



STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Board members
FROM: Mark Connors
FOR: May 20, 2025
RE: 656 Asbury Street – Iron Ox Farm Site Plan Application

BACKGROUND:

Iron Ox Farm is an eight-acre farm producing fruits, vegetables, and flowers located at 656 Asbury Street on the Topsfield town line. The farm, which opened in 2017 and occupies the former Green Meadows Farm land, is located on land owned by the Essex County Greenbelt Association through a 99-year ground lease. The farm operates a seasonal farmstand and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) cooperative program and is managed by two Hamilton residents with the assistance of other employees. The property includes the farmstand, a parking lots, several greenhouses and small accessory structures and farmland.

APPLICATION INFORMATION:

The applicant is seeking to replace small temporary structures with a permanent open-air pavilion structure measuring 24-feet by 48-feet. The structure will include a concrete base, wood posts, and a metal roof. It will support the farm's operations by providing a shaded area to store materials and equipment and for employees to work and congregate when necessary. The structure will be located adjacent to existing greenhouses approximately 300-feet from the Asbury Street frontage. As such, it will not have a significant presence along the roadway and in the opinion of staff will represent an aesthetic improvement over the existing temporary structure (see associated photos).

Agriculture, horticulture, and floriculture is a permitted use in all of Hamilton's zoning districts. Therefore, the Site Plan is a non-discretionary review by the Planning Board. The Site Plan Standards of Review are included below for the consideration of the Board:

- 1.) The plan shall show compliance with Zoning Bylaw requirements for parking, signage, loading, landscaping, performance standards, dimensional requirements, and all other applicable requirements of this Bylaw;

This application includes no additional signage, parking, or loading features. The structure will comply with all dimensional requirements of the Bylaw.

- 2.) The proposed project should be compatible with existing natural features of the site and compatible in architecture and scale with the surrounding area;

As an agricultural structure, the pavilion will be compatible with the existing agricultural use. The structure will be of similar height to existing buildings on the property and will be located no closer to the road frontage than existing structures.

- 3.) The plan shall provide landscaping and open spaces that enhance the proposed development from within and without, which provide screening and buffers as necessary and which maximize amenity for customers, neighbors, and the general public;

Although no landscaping is proposed, staff does not believe it necessary for this application. The structure will be located interior to the property on a parcel with a large proportion of open space.

- 4.) The proposed project shall provide for safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian movement within the site in relation to adjacent ways, and provide for compliance with handicapped access requirements, and provide for access and egress by emergency vehicles;

The structure will support the operations of the farm. It is not designed to be a publicly accessible facility.

- 5.) The proposed project shall provide for location and screening of exposed storage areas, machinery, service areas, dumpsters, utility buildings and structures and other unsightly uses to maximize amenity for neighborhood. The Planning Board may require landscaping and/or fencing to provide needed buffers;

Agriculture, by its very nature, can involves some unsightly features. However,

- 6.) The proposed plan shall be consistent with the capacity of local infrastructure, such as water supply, utilities, drainage and Streets, or shall provide for such improvements as necessary; and

The facility should have no measurable impact on the community's capacity of basic infrastructure services.

- 7.) The plan shall provide for compliance with Board of Health, Conservation Commission, and other Town and State Regulations. Where applicable, the approval may be made conditional upon Board of Health, Conservation Commission, State Department of Public Works or other approvals, which shall be specifically referenced in the decision.

Town Staff is not aware of any applicable approvals necessary before the start of construction with the exception of the issuance of a building permit. However, if any such

approvals are identified, the Building Inspector, consistent with his responsibilities as the Town's Building Commissioner, is empowered to withhold the issuance of a building permit or any other local permits or certificates until documentation of such approvals can be furnished.





Location of proposed pavilion



TOWN OF HAMILTON
PLANNING BOARD

REQUEST FOR FINDINGS OF FACT
SITE PLAN REVIEW

Date Submitted:

Applicant Name: *Iron Ox Farm*

Phone: *978-317-8148*

Site Plan Review for Property Located at: *656 Ashbury St*

1. If the proposed is an addition or alteration to an existing building, please provide the following information:

- a. Square footage of proposed new floor area: *864 sq ft*
- b. Square footage of the current ground floor area of the existing building. (See Section 2b of the Site Plan Review By-Law for more information.): *new building*
- c. Estimated cost of proposed work: *\$50,000*
- d. Current 100% assessed valuation of building: *\$14,950*

*See attached
document
for answers
to #2*

2. How does the proposed development fit into the existing neighborhood in the following areas?

- a. Neighborhood character: *See attached document
for responses.*

b. Scale:

c. Appearance:

d. Natural features:

e. Use:

Site Plan Application

Responses to Section 2 of Site Plan Application

- a. Neighborhood Character:** The neighborhood is agricultural and rural in nature. Other farms in Topsfield and Hamilton are located in the vicinity. The property has been used for agricultural uses for the last 40 years. The proposed building will have wood beam posts with a concrete slab and metal roof. It will be consistent in character with the agricultural use and other small buildings on the property including the farm stand.
- b. Scale:** A 24-foot by 36-foot open-air barn structure with a metal roof and wood posts and a concrete slab floor. The structure will stand 13.5-feet in height. The scale will be consistent in scale with the property and its surroundings.
- c. Appearance:** The structure will be agricultural in nature and consistent with the property's surroundings. For materials, the structure will include wooden posts and trusses, a metal roof, and a concrete floor. A photo of a similar structure is below.
- d. Natural Features:** The barn will be placed on a grass flat surface that is currently occupied by a temporary tent-like structure. It will be located near three existing greenhouses but further interior to the property from Asbury Road. We believe the replacement building will be an aesthetic improvement from the current conditions.
- e. Use:** The use will be for agricultural purposes. It will serve as an all-purpose facility including a resting area for workers, to house crops, and to support other daily operations at the farm.



Hamilton Planning Board
Site Plan Review Checklist

Applicant: Iron Ox Farm - Stacey Apple, Alex Cecchinelli
Address: 656 Ashbury St Hamilton
Zone: 61A
Date Received: _____
Existing Structures: 16x30 Farmstead, 4 greenhouses (2 30x46, 18x70, 24x20)
Proposal: 24x36 pole barn

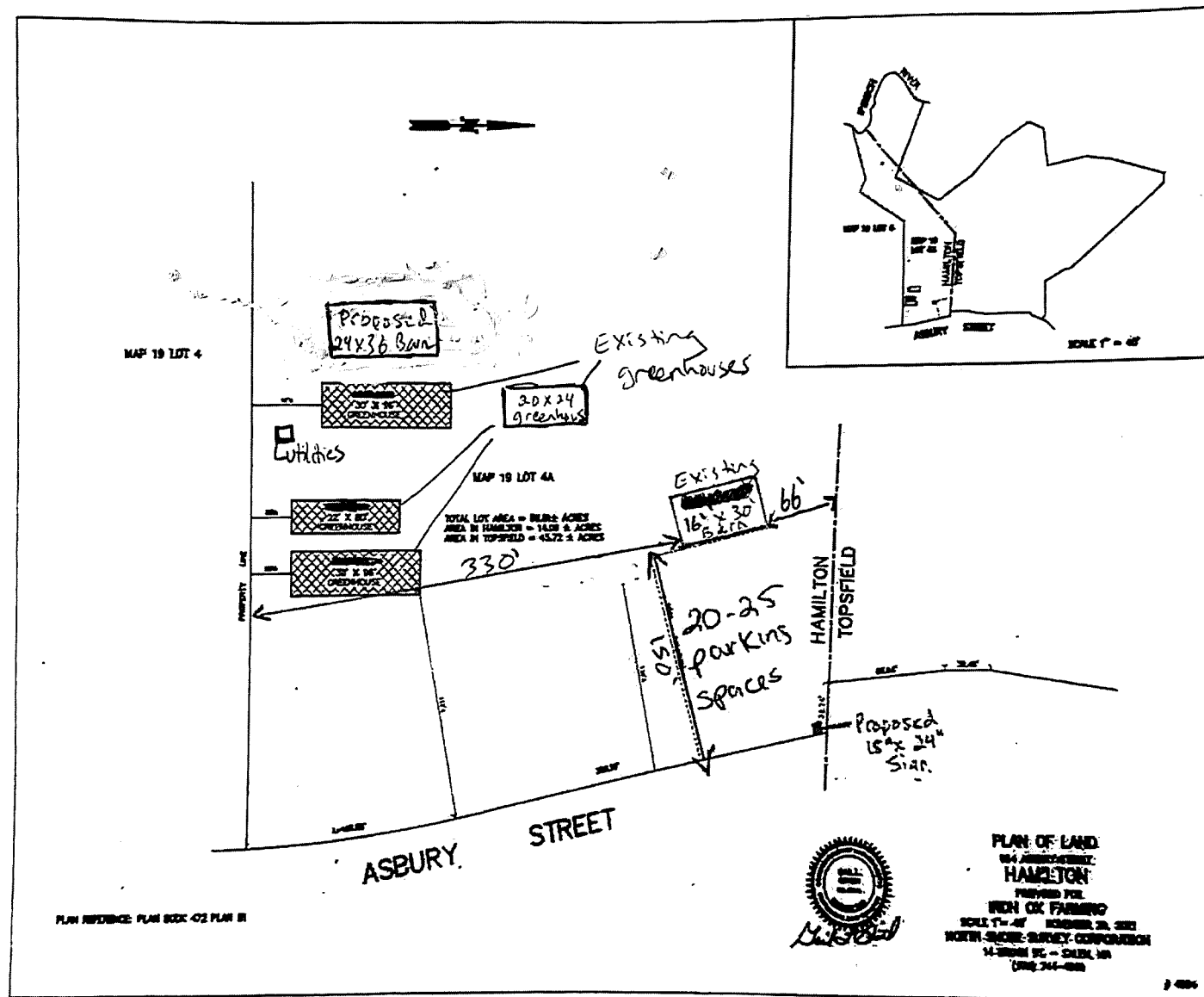
Previous Proposals: _____

Requirements:

Locations and boundaries of existing and proposed lots See attached site map
Locations of adjacent streets or ways Ashbury St on frontage
Locations of any easements utilities on neighbors driveway
Adjacent property owners' names Dan Mayer
Size of lot 14 acres
Frontage and yards _____
Existing and proposed buildings and structures Farmstead, greenhouses, Barn
Dimension of buildings and structures 24x36
Elevation drawings of building(s) with additions from each side _____
Additions/alterations need to show only affected side _____
Locations and dimensions of all parking areas See attached map
Number of parking spaces compared to requirement 25
Handicapped parking Yes
Locations and dimensions of all loading areas _____
Locations and dimensions of driveways/walkways _____
Locations and dimensions of access/egress _____
Relation to street traffic _____
Grading and site work _____
Proposed and existing topographical lines at 2' intervals _____
Location/description of proposed and existing sewage disposal system not shown
Location/description of underground storage tanks _____
Location/description of water supply _____
Location/description of storm drainage _____
Location/description of utilities _____
Location/description of dumpsters _____
Location inc. height, dimension, appearance of lighting _____
Natural Features _____
Location/description of landscaping inc. large trees _____
Location/description of proposed screening/buffers/fencing _____
Location/description of open space/recreation areas _____

Other permits required _____

There will be no changes to the site
apart from the new structure. No
increase in traffic anticipated and
no changes to parking.



Total Lot Area 59.81 \pm acres
 Area in Hamilton 14.09 \pm acres
 Area in Topsfield 45.72 \pm acres



May 1, 2025

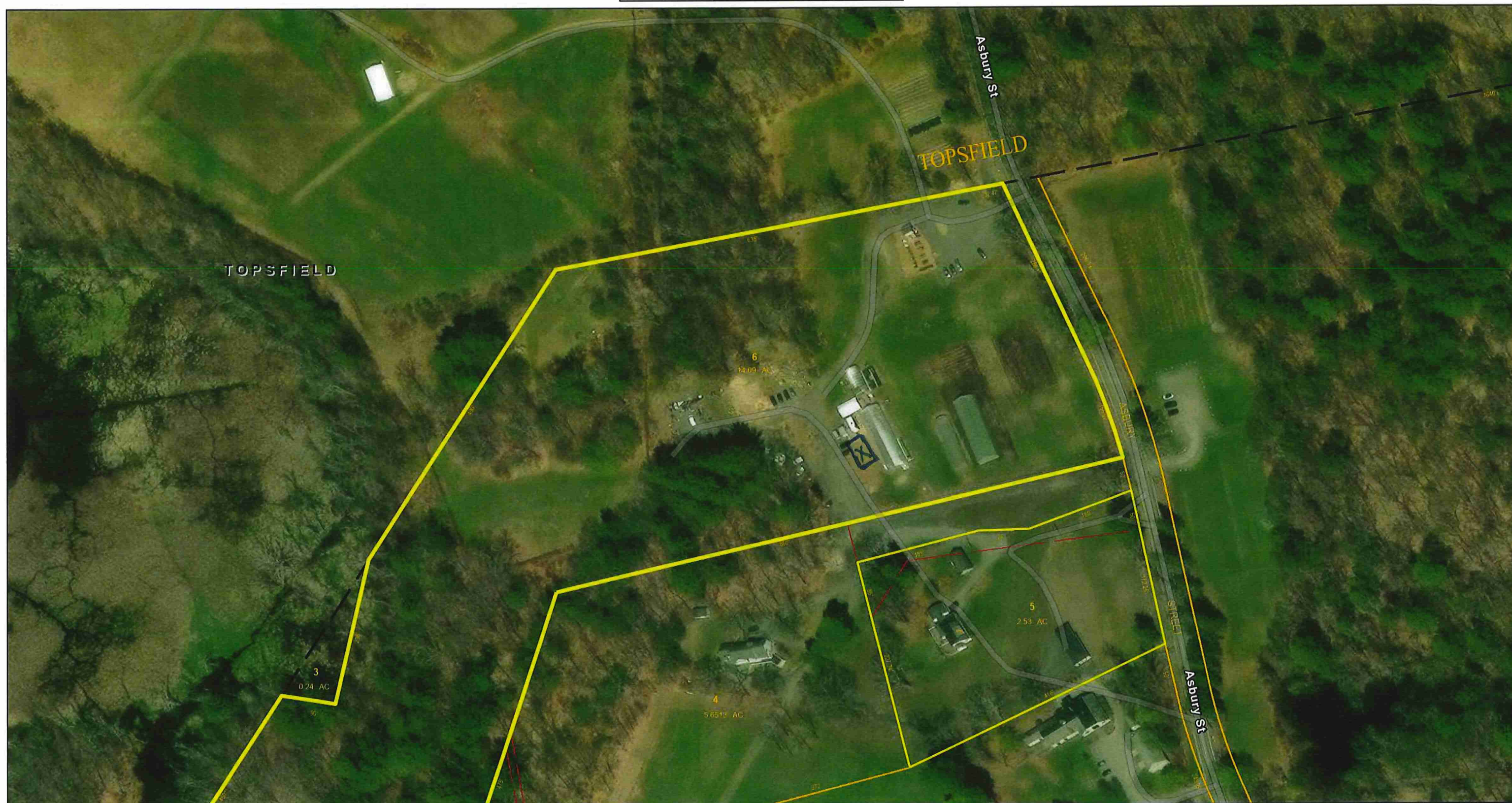
Town of Hamilton, MA

1 inch = 139 Feet



www.cai-tech.com

X-Location of proposed structure



Data shown on this map is provided for planning and informational purposes only. The municipality and CAI Technologies are not responsible for any use for other purposes or misuse or misrepresentation of this map.

IRON ON

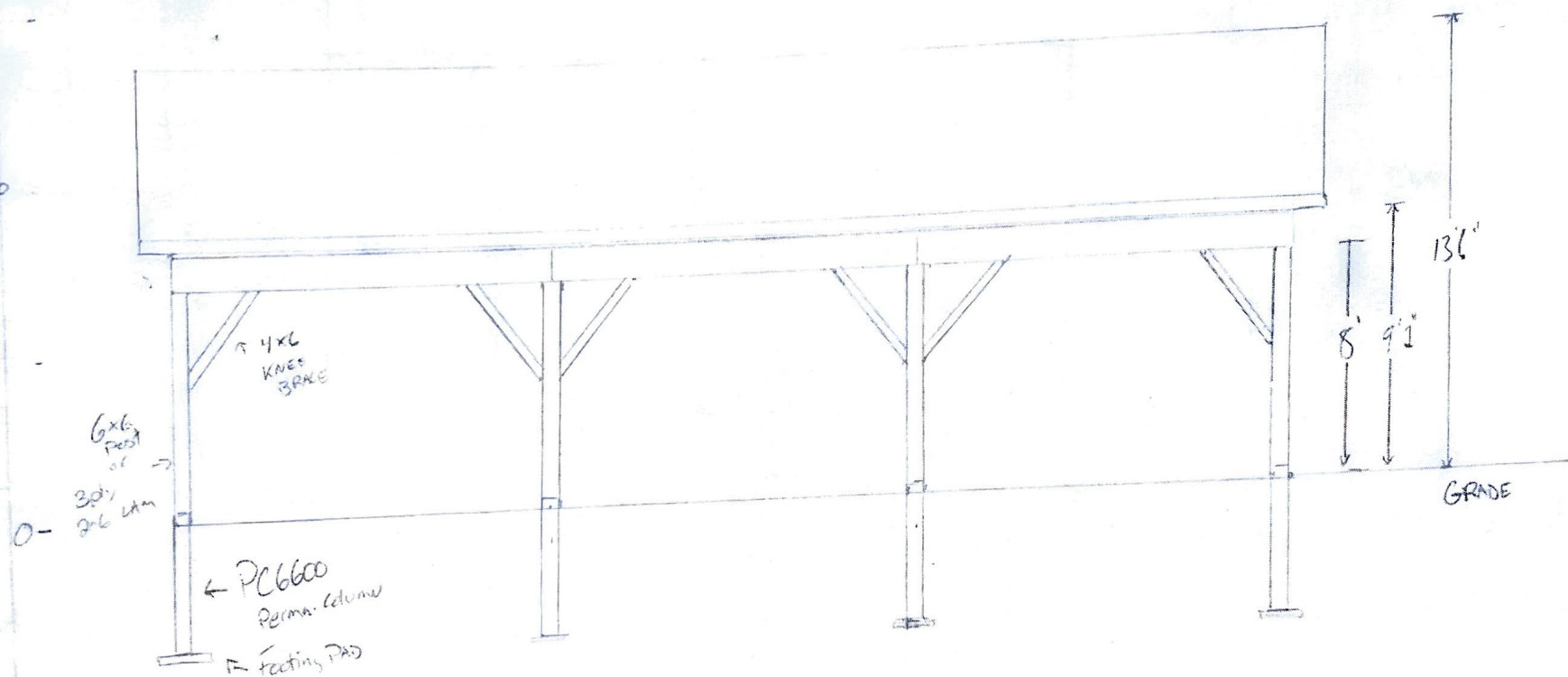
COVERED SPACE

36x24

PAGE 1

COULD 8' CLEARANCE, MAX HEIGHT APPROX 13'6"

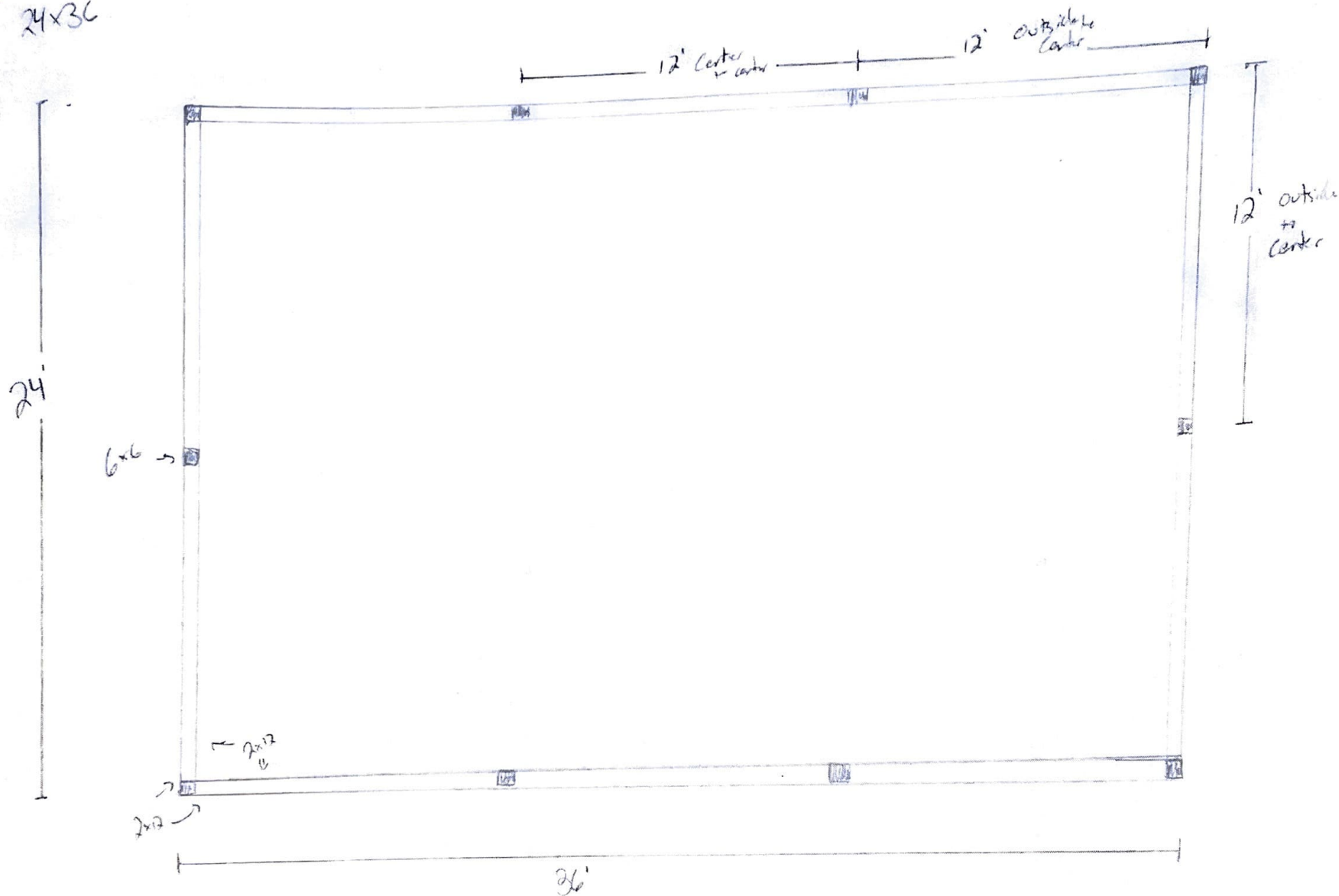
TRUSS (BOWIE TO SPEC)
PITCH - 3/12
METAL ROOFING



IRON ON
COVERED SPACE
24x36

Post
LAYOUT

PAGE 3



TOWN OF HAMILTON
Planning Board
CERTIFICATE OF PARTIES IN INTEREST

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 11, the undersigned Assessor of the Town of Hamilton, hereby certifies that the names and addresses appearing on the list appended hereto are those of the:

- (a) abutters 100'
- (b) owners of land directly opposite on any public or private street or way
- X (c) owners of land within 300' of the property line of the property at:

656 Asbury St

So. Hamilton

Dated **April 16, 2025**

Prepared by Assessor's Office of the Town of Hamilton.

Jane Dooley
Director of Assessing



300 feet Abutters List Report

Hamilton, MA

April 16, 2025

Subject Property:

Parcel Number: 19-0006
CAMA Number: 19-000-0006
Property Address: 656 ASBURY ST

Mailing Address: ESSEX COUNTY GREENBELT ASSOC
C/O PIERCE JOHN W
82 EASTERN AV
ESSEX, MA 01929

Abutters:

Parcel Number: 19-0001
CAMA Number: 19-000-0001
Property Address: 650 ASBURY ST

Mailing Address: HAMILTON TOWN OF
577 BAY RD
SOUTH HAMILTON, MA 01982

Parcel Number: 19-0002
CAMA Number: 19-000-0002
Property Address: 649 ASBURY ST

Mailing Address: ESSEX COUNTY GREENBELT ASSOC
82 EASTERN AVE
ESSEX, MA 01929

Parcel Number: 19-0003
CAMA Number: 19-000-0003
Property Address: 0 OFF ASBURY ST

Mailing Address: ESSEX COUNTY GREENBELT ASSOC
C/O PIERCE JOHN W
82 EASTERN AV
ESSEX, MA 01929

Parcel Number: 19-0004
CAMA Number: 19-000-0004
Property Address: 654 ASBURY ST

Mailing Address: 85 CONOMO POINT LLC
9 SCOTS WAY
ESSEX, MA 01929

Parcel Number: 19-0005
CAMA Number: 19-000-0005
Property Address: 652 ASBURY ST

Mailing Address: 25 BUTTERFIELD LLC
P.O. BOX 517
ESSEX, MA 01929

Parcel Number: 27-0003
CAMA Number: 27-000-0003
Property Address: 0 REAR ASBURY ST

Mailing Address: ESSEX COUNTY GREENBELT ASSOC
C/O PIERCE JOHN W
82 EASTERN AV
ESSEX, MA 01929



www.cai-tech.com

4/16/2025

Data shown on this report is for informational purposes only. The Town of Hamilton and CAI Technologies are not responsible for any use for other purposes or misuse or misrepresentation of this report. The Town of Hamilton makes no warranties with regard to the report's accuracy or completeness and assumes no liability associated with use of the data.

Page 1 of 1

Abutters List Report - Hamilton, MA

Mark Connors

From: North of Boston <noreply@wave2adportal.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 1, 2025 4:47 PM
To: Mark Connors
Subject: External Email Warning Thank you for placing your order with us.
Attachments: W01334210.pdf

THANK YOU for your notice submission!

This is your confirmation that your order has been submitted. Below are the details of your transaction. Please save this confirmation for your records.

Job Details

Order Number:

W0133421

Business Type:

[All Other Public Notices](#)

Notice Size:

[Public Notices](#)

Notice Estimate:

\$267.15

Referral Code:

[Iron Ox Farm Site Plan Hearing](#)

Account Details

Hamilton PBd

PO BOX 429

HAMILTON, MA 01936

978-468-5570

lwilson@hamiltonma.gov

HAMILTON PLANNING BD LEGL

Schedule for notice number W01334210

Mon May 5, 2025

The Salem News Public Notices

All Zones

TOWN OF HAMILTON PLANNING BOARD LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

SITE PLAN APPLICATION – The Hamilton Planning Board will hold a public hearing to review a Site Plan Application, pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 40A, § 10 and Section 10.6 of the Hamilton Zoning Bylaw, on May 20, 2025 at 7 pm at the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library, 14 Union Street, Hamilton. The applicant, Iron Ox Farm, proposes to construct a 24' by 36' open air structure to support agricultural operations at 656 Asbury Road (Assessor's Map 19, Lot 16) owned by the Essex County Greenbelt Association. The property is located within the Residence-Agricultural (RA) District. Application and plans materials are on file and available for review in person or electronically by contacting the Hamilton Building Department at (978) 626-5250 or permitting@hamiltonma.gov.

Mark Connors Planning Director
SN - Publication Dates

The North of Boston Media Group is not responsible for any false, inaccurate or omitted notices.

The North of Boston Media Group reserves the right to alter, edit and omit any notice to meet our editorial guidelines. Any additional charges or credits as a result of this process will be the responsibility of the individual or company submitting the notice.

This is an automated message, please do not reply to this e-mail. If you have any questions or concerns you may contact us toll-free at 800-681-6248.