

U. S. MILITARY RESERVATION LAND  
WAYSIDE INN DINNER MEETING  
FEBRUARY 27, 1974

At the invitation of the Sudbury Board of Selectmen, Commissioner Arthur W. Brownell of the Department of Natural Resources, Joel A. Lerner of Conservation Services, and Bruce S. Gullion of Forests and Parks, Selectman Roland Wright and Mr. Richard Savage of the Conservation Commission from the Town of Stow, and Selectman Roland Plante from the Town of Hudson met with Chairman of the Board of Selectmen William F. Toomey, Selectman John C. Powers, Town Counsel David L. Turner, and Executive Secretary Richard E. Thompson from the Town of Sudbury on Wednesday, February 27, 1974, at 6:00 p.m. at the Wayside Inn.

The purpose of the meeting was discussion of the objectives for the ultimate use and ownership of the so-called military reservation land located in Sudbury, Stow, Hudson, and Maynard.

Mr. Thompson reported that there were 750 acres of land within the military reservation which were scheduled to be exscessed in two actions by the Federal Government. Mr. Thompson stated that the first 350 acres is further along in the process, but will be followed by the remainder. He further stated that the State has already concurred in an allocation of 100 acres to the Town of Maynard, a portion of which has been zoned for industrial use.

Commissioner Brownell stated that property no longer needed by a federal agency is first circulated at the federal level, and if no interest is indicated, it becomes exscessed by the Review Board. Commissioner Brownell stated that a price is established by the Federal Government, and it is offered to the State, then to the towns, and finally for public auction, if no interest is indicated at the State or town level. He stated that once the property becomes exscessed, any State agency or involved town can file an application for its acquisition.

Commissioner Brownell stated that if all available land in this area were acquired by the Department of Natural Resources, it may be developed as a State park for recreation and conservation purposes.

Mr. Gullion added that the area could be opened as a park immediately, but there would be no facilities available at the outset, and estimated that final development of the park would take approximately ten years from the time of land acquisition.

Commissioner Brownell commented that the State, in development of land, must comply with State zoning and public health laws, but is not bound by town laws in this regard.

Mr. Lerner stated that land acquired in this manner, when used for public health, recreational, conservational, and educational uses can qualify for up to 100% cost discount.

Mr. Gullion stated that this property was made up of sand, gravel, woodland, and pond and would lend itself to uses such as a day camp and to activities such as horseback riding, fishing, and swimming, if the water were made suitable. Mr. Gullion stated that a primary water supply can, under present laws, allow no additional use other than fishing, but that a source used as a secondary supply can be used for body contact sports. In response to a question, Mr. Gullion stated that incorporation of a swimming facility in this location would have no fallout effect on the processing of applications for BOR reimbursement (Haskell property). Mr. Gullion stated that construction of a golf course within the area would not be desirable, as the State does not wish to conflict with private enterprise.

With reference to the earlier mention of the composition of the land, Mr. Gullion stated that there would be no removal of sand and gravel or of any nonrenewable material.

Commissioner Brownell stated that the Department of Natural Resources is coming very close to acquisition of 1,000 acres of land in Carlisle for the purposes of a State park, which would have an impact on this land. He further stated that the Department is very interested in the military area as its master plan indicates that they need land which is located west and northwest of Boston and situated between Routes 128 and 495.

Chairman Toomey responded that at the present time the Sudbury boards and commissions have indicated the hope that the Sudbury portion of land will remain as open land and be used for purposes of recreation and conservation.

Selectman Plante stated that he believed Hudson would use its share of the land for a conservation-recreation area and would police it by cruiser. Selectman Plante stated that Hudson's portion of land is not very large and that he personally would prefer to see the land remain as open space with limited recreational use.

Selectman Wright stated that Stow would like to acquire its share of the land for purposes of conservation and recreation, but did not want State control of it. Selectman Wright and Mr. Savage stated that the Town is willing to police it, as they already patrol the area on a regular basis, and that the land would be treated much as their Town Forest is presently, with very little development.

In response to a question relating to a change in the use of the land if first acquired by the State for the purpose of conservation and recreation, Commissioner Brownell replied that it would take a two-thirds vote of the legislature, the signature of the Governor, and approval from the Secretary of the Interior before any use change would be authorized.

Commissioner Brownell stated that, in his opinion, if the State and all the towns file applications for similar land use, the use direction would be enhanced.


Mr. Thompson stated that the Sudbury Board of Selectmen had received a letter from the Sudbury Nonprofit Housing Corporation which indicated their interest in this land. Mr. Lerner commented that if use intent were divided to indicate some interest for housing, the Town might still qualify for 100% cost discount.

Commissioner Brownell stated that all applications must contain a land use plan and recommended that all information and applications be coordinated well in advance of the excess date. Commissioner Brownell offered to provide technical assistance to the Towns to assist in the development of a coordinated plan of the land and the filing of applications and suggested that a joint committee be set up to work in this regard.

In response to a question, Commissioner Brownell stated that the State provides very little in the way of training programs for the managers of State parks, as they have been professionally trained (college graduates in forestry, etc.) and offered, if the Towns acquire the land, to send out their managers to help coordinate land management programs.

It was the consensus of the meeting that a joint committee, composed of one designee from each of the four Towns, be set up and to appoint Mr. Thompson as contact director with Commissioner Brownell's office, for the purpose of developing a coordinated plan.

It was also agreed that Mr. Thompson will contact, by letter, the designees forwarding an overall map of the area, the application forms, and the minutes of tonight's meeting.

Attest:   
Richard E. Thompson  
Executive Secretary-Clerk