

Land Acquisition Review Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held Dec. 12, 2017, 8:00 am

Engineering Conference Room, DPW Building

Present: John Cutting; Jan Hardenbergh; John Hincks; and Tom Friedlander

Staff: Beth Suedmeyer; Debbie Dineen

Public: Chris Morely (short gap in appointments as LARC member); Charlie Russo

LARC opened the meeting at 8am and met to discuss current project proposals for land acquisition under consideration by the Community Preservation Committee.

Liberty Ledge Sewataro

An application was submitted to the CPC by Mark Taylor, one of the owners of the land, to see if the Town has interest in purchasing a conservation restriction on the property while still allowing the operation of the summer day camp on the site. LARC members unanimously agreed that although there may be interest by the town in maintaining the site as a recreational facility, a conservation restriction is not the appropriate mechanism to protect active recreational land. There was support by some members for the Town to work with the owners to figure out a way to support their ongoing camp operations through a creative partnership. But, this would need to be further investigated and considered.

Broadacres

The Town has submitted a CPC request to fund the acquisition of Broadacres Farm on Morse Road. This property is listed as a priority parcel for preservation in the 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan and a priority Heritage Landscape in the 2006 Heritage Landscape Inventory Report. It is subject to the 61A Agricultural tax classification. The proposal at this time focuses on acquisition of the 19 acre parcel on the south side of Morse Road. Conservation of this land would create contiguity with adjacent Wake Robin Woods Conservation Land and the proposed Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. LARC members unanimously supported the acquisition of the parcel, pending a reasonable agreed upon purchase price.

LARC suggests DPW develop a lot plan based on layout of the land and zoning regulations and recommend areas to be tested for percolation. The Town will request information on owner's plan and wetland delineation. The Town Manager has requested funds from the CPC for conducting an appraisal

Debbie Dineen agreed to write a memo to the Board of Selectmen to capture and convey the discussion. See the attached memo dated February 9, 2018.

In the context of the Broadacres Farm project, the topic of a Conservation Fund was discussed, as a means of dedicating CPA funds towards acquisition of priority parcels for land protection without having to wait to take action through Town meetings. Members said they prefer the thorough vetting that takes place through the current process, where each parcel is considered through a CPC application and voted on at Town meeting. Generally, they don't see a need to fund the conservation fund when CPA funds exist.

LARC also briefly discussed the potential donation to the Town of the Topham property (Parcel G08-0033) off Demarco Road. LARC members unanimously expressed support for the Town's acceptance of the Topham property donation should this become a formal offer.