



Londonderry Open Space Task Force

Thursday, May 5, 2011

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1 Present: Mike Speltz, Chair and Conservation Commission Representative; Lynn Wiles, Secretary and  
2 Planning Board Representative; Art Rugg, Heritage Commission Representative; Marty Srugis, Solid  
3 Waste Advisory Committee Representative; Bill Manning, Recreation Commission Representative; John  
4 Curran, Budget Committee Representative; Lisa Whittemore, Budget Committee Alternate  
5 Representative; and Stella Tremblay, Legislative Representative

6  
7 Also present: John Vogl, GIS Manager; and Jaye Trottier, Administrative Assistant

8  
9 Absent: Dana Coons, Vice Chair and Planning Board Alternate Representative; George Herrmann, School  
10 Board Representative; Bob Saur, Londonderry Trailways Representative; Jeff Locke, At-Large  
11 Representative; and Tim McKenney, At-Large Representative

12  
13 M. Speltz called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. He asked members for comments or corrections  
14 regarding the minutes of the April 7, 2011 meeting. Seeing none, he entertained a motion to accept the  
15 minutes of the April 7, 2011 meeting. A. Rugg so moved. B. Manning seconded. The motion was  
16 approved, 7-0-1 with M. Speltz abstaining as he had not attended the meeting.

17  
18 The Task Force first reviewed the current version of the Green  
19 Infrastructure map created by J. Vogl. M. Speltz explained that  
20 infrastructure in general is defined as “those systems, services, and  
21 facilities that are necessary for economic activity.” For the purposes  
22 of the Task Force’s work, M. Speltz explained, this would include  
23 recreation as an economic activity since it is an important part of the  
24 State’s economy. “Green Infrastructure” is then specifically defined  
25 as those systems, services, and facilities that are provided by nature,  
26 namely the values and benefits that the Task Force identified in their  
27 earlier efforts and then ranked through the Delphi process (see  
28 Figure 1).

29  
30 To locate those values and benefits relative to unprotected land in  
31 Londonderry, the “Co-Occurrence of Natural Resource Features”  
32 map introduced at the April 7 meeting is used to identify where  
33 natural benefits co-exist. This helps determine what specific parcels  
34 of vacant or underdeveloped land have the highest incidences of multiple benefits. In order to sustain  
35 the particular benefits of those parcels over the long-term, a 600-foot buffer is placed around the high  
36 value areas, in this case, areas on the top 30% of total natural resource score as assigned in the Delphi  
37 Process, to separate uses and establish natural corridors. A network of the most advantageous buffered  
38 lots to protect is then created using narrow strips of connecting land. The land in those links may not be  
39 of specific natural value in and of themselves, but are important in that they connect other valuable  
40 areas. Once already developed areas are carved out, the remaining polygon identifies the green  
41 infrastructure in Londonderry.

42  
43 J. Vogl noted that map has changed very little since the last Open Space Task Force in 2005, although he  
44 pointed out two areas that have been added since then as a result of the Delphi scoring. Both are  
45 significant areas of forest block, one stretching along the majority of Perkins Road and the second

Preserve adequate drinking water quality/quantity
Keeping development out of floodplain areas
Preserve local agricultural land
Keep natural views in their present form
Support outdoor recreation in a natural setting
Support plant and animal habitat and connections between habitats
Preserve large, contiguous forest areas
Maintain historic structures in their appropriate context
Minimize/mitigate impacts of development elsewhere
Preserve habitat for endangered species

Fig. 1



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46 situated east of I-93 and west of Wilson Road (map and lot 16-9). The one large area of multiple co-  
 47 occurrences that will not be included as an area of potential complete preservation is the land south of  
 48 the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport around Pettengill Road. This was omitted in the 2005 OSTF  
 49 report as well because that area has been slated for development for years and has recently been zoned  
 50 specifically as a "Gateway Business" area. Protection of such things as the forests blocks, endangered  
 51 species, and natural aquifer in this area will be done primarily through the site plan process of the  
 52 Planning Board along with other land use boards and committees. This process affords those boards  
 53 and committees the ability not only to enforce the Town's regulations but also to negotiate with  
 54 developers in an attempt to maximize preservation efforts. L. Whittemore asked what legal recourse  
 55 the Town would have to protect an aquifer like that south of the airport, i.e. what entity retains the  
 56 water rights. M. Speltz explained that neither the property owner nor the Town own the groundwater  
 57 itself. In New Hampshire, groundwater is held in a public trust by the State, meaning the water belongs  
 58 to all its citizens. What the Town can do, however, is develop an aquifer protection ordinance to  
 59 regulate the effects of development on those water sources. M. Speltz pointed out other small areas  
 60 that have multiple benefits co-existing on them, however, their relative size and the location within  
 61 developed areas means their value will probably not be sustained in the long term.

62  
 63 The discussion then transitioned from regulatory measures to one of the funding required to support  
 64 the Open Space Plan. Currently, the Town is spending approximately \$900,000 per year to pay the  
 65 principle and interest on previously passed Open Space bonds. The March online open space survey  
 66 included the statement/question: "Currently, the Town spends 2.7% of its budget on conservation. What  
 67 percentage would you be willing to see it spend?" When interpreting the results of that survey, the  
 68 Task Force noted, "If one adds up the non-blank responses and removes the three outliers (33.5%, 25%,  
 69 20%) the average is 2.702%. This would indicate that open space efforts should 'stay the course.'" (April  
 70 7, 2011 minutes, p. 7). Using that interpretation, a Steady State approach to funding was introduced to  
 71 the Task Force for their review. This approach involves keeping the level of commitment steady at 2.7%  
 72 by introducing rolling bond measures timed to support new acquisitions as old ones are paid off. Since  
 73 the rate of interest decreases as the principal is paid off over time, the \$900,000 spent annually can  
 74 eventually be used in part towards the purchase of new bonds. Assuming bond payments are kept  
 75 below \$900,000 (based on the 2011 payments totaling \$925,000) and assuming a 4% interest rate on  
 76 new 10-year bonds, the steady state approach would call for the next \$1 million bond to be passed in  
 77 2013. Four other bonds, three at \$1 million and one at \$3 million in 2015, 2021, 2023, and 2025  
 78 respectively would balance out the five bonds that were authorized by taxpayers between 2001 and

79 2007 (see Fig.  
 80 2). There was support  
 81 for this idea,  
 82 however, it was noted  
 83 that increasing  
 84 stewardship efforts  
 85 should come first.

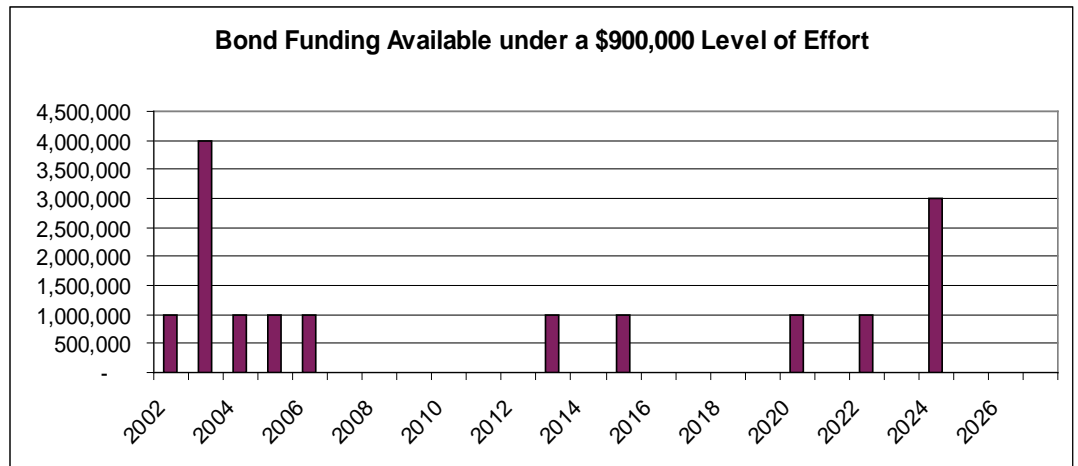


Fig. 2

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How much will be spent annually can, of course, be modified over time depending on the will of the taxpayers. Although it is impossible to know how much time exists before the remaining land in town is built out /preserved, the steady state rate will determine what funding will be available through the next decades while the list of most desired parcels in the open space plan will determine what funds will be required. There was consensus based on results of the online survey that the 2.7% figure should include funds needed for appropriate stewardship, although stewardship funding should come from a non-lapsing fund as opposed to a bond measure. As a side note, M. Speltz presented some data compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture showing that the Merrimack Valley watershed forest, within which Londonderry lies, is the most threatened by development in the nation. The third fastest disappearing forest is in the nearby Pisqataqua-Salmon Falls watershed to the east.

In order to know how much funding is needed, the Task Force next examined J. Vogl's map entitled "Potential Areas for Permanent Protection" (see attached). This map identifies roughly 220 unprotected parcels that are currently vacant or underdeveloped, are 8 acres in size or greater, and intersect the green infrastructure. The first question from Task Force members was why such lands as Woodmont Orchards on map and lot 10-41 and the Lorden property on 16-38 were still included when proposals for their development are in conceptual and formal subdivision review respectively. J. Vogl and M. Speltz explained that until construction actually begins, it is still conceivable that lands such as those could become available again. While it may be unlikely they will, M. Speltz advised that the plan should still prepare for the possibility. Such lots would simply not be as a high a priority as others. If development on those lots does take place, attempts to mitigate impacts and prevent others through the site plan process and other regulatory means would help to ensure some level of preservation. This regulatory approach would benefit the town in terms of natural resource preservation as well as by bringing commercial and industrial growth to add to the tax base.

Those parcels that fell under the above category were as follows:

1. Woodmont Commons (10-23, 10-42, 10-41-2, 10-15 & 10-41)
2. Pettengill Road area (14-35, 14-36, 14-38, 14-39 14-45, 14-45-2, etc.)
3. Lorden Subdivision (16-38)
4. Mill Pond Subdivision (18-13)
5. Evans Family land (16-9)

The following were choices of the different Task Force members as high priority parcels:

1. Lots 4-57, 7-111, 7-113 and 1-83 (M. Srugis); for water quality and quantity and to prevent flooding.
2. Lots in southwest corner such as 2-43 (M. Srugis); to protect the groundwater aquifer
3. Lots 6-84, 6-59-1, 6-53 and 3-132B (M. Srugis); would create a significant block of protected land since it abuts Moose Hill Orchards easements and would link them over to preserved land on Adams Road, including Sunnycrest Orchard easements.
4. Lots 8-6A, 9-8A, 9-12A, 9-12-62 and 9-83-1 (M. Srugis); would connect the Musquash over to conservation land on the north and eastern end of town. J. Vogl pointed out that these would be



136 considered "low cost" acquisitions since they already benefit from the temporary protection of  
137 being a utility corridor.

138 5. Lots 3-34, 1-26, and 1-18 (L. Whittemore); would support wildlife movement and habitat.

139 6. Lot 13-20; L. Wiles asked if its proximity to I-93 would hinder its conservation value, but M.  
140 Speltz explained that the efforts by NH DOT to effectively manage stormwater runoff from the  
141 highway would actually raise the value because of the specific wetland characteristics and scenic  
142 buffer. The expansion of I-93 was discussed further with the acknowledgment that it would bring  
143 significant development to NH. L. Whittemore and L. Wiles asked what measures could be taken  
144 to ensure wildlife will be able to cross under the highway through culverts, etc. M. Speltz  
145 explained that that phase of the project has been completed, but added that NH DOT could still  
146 be approached to examine what has been planned and what, if anything, is left to negotiate.  
147

148 If all of the parcels of highest priority were permanently protected and added to that which is already  
149 preserved, J. Vogl estimated that roughly 40% of land in town would be protected. M. Speltz added that  
150 according to Conservation Biologists, it takes somewhere between 25-50% of a given land area to be  
151 preserved in order to sustain the ecosystem indefinitely. J. Vogl will research the individual parcel  
152 values based on the above discussion to determine what kind of overall cost would be involved.  
153

154 M. Speltz next asked the group for any emerging themes resulting from the SWOT analysis  
155 (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) and online survey reviewed in previous meetings. There  
156 was consensus about using the themes presented by M. Speltz (see Fig. 3). M. Srugis recommended  
157 encouraging developers to use the Conservation Subdivision ordinance. J. Curran suggested focusing on  
158 the recreational aspect using the connecting  
159 lands mentioned earlier in order to develop  
160 community interest. M. Speltz advised  
161 reviewing the Town Master Plan to  
162 determine what goals there are for trails  
163 and recreation of Town owned land,  
164 perhaps working with Londonderry  
165 Trailways and the Recreation Commission to  
166 support those goals. Outreach to  
167 landowners with no-cut zones in their  
168 backyards was also deemed important in  
169 order to educate them on their  
170 responsibilities to protect that preserved  
171 land. The need for education in general  
172 about conservation and open space, J. Vogl  
173 pointed out, has been a constant theme  
174 throughout this process.  
175

### Emerging Themes from the SWOT and Survey

- **Priority to water: quality, quantity and flood control**
- **Greater outreach: familiarize residents with *their* land and its uses**
- **Develop recreation potential on town-owned land**
- **Develop a comprehensive stewardship plan for *all* town-owned land, but without added town staff**
- **Continue to protect open space; growth will continue**
- **Emphasize the regulatory approach**
- **Do not increase the current level of funding**
- **...and...and...and**

Fig. 3

176 The Task Force will be hosting a public meeting on May 25 at 7PM in the Moose Hill Council Chambers  
177 where they will attempt to obtain as much input as possible from residents about open space and  
178 conservation. M. Speltz explained that a brief overview of the Task Force's work to date would be  
179 provided, after which the Task Force should focus on absorbing public comments.  
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181 The meeting adjourned at 9:06 PM. The next meeting will be the aforementioned public meeting on  
182 May 25, 2011 at 7PM in the Moose Hill Council Chambers. The next regular meeting of the OSTF is  
183 scheduled for June 2, 2011 at 7PM at the Cable Access Center.

184

185 Respectfully submitted,

186

187 Jaye Trottier

188 Secretary