



Caretaker Cottage Request for Proposals

From: Greg Cantori, President, CANTORI CARES, LLC.

Date: 1/1/18

Re: Innovative Baltimore Urban Farm Caretaker Cottage Proposal

We are looking for several (perhaps two, three or four) very capable individuals, couples or partners willing to work hard while getting involved in farming on 2.4 acres located at 5105 Plainfield Avenue, Baltimore MD 21206, in the Frankford community of Baltimore,

We are also looking for those willing to live in off-grid tiny homes (caretaker cottages) while getting involved with the local community and Baltimore as a whole. This is an extraordinary demonstration project opportunity to prove that off-grid, sustainable, urban living is not only a realistic lifestyle, but can offer many benefits to both owners and residents on, and near, the farm.

As an urban sustainable living pioneer, there is, however, a likelihood of disruptive legal and bureaucratic risks you'll need to be aware of, willing to live with, and both reactively and proactively work through. They will be outlined, as best we can ascertain, below.

Owing to the anticipated interest in this project, we're asking you to prepare a proposal that outlines your degree of commitment, skills and experience in sustainable living, tiny homes, farming and/or gardening, working with communities as a volunteer or leader, your ability and willingness to document and share what is being learned, and your tolerance for uncertainty, the unknown, and reasonable risk.

The following RFP includes a background of the project and describes the purpose of the RFP and specific requests relating to the proposal. We understand that details may be subject to changes as we learn more about the wants and needs of the community, the city, and future farm residents. In your proposal, please feel free to suggest any alternatives, ideas and enhancements that will make this even more likely to succeed and where we may have missed anything. Also please notify us ASAP of your intent to apply so we can be of assistance.



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GUIDE TO THIS RFP

We hope to share a clear vision for the first Baltimore off-grid tiny home community and specific challenges facing off grid living, challenging outdated rules and demonstrating that the lifestyle is realistic and sustainable. It includes a background section about us and suggests an outline of potential best practices and desired outcomes. In providing these details, our intent is not to convey that we have all of the answers. The ideal and preferred candidate(s) will bring your own ideas and vision based on your skills, experiences, lessons learned, and research, guiding us to incorporate our goals into that vision. Depending on the number of quality proposals and the potential for new partnerships, we may adjust how many awards we'll make.

Please feel free to email Greg Cantori at gcantori@gmail.com with any questions or comments.

Project Overview



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Our immediate main challenge is in finding ready, willing, and able individuals to live in a tiny home off-grid in Baltimore city with a high degree of uncertainty and risk of 'Eviction for your Conviction'.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You will be immediately violating outdated, sometimes nonsensical, and often discriminatory, zoning, health, fire and building codes. In addition, your proposed off-grid tiny house (and therefore an alternative lifestyle) may create irrational fear and uncertainty in the surrounding community, giving rise to NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard), including calls to housing inspectors, community gossip, and rumors as well as the potential of hearings, forums, or meetings, to discuss your home and lifestyle. As the farm landowners, we will help in facilitating and mediating plans and meetings towards helping avoid any legal action and/or costs as best as we can.

Our philosophy is simple:

Do no harm while adding value to our communities.

The community must prove real and demonstrable evidence that your lifestyle will somehow create actual and demonstrable harm to their own lives. Property values are NOT one of those harms since tiny homes are not a comparable (Comps) housing for valuations. Additionally, property values are often based on cultural norms and fears that make little rational sense, but drive markets at a point in time (split foyers, harvest green appliances, paneling and formstone used to be considered desirable amenities that 'added value', but now do the opposite based on contemporary desires, whims and wants, not on actual functional value, factual harm or other benefits). Traffic and parking are likewise red herrings, as no one is currently restricted from owning multiple cars per household, so some areas have fewer cars, others many, all based on whims, occupancy, needs, wants, and incomes.

Background

Cantori Cares, LLC was created to begin addressing the global issues of homelessness, poverty, and global climate change, on a local scale (Thinking globally, acting locally). Our



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purpose is to make housing as suitable, sustainable and accessible as we humanly can. By doing so we'll create new opportunities in creating a better quality of life for everyone. Simple goals, yet very hard to accomplish.

- We believe that housing is a human right. That everyone deserves clean air, water, a safe community, a place to call home, and easy access to work, play and educational opportunities.
- We believe that until everyone has real opportunities to live in peace, many will be deprived of their freedom from fear, and our collective quality of life will suffer.
- We believe that high quality, sustainable, and affordable housing paired with sustainable, active transportation, is key to allowing millions more to participate in living a life full of genuine hope and even happiness. Learn more at www.CANTORI.com.

After over 25 years of for profit, nonprofit and foundation work including working with the homeless and in housing development, Greg Cantori has learned that creating quality affordable housing is a highly complex process full of bureaucratic, financial, cultural and community barriers along with many demands that keep those homes unaffordable without large subsidies, teams and fundraising. All that extra work diverts us from the primary goal in providing high quality, well-designed, affordable homes so that everyone has their right to housing met.

Most developers rarely incorporate a genuine path towards actual asset and wealth creation for those with lower incomes. Often this critical asset creation component is missing due to funding and time constraints, or perhaps massive red tape and the hassles involved. The development process too often keeps lower income individuals and families just barely surviving emotionally and financially, creating years of uncertainty and stress in their lives.

Housing is the number one expense for households. Too many pay much more than one third of their total income for maintenance, property taxes, rent or a mortgage. Many pay closer to 50%. Utilities and transportation are also additional large burdens (forcing too many families into long term utility debt, turnoffs, or spending hours commuting). Tiny homes are likely the most sustainable, green, low-infrastructure cost and environmental impact housing choice possible.



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We are very lucky to have a wonderful group of committed volunteers willing to review your proposal and actively participate in making the farm and this concept a successful reality.

Project Goals

Our goal is to establish a sustainable off-grid tiny home demonstration project working with the land, the community, and each other in showing that it is very possible to live a great life without exploiting others, creating a nuisance, or wasting resources. We will encourage the use of solar power, solar heating (both hot air and water), wind power, wood stoves, rainwater catchment, composting of all organic material, including humanure, greywater gardens all while using permaculture's ethics, principals and designs.

We want to point to a real option in repopulating our cities with a focus on the basic human needs for Safety, Food and Shelter.

Success might look like this: *Imagine an extraordinary affordable, established, diverse, sustainable, off-grid group of tiny homes and people, raising vegetables, chickens and harvesting fruit, while also highly engaged with the surrounding community, hosting workshops, open houses and tours that engage everyone, including children who want to learn more about off grid living, farming, healthy eating and so much more.*

We are currently working hard in creating a tiny home community, mostly on foundations, while also accommodating several homes on wheels including you, the successful RFP candidate. We also want to transfer the farm ownership in an equitable (Commons) manner to that community.

The Site



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The urban farm is located at 5105 Plainfield Avenue, Baltimore MD 21206 in the Frankford community. It is 2.4 acres on the interior of a block of just a few homes with a park on the eastern edge and on a gentle slope facing south. The property has two small year-round ponds, a number of fruit trees at the entrance, scrub plants and some small trees scattered about. Otherwise it is currently in a wild state as it has not been farmed in several years. The area is very quiet and feels miles away from this urban setting. There is a lot of mulch creating a pathway into the interior of the property. We will work with you on a farming lease (for a mutually



agreed upon set of seasons) separate from an occupancy agreement. We also hope you'll assist in applying for membership in the [Farm Alliance of Baltimore](#). We are already members of WWOOF. Brandon Scott is the community council person and is aware of this farm potentially hosting tiny homes. Several neighbors also know of the general concept, including the community president, Barbara Jackson.



Scope of Activities



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Once the project is awarded, we expect you to:

- Meet with immediate community members and community association regularly.
- Create some method of keeping everyone updated such as a Blog, newsletter, reports....
- Establish a composting area for both property biomass and humanure.
- Create a rain catchment cistern and treatment system.
- Set up any exterior solar panels as needed.
- Locate a great spot that drains well and then move your home to the farm.
- Establish a solid and secure tiny house attachment to the ground in case of high winds.
- Create permeable walkways and perhaps a parking spot or two.
- Come up with a farm name, and erect any permitted signage, as appropriate.
- Establish workshops, tours, and farming schedules
- Actively work with the Farm Alliance of Baltimore and any WWOOF volunteers.

Additional Requirements

Diversity:

Describe how you will encourage engaging a diverse group of people and ideas.

Accessibility:

Will you need any accommodations for accessibility? Will you create accessible options for others?

Budget

Ideally, you'll own or rent your own tiny home. If you need one built, please contact Civic Works to learn how you can have your own home built locally while employing local young adults learning the skilled trades. There may also be very affordable financing options we can discuss. The monthly land cost is highly variable based on what value you can bring to this project. The more skills, labor, materials, education and outreach, the less any other costs.....perhaps even to the point where we may find a way (grant or other investment) to pay a small stipend for you



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to live there. We will support your ability to earn income from farming and/or other compatible activities too.

In your proposal, outline your expected monthly living expenses, the costs in borrowing, renting or purchasing farming or other equipment, what additional funds you need, and any other contributions you'll make that add value. Some items, such as renting tools or purchasing a shed, we may be able to help fund. If a student, we may be able to help with research or credit.

Project Timeline

RFP issued and widely advertised January 1, 2017- January 31st, 2018

Information session and land tour January 31st, 2017

March 1st – Proposals due

March 15th – Finalists Interviews scheduled

April 1st – Selection committee completes semi-finalists interviews

April 15th – Selection Committee announces successful proposals

April-May – Community introductions, Site preparation, set up, and moving

Spring-summer – First Community Gardening projects and contacts, create first contracts with markets for produce, join Farm Alliance of Baltimore and WWOOF. Post blogs.

Criteria for Selection

We don't expect many, if any, proposals to have all the skills and experiences outlined here. We do expect you to demonstrate how you'd acquire those to be successful. Perhaps you've built a home or even a tiny one! Perhaps you've researched permaculture, or even lived, off-grid in some capacity. Spent time boon docking (RV off-grid), tent or cabin camping, hiking, or sailing



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for weeks. Perhaps you've farmed or volunteered in a similar fashion. Perhaps out of necessity and circumstances, you've lived with very little and learned a lot from that.

Knowledge, Skill, and/or Ability:

1. Living tiny

- a. Outline the inherent advantages and compromises of living lighter and knowing the difference in what you really need, and less of what you want. How will you optimize your storage, sleeping space, kitchen and bath? How will you keep the area inside and out tidy and ready for visitors?

2. Living off-grid:

a. Solar power

- i. Describe your knowledge of solar and how you'll monitor and manage the DC systems. including charge controllers, inverter/chargers, battery monitoring and safe battery maintenance.

b. Composting Toilets and Humanure

- i. Outline your understanding in balancing the carbon cycle, proper toilet use and maintenance, safe humanure handling practices, how to compost safely and without odor, working with urine diversion systems including incorporating into:

c. Greywater systems

- i. Describe how you will set up, monitor, and service a gravity fed greywater system with Y and/or diverter valves and mulch basins

d. Rainwater Catchment

- i. Describe how you will set up and maintain a first rain flush cleaning system, mosquito prevention, safe rainwater storage, treatment, and use. Will you use the water for showers, cleaning and dishes or also for drinking? If not rainwater for drinking, are you able and willing to bring drinking water onsite?

ii.



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- e. Keeping warm in winter, cool in summer
 - i. Demonstrate your knowledge of the concepts or skills in using passive solar, reducing heat gain in summer or increasing heat retention in winter. Operating and maintaining alternative heating and cooling systems including heat pumps, propane and wood. Would a very quiet generator be useful?
3. Gardening/Farming: Have you created, planted and maintained a Flower, Vegetable or Fruit Tree garden? Tended to bees or chickens? Lived on a farm, and/or actually farmed? Tell us how and what you prepared, planted and harvested.
4. Community engagement: Have you volunteered or served in a leadership role within your community association? Have you organized community events? Hosted or presented in community meetings?
5. City: Have you worked with city officials? City Councilmembers? Have you worked with city public service staff, inspectors, leaders or other politicians? How do you see your role in engaging them in this project?
6. Funding community: Have you applied for foundation grants or special loans? Started a business? Engaged investors in a business? Scholarships?
7. Education: Have you taught young and/or older learners in any capacity? Environmental or experiential education?
8. Media: Have you ever been interviewed? Written an article or OP ED? Do you have marketing, social media, or other journalistic experience?
9. Diversity: Describe how you will encourage engaging a diverse group of people and ideas.
10. Accessibility: Will you need any accommodations for accessibility? Will you create accessible options for others?
11. List any relevant Knowledge, Skills or Experiences not outlined above.
12. Provide a resume and short bio
13. Please list three personal, and three professional references and whether email or phone is better to contact them (to assess credibility)
14. Outline your timeline to obtain (buy or rent), build, or relocate your tiny home with major tasks and milestones (to assess process)



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15. What is your expected budget for the home, moving, and property operation by line item –
Will you need financial help? (to assess financial ability)
16. What is your plan, should all media, legal, and political defensive actions to remain located on the property ultimately fail, resulting in having to move (to assess familiarity with controversy, compromise and flexibility)
17. Describe how, and how often, you will communicate with CANTORI CARES, LLC, the community, and the city without monitoring or prompting from anyone.
18. If you will be partnering with someone else, tell us more about who, and why, that person and have them submit a bio, resume and Knowledge, Skills and Abilities outlined above as well.
19. Describe how flexible you are: How have you adapted to unforeseen life, work, school or project changes?
20. Vision: Provide ideas for this project beyond what is presented here, and why.
21. Engagement: How will you engage the immediate and greater community? (example: (Sustainable living and gardening workshops) How often?

Format & Proposal Details

Remember to signal your intent to apply ASAP. You can submit your final proposal to gcantori@gmail.com in either MS Word or PDF, single spaced with no page limits, use your best judgement as to length, details, and readability. Feel free to ask questions.

Deadline:

Deadline for Submissions: March 1st, 2018

We hope to have an in-person information session and property walk through on 1/31/18. Semi-finalists will be scheduled for interviews by March 15th and the final selection will be made by April 15, 2018.

Best wishes as we look forward to reading your proposal and in meeting with you!