



Londonderry Open Space Task Force
Tuesday, November 4, 2010
Page 1 of 4

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;**
3 **Art Rugg, Heritage Commission Representative; George Herrmann, School Board Representative; Bill**
4 **Manning, Recreation Commission Representative; Marty Srugis, Solid Waste Advisory Committee**
5 **Representative; Lisa Whittemore, Budget Committee Alternate Representative; Bob Saur,**
6 **Londonderry Trailways Representative; Jeff Locke, At-Large Representative; and Tim McKenney, At-**
7 **Large Representative**

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

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11 **Absent: John Curran, Budget Representative**

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13 M. Speltz called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He asked the members to introduce themselves and
14 express why they are interested in serving on the Open Space Task Force.

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16 Following introductions, M. Speltz explained the initiation of the 2010-11 Open Space Task Force. The
17 Town Council recently charged this Task Force with updating the 2005-6 Open Space Plan in anticipation
18 of an update to the Town's Master Plan in 2011 and to expand on the old plan in several ways. One
19 mandate of the current Master Plan is to "protect the natural resources" necessary to "sustain a livable
20 Londonderry." In addition to this broader task, the Council has asked that the OSTF focus on two
21 specific topics not fully addressed by the previous OS Plan: 1) Stewardship, i.e. maintaining the open
22 space already preserved in town, and 2) Financing the acquisition of open space and associated
23 stewardship. M. Speltz explained that the latter can viewed in terms of deciding when the OS Plan is
24 complete based on the investments made to date, the remaining land deemed vital to protect, and the
25 funding needed for open space purchases. This project will effectively include an inventory of assets:
26 desired environmental resources protected either by regulatory resources or funded by financial
27 resources.

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29 The scope of work was outlined in five phases, the first being an inventory of what lands are presently
30 conserved, be it by easements, statute, land use board conditions, etc., along with a review of how
31 those lands are currently monitored and managed. The second phase, which will detail all natural
32 resources considered essential for the town, will also answer the question of how much open space is
33 required to provide satisfactory levels of those resources and their associated benefits to the town.
34 While some resources are quantifiable in nature, others are more subjective, such as what constitutes a
35 scenic view or how many recreational fields will meet the needs of the town. M. Speltz noted that
36 because specific determinations arise from varying viewpoints and public inputs, this phase should
37 prove to be the most demanding. Phase III will entail an assessment of the prioritized resources to
38 identify their (S)trengths, (W)eaknesses, (O)pportunities and (T)hreats, a/k/a the "SWOT" analysis.
39 Determining how to best use limited natural services will come from ascertaining the sources of those
40 benefits, examining any weaknesses the town has in securing those benefits, then finding opportunities
41 for and/or threats against them. Consensus on the sufficiency of each benefit will eventually help
42 answer the larger question of how much open space is enough "to sustain a livable Londonderry." One
43 particular issue the Town Council has requested is an examination of threats associated with flooding,
44 mainly due to the ongoing impact to homes on the cul de sac of Brookview Drive. The goal of Phase IV is



Londonderry Open Space Task Force
Tuesday, November 4, 2010
Page 2 of 4

45 to bring the conclusions of the inventory of resources, the analysis of the town's needs, and the SWOT
46 analysis to Londonderry residents in an open forum where they can offer their opinions and ideas. M.
47 Speltz noted, however, that this should not be the first point of contact with residents. OSTF meetings
48 will be televised and open to the public, At-Large representatives will act as links to interested residents,
49 and the remaining representatives will keep their various boards and committees informed. A brief
50 synopsis of each meeting can also be presented to the Council during the public comment session of
51 their agenda after each OSTF meeting. The fifth phase will take the revised analysis and generate the
52 written report, offering a plan for stewardship and a method of financing both the conservation and
53 management of land. Wherever possible, stewardship and protection should be achieved through
54 regulation (e.g. State statute or town ordinances) to avoid the need for funding through tax dollars.

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56 Guidance given by the Town Council includes making use of contact with the public to solicit the
57 expertise of residents, Town boards and committees, government agencies, etc. M. Speltz made a
58 specific request to the viewing audience that those with any technical environmental background
59 contact him. Regular updates to the Council will reflexively provide potential for finding those with
60 expertise along with additional public input. The Council has also asked the OSTF to consider what
61 incentive/disincentive programs are available when researching the possible forms of regulation. Time-
62 phased cost estimates will be required, along with the estimated value of potential revenue sources to
63 demonstrate the economic viability of the program. A preliminary report is due March 4, 2011 (prior to
64 Town Meeting) and the final report by June 30 (prior to the commencement of the Capital Improvement
65 Plan process).

66

67 GIS Manager John Vogl introduced members to the application of GIS technology to visualize OSTF
68 results. He reviewed the most recently updated open space map, which identifies each piece of
69 conserved land and categorizes its form of protection (easement, Town ownership, impact mitigation,
70 etc). Tied to each parcel in the GIS system are the specifics of the parcels, including such things as
71 acreage, ownership, percentage of wetlands/uplands, degree of slopes and natural resources. He then
72 presented the "Green Infrastructure Map" created by the last OSTF. This illustrates a contiguous
73 network of potential green space that links existing conservation areas to ensure corridors of wildlife
74 and to secure natural services. The infrastructure is spread out over 20% of the land area, which J. Vogl
75 explained is consistent with overall State conservation goals. Londonderry's model has been applied to
76 all of southern New Hampshire in the I-93 corridor, helping towns such as Litchfield, Derry, and Bedford
77 create their own green infrastructure networks. In turn, the plans of other communities will assist in
78 looking beyond Londonderry's borders to see where advantageous connections with other towns may
79 exist.

80

81 M. Speltz explained that the first significant act of conservation in Londonderry was the acquisition in
82 1973 of several small pieces of what is now known as the Musquash Conservation Area. In 1978,
83 another 538 acres were added. Today the Musquash features over 1,000 acres, chiefly due to the
84 intensification of open space efforts following the first OS Plan developed by the Conservation
85 Commission in 2001. When the second plan was developed in 2005-06 with the aid of better technology
86 and input of the other boards and committees, roughly 85% of the same land identified in the original
87 plan was acknowledged again. The 2010-11 plan can further build on previous iterations to first
88 substantiate their results and then achieve the new goals set forth by the Council.



Londonderry Open Space Task Force
Tuesday, November 4, 2010
Page 3 of 4

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90 M. Speltz asked members for questions and/or comments. A. Rugg suggested that when inventorying
91 resources in Phase II, historic properties and structures be considered. M. Speltz noted that part of the
92 preservation of aesthetics associated with the Town's history is conserving the land upon which these
93 structures stand. Also as part of Phase II, Bob Saur asked whether the effluence of septic systems should
94 be factored into the discussion of water quality. Drinking water supply had been listed under the
95 examples of resources to be discussed, but he proposed looking at water quality on a broader scale. He
96 also asked if a version of the green infrastructure map could be generated to show areas that are
97 currently before the Planning Board for development. J. Vogl said he could add that aspect to the map.
98 T. McKenney suggested that when determining the cost of open space, the OSTF calculate the cost of
99 not protecting land in terms of the expenses for roads, water systems, sewer systems and other
100 infrastructure. Because these "opportunity costs" involve varying opinions which make it more difficult
101 to quantify, M. Speltz thought this will require a more detailed examination to address it adequately. J.
102 Locke asked whether the green infrastructure maps of surrounding towns were based on the same
103 methodology as Londonderry's so that accurate comparisons can be made. J. Vogl replied that they
104 were and J. Locke suggested Londonderry's "livability" could then be measured in relationship to
105 neighboring communities. Those towns that have not completed their green infrastructure maps should
106 be doing so soon since their work is in anticipation of the impending widening of I-93. J. Vogl will have
107 information available at the next meeting regarding what towns have completed their maps and when
108 others expect to be done. J. Locke also asked for electronic copies of the maps presented. J. Vogl said
109 he would supply those as well as "homework packets" prior to each meeting.

110

111 M. Speltz reviewed the work plan for each meeting. The next step for J. Vogl and staff before the
112 December meeting is to develop a methodology and perform an inventory of existing open space
113 resources and stewardship plans. The OSTF will then validate those resources and prioritize their values
114 and benefits. This will lead to staff developing the analyses of those natural services for a discussion at
115 the January meeting when the previous ratings will be reassessed if need be. Staff can then refine the
116 analyses so the OSTF can address the issue of "how much is enough" in February. Once the analyses are
117 finalized by staff, a preliminary report will be generated for the March meeting, at which time the Task
118 Force will set the parameters for the SWOT analysis to be conducted by staff in preparation of the April
119 meeting. Included in the schedule for March is a proposed update to be delivered at Town Meeting. B.
120 Saur questioned if that would be an appropriate forum for that kind of presentation. He proposed doing
121 so at a Town Council meeting just prior to Town Meeting instead. It was decided to pose the question
122 back to the Town Council for their determination. In April, the public will be invited to offer their input,
123 which will be used by staff to adjust the work done to that point. Those updates can be reviewed by the
124 OSTF at their May meeting so they may start formulating methods of finance, regulation, etc. Staff will
125 then draft a more detailed plan for the OSTF to approve or modify in June and then present to the Town
126 Council and Planning Board. More revisions will be done by staff so a final version can be presented to
127 the residents by July. L. Wiles asked if the deadline could be extended beyond July if necessary. M.
128 Speltz said it could be pushed back but should ideally not go beyond August when the Capital
129 Improvement Committee is preparing its recommendations to the Planning Board. D. Coons felt that
130 additional time needed to be spent on determining funding for the plan, particularly with regard to
131 stewardship. M. Speltz replied that establishing those costs should be dealt with prior to the scheduled
132 discussion in May. It was discussed that subgroups can address the issues, working parallel to the



Londonderry Open Space Task Force
Tuesday, November 4, 2010
Page 4 of 4

133 monthly tasks. G. Herrmann recommended using stewardship plans from the UNH Cooperative
134 Extension and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests as models. M. Speltz asked all
135 members to forward organizational ideas for individual tasks to the secretary prior to the next meeting.
136

137 Officers were selected as follow:

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139 Chair: B. Saur nominated M. Speltz for Chair of the OSTF. Lisa Whittemore seconded.

140
141 Vice Chair: D. Coons volunteered to be Vice Chair.

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143 Secretary: D. Coons nominated L. Wiles for Secretary of the OSTF. G. Herrmann seconded.
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145 The next meeting will take place on December 2, 2010.

146
147 Respectfully submitted,

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149
150
151 Jaye Trottier
152 Secretary

DRAFT