

**Draft
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Cape Elizabeth Town Council
FROM: Conservation Commission
DATE: June 30, 2011
SUBJECT: Open Space and Greenbelt Management Plan

Introduction

The Open Space and Greenbelt Management Committee is pleased to recommend the enclosed draft management plan for Town Council consideration.

The Town Council authorized a charge for the committee on April 12, 2010. The committee, comprised of the Conservation Commission and Town Council Liaison Jessica Sullivan, met 16 ([includes June 14th] times plus held 2 public forums, on June 16, 2010 and May 26, 2011. (See attached minutes of public forums)

Highlights of the Plan

The plan focuses on existing open space and how it should be managed rather than future open space growth. Some of the highlights of the plan include:

1. **Management Area concept.** Prior town open space inventories have been organized by type of ownership and map-lot. For management purposes, and to understand the potential value of a seemingly small and isolated lot, land is presented by geographic area. Maps showing each geographic area are included that suggest how individual lots are connected to a larger greenbelt trail network.
2. **Updated inventory.** The plan includes a one page description with map of each open space parcel owned by the Town, each parcel for which the town holds an easement, and selected Land Trust properties immediately adjacent to town holdings.
3. **Names.** Each town holding has been assigned a name. In some cases, names refer to the original donors or owners of the land. Assigning a name to each lot should ease reference to lots in the future. As with the entire plan, all names are subject to Town Council approval.

4. **Open Space types.** The management plan introduces some new categories for open space. For example, 7 parcels are designated as “preserves,” where the management plan recommends to essentially leave these areas in their natural state due to the presence of wetlands. Another category is the neighborhood park, where an open space lot is primarily valuable as a resource to the neighborhood.
5. **Activities/Facilities Table.** The plan includes a table of open space managed by the Town with a list of activities that are allowed or not allowed and facilities available on each lot. This table has been coordinated with existing deed restrictions and should be a handy reference for residents.
6. **Management Policies.** The plan commits to writing, many for the first time, management policies for town open space. These policies are a combination of custom and practice, state law, and anticipated demands for the future. (See attached email re: hunting)
7. **Encroachments.** The Town Council’s decision to commission the management plan was motivated, in part, by the need to address possible encroachment on town property in a proactive way. The management plan includes specific policies for encroachments, a process to identify and respond to encroachments and a recommendation that the Town Council consider annual funding of approximately \$2,500 to begin an open space boundary survey program.

Conclusion

The Open Space and Greenbelt Management Committee made every effort to recommend management policies that adequately protect town open space for the benefit of all residents and reflect community values. The committee strongly encourages the Town Council to review the management plan and to make revisions as needed. The committee looks forward to assisting the Town Council with that review.