

Town of Shelburne
Open Space Committee
2017 Annual Report

The Open Space Committee highly values the efforts of our many citizens who continue to support the goals of protecting and preserving open space in the Town of Shelburne.

The major focus of work of the Committee in 2017 was to continue work on executing the updated Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan. This plan, approved by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation Resources, serves as a guide for the identification, prioritization and protection of Shelburne's natural, cultural, scenic and historic resources, and identifies future open space and recreation needs of the residents of Shelburne.

Throughout the year, the Committee continued to advocate for open space in Shelburne. Activities included:

- Continued work on the Shelburne Trail system: initiated discussions, and with the Recreation Committee and the Franklin Land Trust, pursued a feasibility study grant with the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation to evaluate the potential development of a Riverfront Trail connecting the Potholes to the existing Mahican-Mohawk Trail located on Franklin Land Trust property;
- In conjunction with the Town's Tree Warden, FRCOG, the Historical Society and the GSFBA, planned and developed a Village Walk, with color map and brochure including trees of note, historical buildings and village landmarks, with brochure to be ready for 250th celebration;
- Collaborated with the Planning Board and ZBA regarding open space issues on proposed Zoning Bylaw amendments;
- Provided input to the Shelburne Community Development Strategy;
- Reviewed culvert survey data and collaborated with Town officials on best ways to protect wildlife and ensure safety at river and stream crossings;
- Continued to update and maintain the collection of over 30 maps relating to various town attributes and open space to facilitate town officials and citizen access to the information and tools (maps are available for study on a rack in the Memorial Hall meeting room and on the Town Website);
- Served on the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Advisory Committee to finalize a plan in conjunction with FRCOG, Mass DEA and USDA Forest Service outlining strategies to advance sustainable and productive woodlands, land conservation, and economic development in the region.

The Committee reviewed priorities for the coming year, and has the following goals:

- Identify and advance the top priority action items in the updated Open Space and Recreation Plan and continue work on action plans with interested citizens and town Boards;
- Work with the Franklin Land Trust to develop a potential trail along the riverfront;
- Integrate map resources into new digital mapping system in development by Assessors;
- Coordinate with the Mahican-Mohawk Trail ad hoc group to ensure improved access, marking, mapping, maintenance and marketing of the trail.
- Continue to develop and sponsor educational forums on topics such as conservation programs, land transfer, control of invasive species, and other topics of interest to landowners;
- In conjunction with the Recreation Committee, continue to identify landowners willing to open their land to the public, and identify, map and blaze such trails including posting trail signs;
- Promote the Open Space Donation Account as a means to fund open space acquisition with private dollars in the absence of town funding.

Open space is defined as, "land that is undeveloped, generally without paved roads or permanent structures, which includes, but is not 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 conservation restrictions, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions and tax incentives (such as Chapter 61), residents of Shelburne have identified over 5,600 acres of agricultural land, woodlands and open space in the Town with some level of protection from development. (37.1% of the Town's land area – see following table for details.)

| PRIVATELY OWNED OPEN SPACE | Acres | % Of Total Land Area in Shelburne |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------|
| Farmland | | |
| <i>Protected by Agricultural Preservation Restriction</i> | 1,360.2 | 9.1% |
| <i>Temporarily Protected Farmland under Ch. 61A*</i> | 1,964.8 | 13.1% |
| Forestland | | |
| <i>Protected by Conservation Restriction</i> | 429.0 | 2.9% |
| <i>Owned by a Conservation Organization</i> | 647.2 | 4.3% |
| <i>Temporarily Protected Forestland</i> | | |
| Chapter 61* | 671.3 | 4.5% |
| Chapter 61B* | 107.6 | 0.3% |
| TOTAL PRIVATELY OWNED OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION | 5,180.1 | 34.2% |
| | | |
| PUBLICLY OWNED OPEN SPACE | Acres | % Of Total Land Area in Shelburne |
| Forestland | | |
| <i>Protected by State Conservation Agencies</i> | | |
| Department of Conservation and Recreation – Division of State Parks and Recreation | 74.7 | 0.5% |
| <i>Land Owned by Shelburne Falls Fire District</i> | 297.0 | 2.0% |
| Other Lands | | |
| <i>Cemeteries</i> | 37.0 | 0.2% |
| <i>Land with Limited Protection Owned by Town of Shelburne</i> | 32.8 | 0.2% |
| TOTAL PUBLICLY OWNED OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION | 441.5 | 2.4% |
| TOTAL OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION | 5,621.6 | 37.1% |

Source: FRCOG using Town of Shelburne Assessor's Records, 2012; and MassGIS Open Space data, 2012

It is the privilege of the Open Space Committee to work with landowners as stewards of open space, 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 individuals who have contributed to the Open Space Donation Account this year. Account totals include: Open Space Donation Account: \$18,094; Land Preservation Account: \$ 26,479; Open Space Revolving Fund: \$ 267.

At-large Members:

Joel Dwight
Larry Flaccus
Linda Herrera
Arlene Patenaude
Jim Perry
David Schochet

Board Representatives:

Norman Beebe, Recreation Committee
Beth Manning, Agricultural Commission
Norm Davenport, Conservation Commission
Tom Johnson, Planning Board