Rights (2007)	\$180,770	\$180,770	\$145,179	n/a	\$506,719	28.65%	36	21
Olson Property - Conservation Easement (2010)	n/a	\$232,750	\$242,250	n/a	\$475,000	51.00%	39	17
Leahey Farm - Development Rights (2011)	n/a	\$640,506	\$274,659	n/a	\$915,165	30.00%	79	42
Quarry Brook Farm, LLC (2011)	n/a	\$1,400,000	\$600,000	n/a	\$2,000,000	30.00%	165	123
Bielonko Farm Trust - Development Rights (2012)	n/a	\$584,000	\$200,256	n/a	\$785,000	25.00%	58.4	37
No Transactions Requiring Closure								
Total Transactions:	\$2,218,552	\$5,216,388	\$3,229,617	\$600,000	\$11,265,301	31.65%	996.4	571

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

Open Space Fund Account since Inception	\$4,254,207
Less Committed Open Space Funds	\$3,410,117 (\$3,229,617 + \$180,500 Appraisals/Survey Costs)
	\$844,090