

January 3, 2012

Dear members of the Recreation Commission,

I stand before those of you entrusted by the people of Wayland. You have the power and the burden of making decisions about recreational land use in town. I ask you to work in cooperation with others to determine the feasibility of the site proposed in the area we call the Middle School Woods.

We have heard much talk of the Town's desire to communicate and cooperate better as a community. In keeping with that desire, I respectfully ask you to set an example and in cooperation with other boards in town, with the citizens of this town, and with those whose ancestors used this land long before it came to be known as the Middle School property, assure that due diligence is performed as you consider potential uses of this site.

Last spring at Town Meeting, the people voted for \$75,000 to be set aside for a study of the area in question in order to ascertain the feasibility and appropriateness of this parcel of land for the fields and for a possible septic leaching field.

In the interest of working with the people for a good outcome and based upon public input, The Recreation Commission provided a scope of work for study of the land. Included was mention of the possibility of Native American artifacts and the need to follow up should anything be found.

As you well know many of us close to that land, in physical proximity and in heart, have been quite outspoken about our concerns. What some may perceive to be a not in my backyard response has actually been quite helpful in helping us better comprehend the land. We now have an understanding that is proving to be multifaceted, revealing significant issues of worth. These matters may have unfolded in a linear manner through time, yet they continue with us to present days and will continue with us into our future.

Tonight, I will speak to one of those issues. I have had the good fortune to walk the land with members of the Historical Commission, with an expert in Ceremonial Landscapes from the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and with others, of the Mass Archeological Society, who have knowledge of astronomical alignments, geology, and archeology. They have all concurred in their evaluation that this is Traditional Ceremonial Landscape, in other words, a sacred site, worthy of protection.

They have also agreed that this land should be further studied in order to arrive at a more definitive evaluation, suggesting mappings of the features, and potentially using ground penetrating radar to understand what lies below the surface without destroying any features. We ask that a study of the land be conducted by those who understand the nature of such sites in order to assure a culturally sensitive approach.

I respectfully ask, with and on behalf of others who share my concerns, in the spirit of cooperation that you work with the Historical Commission, whose members have more experience in studying features of historic importance, and with the School Committee members, who ultimately are the stewards of this land, to help make such a study occur.

I request that you appropriate funds from the money voted on at Town Meeting last spring to fund this investigation.

As a community, once we arrive at a better understanding of the landscape, we will be better equipped to make informed decisions about the use of this land.

Respectfully,

Sheila Carel  
18 Joyce Road  
Wayland, MA 01778

CC: Members of the Historical Commission for the Town of Wayland  
Members of the School Committee for the Town of Wayland