

Town of Shelburne

Open Space Committee

2006 Annual Report

Open space is defined as land that is undeveloped, generally without paved roads or permanent structures, which includes, but is not be limited to, land to protect existing and future well fields, aquifers and recharge areas, watershed land, agricultural land, grasslands, fields, forest land, fresh water marshes and other wetlands, river, stream, lake and pond frontage, lands to protect scenic vistas, land for wildlife or nature preserve and land for active or passive recreational use such as the use of land for community gardens, trails, and noncommercial youth and adult sports, and the use of land as a park, playground or athletic field.

Through the efforts of many citizens using techniques such as covenants, conservation restrictions, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions and tax incentives, (such as Chapter 61) Shelburne has preserved over 8,000 acres of agricultural land, woodlands and open space in the Town with some level of protection from development.

The Open Space Committee has continued to carry out the initiatives identified by the Town in the Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan approved by the Town in 2004. Activities included:

- Supported the development and implementation of a "Right to Farm Bylaw";
- Prepared groundwork for creating an Agricultural Commission; proposed Commission for Town Meeting approval and facilitated launch of the Commission;
- Drafted procedures for the consistent handling of Chapter 61 right of first refusals by the Town; now reviewing changes to Chapter 61 law to understand impacts on Shelburne, and recommending a procedure;
- Supported the Planning Board in reviewing and updating the Bylaws; participated in the Ad-Hoc Zoning task force to recommend provisions to maximize the preservation of open space in potential developments;
- Drafting guidelines for reviewing and evaluating the importance of open space parcels;
- Created an Open Space Donation Account to receive private donations for the preservation of open space in Shelburne;
- Two members participated in the UMass Coverts Forestry program.

Open Space is a heritage, which, when lost to development, can never be recaptured. It is our privilege to work with landowners as stewards of this heritage, and we are grateful for the support of many townspeople committed to preserving open space, agriculture and the rural character of the Town, and to the many individuals who have contributed to the Open Space Contribution Account this year.

Members:

Christine Baronas
Cynthia Boettner
Eugene Butler
Russell Davenport
Larry Flaccus

Board Representatives:

Norman Beebe, Recreation Committee
Norm Davenport, Conservation Commission
John Payne, Planning Board