

April 29, 2014

Studio Outside
824 Exposition Avenue, Suite 5
Dallas, TX 75226

Subject: Request for Qualifications
10 Year Plan
Columbus Botanical Gardens, Columbus, Georgia

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This letter serves as the Request for Qualifications for development of a 10-Year Plan for the Columbus Botanical Garden, Inc. located at 3603 Weems Road, Columbus, Georgia. It is requested that you submit the qualifications and experience information requested herein by May 26, 2014. Our comments follow.

BACKGROUND

The Columbus Botanical Garden is an approximately 20 acre natural treasure located in north Columbus, Georgia. We are a stand-alone 501 c (3) non-profit whose mission is: "To preserve a portion of the rapidly diminishing open space in Columbus and to provide the community with a unique educational facility that is based on environmental awareness, horticulture, historic preservation and agricultural values. This facility shall strive to inspire and leave a lasting impression on those who visit."

Historical Summary

In 1998 the George M. Adams Co. gifted lands for the creation of a botanical garden. Further lands were gifted over time such that the entire property is now slightly over 20 acres in area. The circa 1890s Farmhouse and other adjoining buildings were gifted and moved to the property in 1999 and 2000. The Gin House was moved in 2008.

The CBG was dedicated in 2004 and shortly thereafter an initial Master Plan was developed. During 2007 the first Executive Director was hired, educational programs began and our first newsletter was distributed.

In 2008 the approximately 1 mile long Joann Holt Walking Trail was cut and dedicated. Shortly thereafter a 500 ft. water supply well was drilled for the purpose of eventually supplying irrigation. An irrigation line was later installed within the trail, although city water still is presently used.

In 2012 we established a Moss Garden adjacent to the walking trail, as well as a bird watching area adjacent to the Gin House. The Sam M. Wellborn Camellia Garden, comprising over 200 varieties of camellias, was dedicated in 2013 and is slated for expansion to include 500 varieties of plants.

Wonderful plantings have been established surrounding the Farmhouse which is currently the heart of the Garden. The Farmhouse is the center of activity, together with the adjoining “social house” and Gin House. This venue is the site for weddings, special occasions, educational programs, plant fairs and other activities.

PURPOSE AND SCHEDULE FOR 10-YEAR PLAN

Purpose

The 10 Year Plan is to provide a realistic presentation (text and graphics) and a ‘road map’ for development, of the 20 acre property. A 10 year period was selected to establish a schedule for development that is measurable, provides accountability and is achievable with sustained proactive effort.

Schedule for Planning

We desire that the 10-Year Plan be submitted within 6 months of authorization to proceed. It is hoped that work can begin in mid to late 2014.

TECHNICAL DISCUSSION

Overview of Property and Micro-Environments

Most of the site is covered with trees, the land being reforested farm land. A variety of pine trees exist at certain locations, with deciduous trees elsewhere, and mixed forest at other locations.

The high point on the property is approximately El 476, near the center of the site, with the ground sloping to the east and west. The westerly border reaches a topographic low of about El 405, providing a grade difference of 70 ft within the forested area to be developed.

The adjacent land to the west includes a FEMA controlled drainage area that is subject to flooding. Urban development exists on the east, along Weems Road abutting the south property and to the north. A 2.9 acre parcel of undeveloped Georgia State Land abuts the northeast corner and the Garden is exploring the feasibility of access to, and use of, this property.

There are a variety of micro-environments throughout the property that are interdependent and intertwined with each other. At present, the property is in a healthy balance supporting a wide variety of trees, plants, birds, insects and wildlife.

Within the higher, well drained, central regions of the property a pine forest predominates, with a pine needle forest floor. The forest transitions to primarily deciduous trees, with a leaf floor, as the grade descends to the west. The shady, moist areas of the westerly low lands have mosses and lichen not seen elsewhere. Storm runoff has eroded deep channels within the westerly limits. These erosion channels provide a challenge to limit their further development, while also presenting an opportunity for unique play areas and education.

Our vision is to achieve a naturalistic development of the property that is steadfast in its stewardship of the existing micro-environments and ecological diversity. The development is to have spatial balance between natural and manmade elements and provide for education, recreation and solace to those seeking it.

Among other items, it is desired to have a children's garden, as well as an outside kitchen and edible garden.

Selected Technical Items

A. Storm Drainage and Erosion Potential

The principal development area descends from the property high point to the abutting wetlands to the west. Locally, the grades vary from approximately level to relatively steep. The surficial soils are very erosion susceptible consisting of fine sands with silt and clay.

Planning in relation to site drainage, erosion prevention, and the required sequence of construction will require careful consideration.

B. Groundwater

Groundwater depth will vary with season, precipitation and other factors and will range from essentially zero feet within the western-most lower areas to possibly several feet at higher elevations.

C. Plant Selection

While detailed garden design will occur later, it is desirable that the consultant have familiarity with the local climate and weather conditions.

D. Westerly Erosion Channels and FEMA Lands

These erosion channels provide aesthetic, recreational and educational potential while also presenting the challenge that they be stabilized.

QUALIFICATION INFORMATION

Qualification information should include the following and be limited to 20 pages with seven (7) printed copies provided:

1. Company overview
2. Financial stability
3. Descriptions of a minimum of five (5) similar projects
4. Descriptions of projects located in similar climate and weather conditions
5. Resumes and applicable experience of Company Officer- in- Charge and Project Leader

6. Minimum of three (3) references

Please direct all inquiries and submit the qualification packages to:

Mr. Matthew P. Whiddon
Executive Director
Columbus Botanical Gardens, Inc.
3603 Weems Road
Columbus, GA 31909
O: 706-327-8400
C: 706-442-2846
mwhiddon@columbusbotanicalgarden.org

We are very excited about our 10-Year Plan and look forward very much to your response. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,



Matthew P. Whiddon
Executive Director