TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MOUNT LAUREL MUNICIPAL CENTER

Distribution _____

Resolution No. 21-R-56

REGULAR MEETING **FEBRUARY 22, 2021**

RESOLUTION REJECTING PROPOSALS FOR THE DARNELL FARM PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS PAWS FARM

WHEREAS, in early 2020, the Township's vendor operating PAWS Farm on the Darnell Family Farm Property, breached its contractual relationship causing the closure of the facility; and

WHEREAS, the animals on the property were placed with zoos, farms and nature centers throughout New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the Township attempted to find a vendor to operate PAWS but the proposals submitted in each round were determined to be inadequate and lacked effective animal plans, staffing plans, and/or realistic commitments to financing; and

WHEREAS, the Township solicited a third round of proposals in September 2020 with a submission date of December 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the two submissions that were received were evaluated and scored by an independent committee not associated with the Township and who did not participate in prior round evaluations; and

WHEREAS, the Township chose this evaluation process to ensure that individuals with significant animal care and not-for-profit experiences as well as business acumen were able to give fresh consideration to the proposals and were not tainted by prior round evaluations; and

WHEREAS, the Township sought a vendor with a score of 85 of 100 but would have also considered vendors that at least scored an average of 70; and

WHEREAS, the average scores of the two submissions, as judged by the independent committee, were only 49 and 17; and

WHEREAS, the Township does not believe that these proposals will lead to the long term success of the facility; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Township Council of the Township of Mount Laurel reject the two proposals received in the third round of proposal submissions for PAWS Farm;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED because of COVID, the Township will not immediately solicit a new round of proposals and when it does, will authorize a proposal process that allows vendors to consider recreation and open space uses and historical preservation uses which may or may not be similar to the former use of PAWS Farm;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Green Acres requirements mandate that the property continue a recreation (active or passive) use and/or historic purpose for the property and the Township recognizes that the Darnell Homestead, out buildings and graveyard are of significant local historical significance and any proposal or action considered in the future must be guided by these requirements.

A CERTIFIED COPY

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Meredith Tomczyk, Municipal Clerk

	MOTION	AYE	NAY	ABSTAINED	ABSENT	TRANSMITTED
Cohen						
Janjua						
Moustakas						
Pritchett						
Steglik						