



MIDDLETOWN
Rhode Island

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TOWN SIGNS AGREEMENT TO BUY HOOGENDOORN NURSERIES LAND

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. (NOVEMBER 20, 2023) – The Town of Middletown has finalized a deal to purchase the Hoogendoorn Nurseries property.

At a meeting Monday night from Town Hall, the Town Council announced the town has entered into an agreement to buy 58.2 acres of nursery land between Turner Road and Berkeley Avenue for \$5.4 million. The agreement includes provisions that will allow the wholesale nursery to remain in business.

Following an executive session discussion on the matter, local leaders were excited about the news, saying it was an important day for the community.

“This is something we’ve been working on for quite awhile,” council President Paul M. Rodrigues said. “We’ve all wanted to talk about it, but we couldn’t until all the t’s were crossed and all the i’s were dotted, but this is an important purchase for Middletown and all its residents.”

Based on early details, the site at 408 Turner Road would remain an active nursery operation for the foreseeable future.

Under the terms of the deal, the Hoogendoorns will have the option to lease the land back from the town for up to four years and keep the nursery operation going. In addition, if the nursery business is sold, the new owner would have the ability to continue to lease the land from the town.

The town has let its interest in the Hoogendorn site be known quietly, with the parcels the subject of ongoing discussions with family representatives going back years.



Town Administrator Shawn J. Brown said he first broached the idea of the town buying the land from the Hoogendoorns about 15 years ago.

“Obviously, we’re very excited about the opportunity we have here,” Brown said. “The Hoogendoorn family is part of the very fabric of the Town of Middletown and the fact this historic property will be preserved is something that we’re all looking forward to, and keeping the nursery in operation is also a positive for the community.”

Besides the potential development impact on the site, town officials have said they’ve been concerned about how new homes or other growth could further exacerbate flooding problems of the Maidford River along Berkeley Avenue.

According to a November 2019 report commissioned by the Aquidneck Land Trust, the island is facing massive development pressure. The study by Sasaki & Associates indicated all the unprotected open space on the island will be gone by 2050.

The “Aquidneck Island Development Impact Analysis” also reported that current growth is harming the area’s water sources and doesn’t generate the per acre taxes that smarter growth could on the appropriate properties.

The study also encouraged local leaders to work to embrace more of a regional approach to planning and development, every community would benefit more. To view the report, visit https://ait.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Development-Impact-Analysis_Final-Report_Spreads.pdf online.

Figures from the town’s finance office indicate there’s close to \$7.3 million in open space bond money available that could be used to cover the purchase of the property. That includes a \$5 million open space bond approved by voters in November 2020 that has not been spent to date.

“In the near term, it allows an important piece of Middletown to continue to be farmed,” Brown added. “It also allows us to work with the Town Council and our Open Space & Fields Committee to map out a long-term vision for the property. The main thing here is we’re saving and preserving a large parcel that’s important to the future of our community.”



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