



Londonderry Open Space Task Force

Thursday, June 2, 2011

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1 Present: Dana Coons, Vice Chair and Planning Board Alternate Representative; George Herrmann,
2 School Board Representative; Art Rugg, Heritage Commission Representative; Marty Srugis, Solid Waste
3 Advisory Committee Representative; John Curran, Budget Committee Representative; and Tim
4 McKenney, At-Large Representative

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6 Also present: André Garron, AICP; John Vogl, GIS Manager; and Jaye Trottier, Administrative Assistant

7
8 Absent: Mike Speltz, Chair and Conservation Commission Representative; Lynn Wiles, Secretary and
9 Planning Board Representative; Bob Saur, Londonderry Trailways Representative; Bill Manning,
10 Recreation Commission Representative; Lisa Whittemore, Budget Committee Alternate Representative;
11 Jeff Locke, At-Large Representative; and Stella Tremblay, Legislative Representative

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13 D. Coons called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. He asked members for comments or corrections
14 regarding the minutes of the May 5, 2011 meeting. It was noted that the word "Tuesday" in the header
15 should read "Thursday" and that there was a missing "s" on the work "Process" on page 1, line 37. A.
16 Rugg made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 5, 2011 meeting as amended. M. Srugis
17 seconded. The motion was approved, 4-0-2 with D. Coons and G. Herrmann abstaining as they had not
18 attended the meeting. D. Coons asked members for comments or corrections regarding the minutes of
19 the May 25, 2011 meeting. It was noted that the word "Tuesday" in the header should read
20 "Wednesday." A. Rugg made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 25, 2011 meeting as amended.
21 M. Srugis seconded. The motion was approved, 5-0-1 with G. Herrmann abstaining as he had not
22 attended the meeting.

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24 The Task Force first reviewed the map generated by J. Vogl entitled "Potential Areas for Permanent
25 Protection" (see attached). J. Vogl explained that the map identifies the 80 +/- parcels the Task Force
26 called out and began assigning categories of protection to at their last meeting on May 5. While they
27 are not prioritized at this point, protection of these lots would conserve the natural resources identified
28 and ranked by the Task Force. This map illustrates possible levels of protection effort that may be
29 necessary, from "high" (outright purchase or purchase of an easement) to "low" (protected partially
30 through zoning regulations) and "Regulate" (protected through negotiations during site plan or
31 subdivision review by town staff and the Planning Board). Examples of high cost parcels would be those
32 identified as 17 though 20 on the map that would most likely be purchased outright or on which an
33 easement would be purchased. These parcels have a higher risk of development than other low cost
34 lots. An example of Low Cost protection would be where power lines currently exist given that the land
35 underneath is likely to remain as open space for the foreseeable future. Other examples of low cost lots
36 would be those with wetlands that are protected by local and State regulations, or those that are
37 landlocked. Those lots labeled "other" on the map are simply those under 20 acres in size. Land that is
38 slated for development, such as that in the area of Pettengill Road and the proposed Woodmont
39 Commons, will be reviewed by the Design Review Committee and the Planning Board. This will ensure
40 that regulations can play a factor in any partial conservation of those lands. A. Garron provided an
41 example where, during the site plan process, if the significant aquifer in the area of Pettengill Road is
42 threatened when one or more of those lots are developed, the Planning Board could choose to require
43 permeable pavement be utilized to allow stormwater runoff to filter back into the groundwater.

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45 M. Srugis asked what the total acreage of all the lots is. J. Vogl replied that the total for high cost parcels
46 is roughly 2,000 acres; everything identified on the report is more. Since 30% of the Town is currently
47 either permanently or partially protected, inclusion of the entire priority list would bring the total
48 percentage to approximately 48%. M. Srugis said that when answering the question “how much is
49 enough?” per the charge of the Town Council, he did not believe the public would want to pursue that
50 high a level of protection, based on feedback from the online survey performed in February as well as
51 the lack of feedback at the May 25 public meeting. If that land is bought outright and therefore taken
52 off the tax role, then he believes the increased burden to the taxpayer will lessen support for such
53 acquisitions. J. Vogl noted that the only real guidance from the survey was to keep the current level of
54 spending at the same 2.7% of the Town budget. D. Coons added that with more conserved land comes
55 an increased demand for proper stewardship of the purchases. T. McKenney reminded members of the
56 point brought up in past meetings that with more development comes the desire to preserve open
57 space. He suggested developing a strategy for purchases and highlighting the highest order parcels. J.
58 Vogl responded that a “threat-based” approach might meet their needs, where he would prioritize the
59 parcels by developing a matrix of individual lot developability balanced against the level of natural
60 resources they hold. He said that the priorities would be very broad and might include “Top Priority,”
61 “Medium Priority” and “Low Priority.” A. Rugg added weighing that overall desirability of the parcels
62 against their relative cost and what the Town can afford. T. McKenney stated that land value has to be
63 examined in terms of market value as well as open space value.
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65 The Task Force then reviewed the draft of the Final Report. J. Vogl reviewed each section and asked for
66 comments or questions. Comments from the members were specifically needed to fill out the
67 conclusions/recommendations section of the report. (Art Rugg left during the discussions at
68 approximately 8:10 PM). Members were in agreement with the suggested recommendations for the
69 Land Use Regulations/Policies and Continuing to Protect Open Spaces sections. Discussions on the
70 remaining sections led to the following comments/observations and questions:
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72 **Prioritization of parcels**

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- 74 • Add two scores to the list of parcels currently itemized by protection strategy in Chapter 5; one
75 for desirability and the other regarding potential for development
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77 **Stewardship**

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- 79 • Fully define what stewardship is and what it entails; Should the Conservation Commission or
80 another group create a coherent stewardship plan?;
 - 81 • Develop the recreational side of stewardship (e.g. creating and maintaining trails);
82 ○ This should be carried out by volunteer groups such as Londonderry Trailways;
 - 83 • Develop a financing plan for stewardship;
 - 84 • Define and delegate the different levels of stewardship to different groups (e.g. standard annual
85 site walks vs. removal of invasive plant species vs. forestry);
86 ○ Those volunteer groups or “partners” need to be listed out first;
 - 87 • Fewer respondents in the online survey were willing to spend additional tax dollars for
88 stewardship as compared to open space purchases. Purchasing more open space, however, will
89 increase stewardship costs.



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- 90 ○ Stewardship should be addressed under “Continuing to Protect open spaces” in Chapter
- 91 10;
- 92 ● Develop better guidelines for stewardship in order to adequately fund it;
- 93 ○ Determine exactly what we want to get out of stewardship;
- 94 ● Develop a comprehensive stewardship plan before large parcels currently slated for
- 95 development (Woodmont Commons, the Lorden parcel on 16-38) are taken out of their Current
- 96 Use status and the town receives significant funding from the Land Use Change Tax;
- 97 ● Distinguish in the stewardship guidelines what issues fall instead under enforcement (e.g. illegal
- 98 ATV use on protected land);
- 99 ● Teach residents how to perform stewardship tasks so they can volunteer for basic monitoring
- 100 activities;
- 101 ● Contract out more demanding stewardship activities to a professional for a fixed amount to work
- 102 from spring through the fall;
- 103 ● If residents are comfortable with the steady state spending at 2.7%, can a portion of that be
- 104 earmarked for stewardship?;
- 105 ● Can local businesses become involved with and support stewardship (e.g. a logging company)?;
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107 **Education** (see also “Negotiations”)

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- 109 ● Educate the public about how the value of an easement is determined;
- 110 ○ What are we “getting” when we purchase an easement?
- 111 ● Educate residents as to why the selected parcels are important and why the different resources
- 112 that caused their selection are important to the town.
- 113 ● Clarify what activities can be done on what protected lands;
- 114 ● Explain the difference between a fee purchase and the purchase of a conservation easement;
- 115 ○ What are the tax implications of each?;
- 116 ● Utilize Old Home Days and Election days as a method of educational outreach;
- 117 ● Use LCTV to produce educational spots;
- 118 ● Work with the School Board to educate students who may, in turn, involve their parents;
- 119 ● Encourage Boy Scouts to assist with education through an Eagle Scout project;
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121 **Recreation**

- 122 ● Enhance the recreation potential on Town owned land;
- 123 ○ This aids in maintenance of the land, depending on the group’s specific recreational use
- 124 ○ Identify groups that can provide stewardship through their recreation use of individual
- 125 properties
- 126 ● Encourage geocaching on town owned land
- 127 ● Support Londonderry Trailways in the development of the rail trail
- 128 ● Encourage trail development on underutilized lands such as the Bockes-Ingersoll property;
- 129 ○ Find out what, if anything, Hudson is doing about recreation on their portion of that
- 130 forest;
- 131 ● Encourage low impact, non-motorized wintertime activities such as cross-country skiing, ice
- 132 hockey and snowshoeing on town owned land;
- 133 ○ Contact the Recreation Department Director about this potential;



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- Publish what lands are available for hunting;
 - Develop private partnerships with companies like Eastern Mountain Sports to encourage activities (though skill courses, confidence courses, etc.)
 - Use Facebook, Town website, etc. to organize and publicize spontaneous hikes, bike rides, etc. in various places.

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141 **Negotiations**

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- Identify the criteria used in land negotiations to educate residents about the process;
 - There is a perception that some deals favor the landowners over the interests of the town;
 - Make negotiations as transparent as possible;
 - What are the guidelines for purchasing land or easements?
 - What is the strategy behind purchasing land or easements?
 - What are the responsibilities of the Conservation Commission with regard to negotiations?
 - Purchase and Sale agreements should include an expiration date to ensure acquisitions are completed within a reasonable time frame;

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153 **Other**

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- If people answer a question negatively in the survey such as not wanting to add staff to perform stewardship tasks, were they given the opportunity to tell us what they do want? Do they know what they want with regard to open space?;
 - Include the Town Attorney's response to the question of easement enforceability in the report.
- 159 J. Vogl said that he would review the comments and develop specific recommendations for review at the July meeting. He said that he would add the updated parcel list for adoption as a recommendation.

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162 G. Herrmann made a motion to adjourn. J. Curran seconded. The motion was approved, 5-0-0.

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164 The meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM. The next meeting will take place on July 7, 2011 at 7PM at the Cable
165 Access Center.

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167 Respectfully submitted,

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169 Jaye Trottier

170 Secretary