



Londonderry Open Space Task Force
Tuesday, January 6, 2011
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1 Present: Mike Speltz, Chair and Conservation Commission Representative; Dana Coons, Vice Chair and
 2 Planning Board Alternate Representative; Lynn Wiles, Secretary and Planning Board Representative; Art
 3 Rugg, Heritage Commission Representative; Bill Manning, Recreation Commission Representative; Marty
 4 Srugis, Solid Waste Advisory Committee Representative; George Herrmann, School Board
 5 Representative; Bob Saur, Londonderry Trailways Representative; and Tim McKenney, At-Large
 6 Representative

7
 8 Also present: John Vogl, GIS Manager; and Jaye Trottier, Administrative Assistant

9
 10 Absent: John Curran, Budget Representative; Lisa Whittemore, Budget Committee Alternate
 11 Representative; and Jeff Locke, At-Large Representative

12
 13 M. Speltz called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

14
 15 Task Force members reviewed the first draft of the public opinion survey that will be used to assess the
 16 viewpoints, opinions, and needs of residents regarding the values and benefits of nature. Using the
 17 online software at www.surveygizmo.com in conjunction with a random mail survey, one of the main
 18 goals will be to assess those intangible values that are difficult to quantify such as preferred scenic views
 19 and recreation land. On a larger scale, it will gauge the importance to residents of the nine separate
 20 benefits itemized by the Task Force, what role the Town should play in preserving those natural services
 21 and ultimately, their willingness to financially support the efforts needed for that preservation.

22
 23 The online method will provide all residents with the ability to partake in the survey while a randomized
 24 statistical sample of 400+/- mailed surveys will serve to substantiate the online responses and assist in
 25 adjusting the bias inherent in a public opinion survey. M. Speltz noted that the very nature of the self-
 26 selecting online option will tend to attract those particularly interested in the Open Space Plan, whether
 27 they support it or not. The random mail sample will counteract that as a statistically valid estimate of
 28 the survey results as if the entire town did indeed make use the online opportunity. A paper version for
 29 those without an internet connection can be made available as well at Town Hall, the Library, etc. M.
 30 Speltz noted the importance of advertising the survey as broadly as possible to create awareness before
 31 the mail survey is sent out.

32
 33 The comments and revisions were as follows (see also original draft with markups attached):

34

Page No./ Question No.	Comment/question	Conclusion/consensus
P. 1; Introduction	(¶ 1 & 3) Will it confuse the reader to use the terminology “benefits nature provides”/”benefits they provide” interchangeably with “open space”?	See next comment
	Is a layperson going to know that the concept of “open space” is not limited to open areas such as a field?	Replace terms “benefits nature provides” and “open space” with “the values and benefits nature provides



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		through open spaces such as..."		
	(¶ 2) Make the term "agricultural soils" less technical.	Replace "agricultural soils" with "agriculture"		
P. 2, Q. 1;	A "visit occasionally" choice should be added to the table of conservation/recreation areas	Add "visit occasionally" column to table of conservation/recreation areas		
P. 2, Q. 1;	Is "town conservation or recreation areas" restricted only to those owned by the Town? For example, the Ingersoll/Bockes Forest is not town owned but is available to residents.	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">1. Change "town conservation or recreation areas" to "conservation or recreation areas in Londonderry"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Add Ingersoll/Bockes Forest, the "old railroad" trail, & the Trolley Car R.O.W. to the list of consv/rec areas.</td> </tr> </table>	1. Change "town conservation or recreation areas" to "conservation or recreation areas in Londonderry"	2. Add Ingersoll/Bockes Forest, the "old railroad" trail, & the Trolley Car R.O.W. to the list of consv/rec areas.
1. Change "town conservation or recreation areas" to "conservation or recreation areas in Londonderry"				
2. Add Ingersoll/Bockes Forest, the "old railroad" trail, & the Trolley Car R.O.W. to the list of consv/rec areas.				
P. 2, Q. 1;	Can a map link be provided along with the table to illustrate the locations specified?	J. Vogl will investigate possibility of a link or add a separate page of the graphic alone		
P. 3	In the wording of Q. 3, do the goals have to be qualified as "conservation" goals?	Remove the word "conservation" from the statement		
P. 3	Those who use a paper version need a way to rank the goals.	Number the choices so participants can rank them on paper		
P. 3	"Scenic" views can include things other than those found in nature	Change "scenic views" to "natural views"		
P. 3	"Support local agriculture" can be misconstrued as subsidizing agricultural activity.	Change "support local agriculture" to "preserve local agricultural land"		
P. 3	Add "plant" to the type of habitat to be supported			
P. 3	Change "connections between species" to "connections between habitats"			
P. 4, Q. 4	Track the changes made on P. 3 to the goals on P. 4			
p. 4	What is the difference between the ranking on P. 3 and the scale on P. 4?	Differences in the degree of importance between questions will reveal any disconnect in the desire to protect a specific resource but a lack of aspiration to pay for it through taxes. Then the OSTF will have to take a different approach when trying to determine how to finance the preservation of specific resources.		
P. 4	The Town's resources can be those other than "financial"	Remove word "financial" from the question and replace with "financial, regulatory, or otherwise" in		



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		parentheses.
P. 4	Add row: "Maintenance/management of current conservation areas"	
P. 5, Q. 5	Row 8; Maintenance of conservation land could be outsourced and would not necessarily require a staff position.	Leave as "staff" specifically to determine if residents are willing to add a position dedicated to those tasks
P. 5	Row 9; The zoning ordinance already includes protection of streams	Remove the words "such as along streams"
P. 5	Row 3; Should not restrict subject to town-owned properties	Rephrase; "should develop and/or encourage development of trails/access on all conservation properties"
P. 6, Q. 7	Ask beyond what more should be done, i.e. what could be done differently	Add 7.A textbox: "What should be done differently to maintain conservation lands in Londonderry?"
P. 7, Q. 8	Change "conservation" in the main question to "preservation"	
P. 7, Q. 8	Explain what the "Land Use Change Tax" is	J. Vogl will investigate possibility of adding definition used at 2010 Town Meeting as a footnote to the online version
P. 7, Q. 8	Split "grants" into two categories, full grants vs. matching grants, since the latter would ultimately involve tax revenue	Add "grants" (i.e. full grant) to "private donations" option and change "Outside grants" to "Matching grants (requiring local matching funds)"
P. 7, Q. 8	"Town bonds" refers in part to future obligations whereas an option for the "annual operating budget" would apply to only one given year	Add option of "Annual Town operating budget" to the list
P. 7, Q. 9	Why restrict the question to the willingness to support conservation <i>purchases</i> when there is a separate goal to maintain conservation land?	Add question 9.A; "Are you willing to pay more in taxes to support better stewardship of existing conservation land?"
P. 7, Q. 9 A & B and Q. 10	Both "A" and "B" of Q. 9 should be followed by a question about the amount of your tax bill an individual would be willing to pay (see below)	
P. 7, Q. 10	Will people be able to easily compute an amount of their tax bill? Should it be asked in terms of a percentage?	Provide reader with something to compare: "Currently, the Town spends x% of its budget on conservation. What percentage would you be willing to see it spend?"
P. 8	Add a demographic about the number of people in each household	Add yes or no question: How many people live in your household?



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P. 9	Some of the applicant’s decisions may be driven by whether there are school-aged children in their home.	Add yes or no question: Do you have any school-aged children in your home?
	With the Woodmont property potentially taking 20 years to be developed, is it worth asking the younger generation what they would like to see in 20 years re recreation, what type of land do they want to use for what purposes, what preferences they have for housing, etc.?	Have a separate survey with open ended questions: A 600-acre, 12,000-unit development has been proposed around the area of Exit 4. What is your vision for how that develops? What other goals would you like realized in the next 20 years? As you look at the future of Londonderry, what other concerns do you have for open space goals for the town in terms of conservation, recreation, preservation, etc.?

35

36 The Survey Gizmo software is designed to show the IP address of each respondent, which will curb
37 excessive submissions from one user. Substantiation from the mail survey will also help counteract any
38 such attempts to influence the responses. Because there will typically be more than one adult resident
39 in each home, however, it was agreed that allowing up to three responses from the same IP address
40 would be reasonable. J. Vogl noted that staff is looking into establishing a budget for the mail survey.
41 An updated version of the survey reflecting the above changes will be made available to the Task Force
42 for further review within the next two weeks. The goal is to have the survey available to the public by
43 the next meeting.

44

45 The second and final agenda item discussed were the measurement tools to be used in assessing the
46 town’s needs for nature's vales and benefits. J. Vogl presented a series of maps, each with a separate
47 GIS data layer showing those places in town most likely to provide the nine individual resources. He
48 asked Task Force members to use these maps as they assign a weight of importance to each contributor.
49 When the individual weighted layers are reassembled, the areas that can supply multiple benefits
50 (known as “areas of co-occurrence”) can be identified. J. Vogl reviewed each map, explaining the
51 methods of protection for each resource goal:

52

53 1. Drinking water quality and quantity; Places to protect would include undeveloped streamside
54 buffers, high and low yield aquifers, open space in high-impervious watersheds, and
55 private/public well head protection areas (WHPA). Three of the main high yield watersheds in
56 Londonderry (Little Cohas Brook, Kendall Pond, and Chase Brook watersheds) have a level of
57 impervious surface greater than 15%, meaning they are approaching a state of impairment that
58 could begin to degrade the town water supply. M. Speltz added that 10% impervious surface is
59 typically regarded as the initial point for impairment.

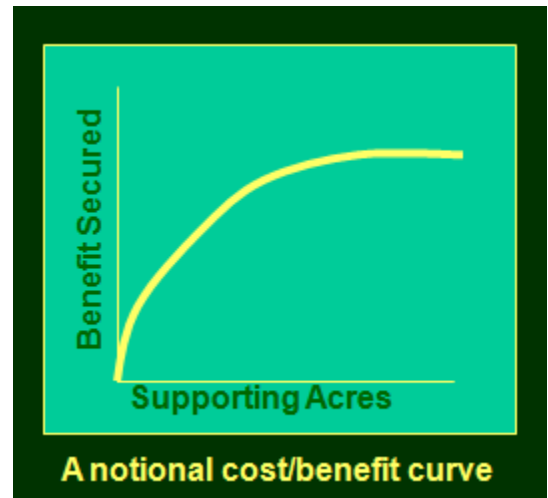
60 2. Flood storage; Preserving the open space within the 100 and 500-year floodplains and the
61 high impervious watersheds would aid in flood mitigation.



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- 62 3. Production of food, fuel and fiber; Areas of prime, local & statewide important farmland soils,
63 land currently in agricultural use but not currently protected and large forest blocks would be key
64 to this category.
- 65 4. Soil stabilization; Because erosion brings sediment to streams and brooks that inhibits their
66 natural functions, areas of slopes greater than 25% and other points of highly erodible soils
67 would be areas to protect.
- 68 5. Scenic views; Those identified were derived from input taken during the 2005 OSTF. J. Vogl
69 asked Task Force members to identify any other areas they believe should be added. Results
70 from the survey will also contribute this map.
- 71 6. Plant and animal habitat and connections between habitat patches; Large forest blocks
72 (categorized by size) and undeveloped land connecting large, existing conservation areas best
73 support plant and animal habitat. B. Saur asked for a second version of this map that would
74 identify those lands that have already been conserved such as the Musquash Conservation Area.
- 75 7. Plant and animal diversity; Areas to conserve have been identified in the NH Fish & Game
76 Wildlife Action Plan, showing places of the highest ranked habitat in the state as a whole as well
77 as within the Merrimack Valley specifically, and the supporting landscape in town that provides
78 a buffer between the prime habitat and developed areas.
- 79 8. Community heritage; Areas include Apple Way, historic properties compiled by the Historic
80 Properties Preservation Task Force and the town's trail network.

81
82 Graphs based on the concept of diminishing returns (see
83 example here) will be designed for each benefit. M. Speltz
84 described those resulting curves as a tradeoff between acres
85 needed to support the individual benefits and the reward for
86 preserving those acres; the first efforts of preservation will
87 yield the most benefit and subsequent efforts will provide
88 less until the result eventually levels off. A point chosen
89 along each individual curve by the Task Force to conclude
90 how many acres of land will be needed to sufficiently
91 provide individual benefits. This will ultimately lead the Task
92 Force to answer one of the primary questions posed by the
93 Town Council about open space; "how much is enough?"



94
95 Prior to the February month meeting, J. Vogl will determine the best way to reach each objective,
96 whether it is by the number of parcels required to secure the benefits or the density of features on a
97 given parcel.

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99 The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:05 PM. The next meeting will take place on February 3,
100 2011.

101
102 Respectfully submitted,

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104 Jaye Trottier
105 Secretary