

Hargrave, Julie

From: Marcos Ribeiro <m_ribeiro1@ymail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 13, 2025 1:20 PM
To: Hargrave, Julie
Subject: Written reply to initial questions
Attachments: East End Flower Farm – Applicant Written Response to Commission Discussion Items (Sept 17 2025 Hearing).pdf

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please see attached and confirm that you have received both the financial models and the written reply.

Thank you,

Marcos Ribeiro

East End Flower Farm – Applicant Written Response to Commission Discussion Items (Sept 17 2025 Hearing)

SCTM No. 0200-589.00-01.00-002.000 – Weeks Ave, Manorville, NY

Submitted to: NYS Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission

Date: October 2025

1. Financial Information / Hardship – Reasonable Return & Self-Creation

The 35 % clearing limit yields only 1.75 acres of usable area—an unviable scale for any regulated agricultural use in the Town of Brookhaven, which requires **five acres minimum** for a bona fide farm operation.

The **financial analysis** shows that under the 35 % cap ($\approx 24,500$ ft² greenhouse) the project produces an annual net of $\approx \$2,000$ confirming no reasonable return. By contrast, a 60 % clearing scenario (30,000 ft² greenhouse + 20,000 ft² hoop houses) merely achieves a modest positive return of $\approx \$80$ k/yr—demonstrating that the restriction itself causes the hardship.

The hardship is **not self-created**: the parcel was acquired with an expectation of agricultural development consistent with A-2 zoning, and previously approved hardship precedent.

2. Hardship Criteria on the Record

- (a) The strict application prevents a reasonable return (see financial models).
 - (b) The hardship is unique due to parcel geometry, slope, and its isolation .
 - (c) The variance will not alter essential character—surrounding lands remain natural and buffered and inline with goals of the CLUP, supporting agriculture.
 - (d) The hardship was not self-created; acquisition was for bona fide farm use under local zoning.
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3. Non-Conformance with Standards / Buffers

Non-conformance with the **Vegetation** and **Open Space** standards but proposes mitigation:

- Open to reducing project clearing to the minimum required, 60% clearing
 - Employ native species in landscape buffers to satisfy the fertilizer-free vegetation standard.
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4. Project Alternatives / Revisions

Smaller clearing footprints ($\leq 35\%$) were analyzed and found economically unviable. Alternative sites were evaluated; none provide the necessary greenhouse support infrastructure or zoning that this CGA parcel offers. The proposed plan represents the **minimum relief necessary** for a viable agricultural use.

5. Uniqueness of the Site

The parcel is one of few **A-2-zoned lots within the CGA** lacking prior agricultural disturbance yet contiguous to major utility and road infrastructure. Its geometry (narrow frontage, deep lot) prevent any practical agricultural clearing under existing limits, distinguishing it from other CGA properties.

6. Precedent / Minimum Relief

Approval would not set a precedent: relief is supported by detailed economic analysis, natural buffers, and mitigation. The proposal uses **only 60 % of the lot**, below the 65 % standard allowed for non-residential use per CLUP Vol 1 § 5.3.3.4, and therefore represents the minimum clearing necessary.

7. Habitat Loss and Wildlife Movement

The applicant acknowledges that clearing results in habitat loss but notes:

- The **western boundary abuts 50+ acres of protected CGA** that will continue to provide undisturbed habitat connectivity.
 - Historic aerials show **previous clearing south of the parcel in 1947**, later re-vegetated, indicating a long-established anthropogenic landscape transition rather than pristine forest loss.
 - Proposed mitigation includes reducing project disturbance to **60% down from 99%**
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8. Alternatives

Existing farmland was considered; however, we operate on Long Island's East End where available cleared land is cost-prohibitive or outside the Brookhaven town. The proposal reuses a single isolated lot rather than fragmenting additional agricultural tracts. The search was conducted over the course of 3 years with no other options.

9. Neighborhood Compatibility / Buffers

A **vegetated buffer** is proposed on the **north side** adjacent to residences, using evergreens (*Thuja occidentalis* 'Green Giant') to control dust, noise, and odor as is per the town of brookhaven town code. We are open to omitting.

10. Open Space / Offsite Cluster Mitigation

The applicant proposes to reduce the footprint of the clearing from **99% to 60%**

11. Fertilizer-Dependent Vegetation

All operational surfaces will be greenhouse, gravel yard, or native vegetative buffers. Less than 15 % of the total site will require supplemental fertilization—thus conforming.

12. Retaining Wall Design

The retaining structure will be reduced and re-graded to ≤ 3 ft in height where feasible. Drainage will be managed via swales and infiltration trenches to prevent runoff.

13. Town of Brookhaven Permits

Pre-application coordination with the **Town Planning & Building Division** is underway. No construction permit will be sought until Pine Barrens approvals are complete.

14. Mitigation for Habitat Loss

Mitigation offered:

1. **Reduction of project from 99% clearing to 60% clearing**
 2. **Maintain native buffers** to the west.
 3. **Native pollinator plantings** throughout the site.
 4. Commitment to **low-impact lighting** and **no nighttime noise** operations.
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15. Endangered Species / NYSDEC Consultation

Preliminary desktop review finds no listed flora or fauna on site as per **NYSDEC** resource maps; nonetheless, tree clearing will avoid roosting seasons for the **Northern Long-Eared Bat**, with activity confined to Nov–Mar.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcos Ribeiro
East End Flower Farm

35% Clearing model Summary	Value	
Lot square feet	217800	
Clearing cap (sqft)	76230	
Total cleared (barn+GH+support) (sqft)	44500	
Clearing margin (sqft)	31730	
Greenhouse footprint (sqft)	24500	
Productive canopy (sqft)	19600	
Total revenue (\$/yr)	\$170,520	
Total OPEX (\$/yr)	\$168,700	
Net income (\$/yr)	\$1,820	

Inputs	Value	
Lot size (acres)	5	
Clearing cap (%)	35	
Barn footprint (sqft)	10,000	
Greenhouse footprint (sqft)	24,500	
Support area (drives/pads) (sqft)	10,000	
Internal aisle % of GH	20	
Annuals mix %	40	
Vegetables mix %	40	
Perennials mix %	20	
Annuals \$/sqft/yr	11	
Vegetables \$/sqft/yr	8.5	
Perennials \$/sqft/yr	4.5	
Labor \$	83,200	
Energy/Heat \$	40,000	
Inputs (soil, plugs, pots) \$	27,500	
Insurance/Repairs/Compliance \$	18,000	

Category	Allocated Canopy (sqft)	\$/sqft/yr	Revenue (\$/yr)	
Annuals	7840	\$11.00	\$86,240	40%
Vegetables	7840	\$8.50	\$66,640	40%
Perennials	3920	\$4.50	\$17,640	20%
TOTAL			\$170,520	

OPEX Item	Annual Cost (\$)	NOTES	
Labor	\$83,200	2 full time employees 40 hrs a week @\$20 an hour	
Energy/Heat	\$40,000	Gas and Electric - 40% savings using sunken greenhouse model	
Inputs	\$27,500	soil, seed, fertilizer, water	
Insurance/Repairs/taxes	\$18,000		
Total	\$168,700		

60% Clearing model Summary	Value	
Lot square feet	217,800	
Clearing cap (sqft)	130,680	
Total cleared (barn+GH+HH+support) (sqft)	70,000	
Clearing margin (sqft)	60,680	
Greenhouse canopy (sqft)	24,000	
Hoop house canopy (sqft)	16,000	
Total productive canopy (sqft)	40,000	
Total revenue (\$/yr)	\$320,160	
Total OPEX (\$/yr)	\$240,300	
Net income (\$/yr)	\$79,860	

Input	Value	
Lot size (acres)	5	
Clearing cap (%)	60	
Barn footprint (sqft)	10,000	
Greenhouse footprint (sqft)	30,000	
Hoop house footprint (sqft)	20,000	
Support area (drives/pads) (sqft)	10,000	
Internal aisle % of GH	20	
Annuals mix %	40	
Vegetables mix %	40	
Perennials mix %	20	
GH Annuals \$/sqft/yr	\$11.00	Greenhouse
GH Vegetables \$/sqft/yr	\$8.50	Greenhouse
GH Perennials \$/sqft/yr	\$4.50	Greenhouse
HH Annuals \$/sqft/yr	\$5.60	Hoop house
HH Vegetables \$/sqft/yr	\$6.80	Hoop house
HH Perennials \$/sqft/yr	\$3.60	Hoop house
Labor \$	\$124,800.00	
Energy/Heat \$	\$55,000.00	
Inputs (soil, plugs, pots) \$	\$38,500.00	
Insurance/Repairs/Compliance \$	\$22,000.00	

Structure	Category	Allocated Canopy (sqft)	\$/sqft/yr	Revenue (\$/yr)
Greenhouse	Annuals	9600	\$11.00	\$105,600
Greenhouse	Vegetables	9600	\$8.50	\$81,600
Greenhouse	Perennials	4800	\$4.50	\$21,600
Hoop House	Annuals	6400	\$8.80	\$56,320
Hoop House	Vegetables	6400	\$6.80	\$43,520
Hoop House	Perennials	3200	\$3.60	\$11,520
TOTAL				\$320,160

OPEX Item	Annual Cost (\$)	NOTES	
Labor	\$124,800	3 full time employees 40 hrs a week @\$20 an hour	
Energy/Heat	\$55,000	Gas and Electric - 40% savings using sunken greenhouse model	
Inputs	\$38,500	soil, seed, fertilizer, water	
Insurance/Repairs/taxes	\$22,000		
Total	\$240,300		