

*Town of*



AMHERST

*Massachusetts*

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February 22, 2016

Community Preservation Act Committee  
Mary Streeter, Chair

Re: Open Space Projects – Hoerle APR, Cushman Brook, & due diligence funds

Dear Chairman Streeter and Committee members,

The proposed Open Space projects, Hoerle APR, Cushman Brook land preservation, and due diligence funds were discussed and voted on at the Conservation Commission meeting on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

The Conservation Commission voted 6-0, with one member absent, to support the Open Space proposal for Surveys, Appraisals and Other Related Studies for \$15,000. This money is crucial for the Town's land conservation and preservation efforts, as the Conservation Department budget does not include funds for this purpose, and land conservation and preservation projects would not move forward without these due diligence funds to complete the necessary evaluation work.

The Conservation Commission voted 6-0, with one member absent, to support the Open Space proposal for the Hoerle APR (Agricultural Preservation Restriction) for \$68,500. The State APR program will provide \$616,500, or 90%, of the Farmland Preservation costs, while the Town will contribute the remaining 10%. This particular parcel has agricultural and ecological value. Natural resources on the property include wetlands, the Hop Brook, land mapped as endangered species habitat, and protected flood zone and medium yield aquifer areas. Some of the property is also mapped as BioMap2 Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape. The 62.62 acre lot will complete a large contiguous block of protected lands, comprised of conservation lands and other APR's, running north/south along the eastern side of Southeast Street. Preserving this land for farming in perpetuity ensures that recreationists at nearby popular conservation areas; Arnold Kenseth Trail, KC Trail and Norwottuck Rail Trail, will continue to enjoy the view and natural surroundings that would otherwise be impacted by development.

The Conservation Commission voted 6-0, with one member absent, to support the Open Space Proposal for the Protection of the Cushman Brook for \$84,668. The Town has received a LAND (Local Acquisitions and Natural Diversity) Grant that will contribute \$183,557.50 towards the acquisition of the Stosz and Stowes property, which consists of 14.3 acres of open space along the Cushman Brook. Protecting this property helps to protect one of the few remaining pieces of land within the Cushman Brook and Mill River

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riparian corridor. This riparian corridor, consisting of woodlands, forested wetlands, small streams, pools and the bank of the Cushman Brook, provides high quality aquatic habitat, a contiguous block of preserved land used as a wildlife corridor, opportunities for fishing, swimming and passive recreation.

The Conservation Commission did not prioritize projects, as the commissioners all felt the projects were of equal importance.

Sincerely,

Amherst Conservation Commission

*Briony Angus, Chair*

*Paris Boice, Vice Chair*

*Harvey Allen*

*Christiane Healey*

*Robert Brooks*

*Fletcher Clark*

*Brett Butler*