

**DRAFT  
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Cape Elizabeth Town Council  
FROM: Conservation Commission  
DATE: July 12, 2016  
SUBJECT: Town Council Goals

Introduction

The Town Council forwarded three goals to the Conservation Commission to report back on. The Conservation Commission discussed the goals at five meetings. The commission's recommendations are summarized below.

Goal: Review all uses of the greenbelt trail

The "uses" goal was discussed at the March 7, 2016 meeting. The Conservation Commission referenced the Management of Greenbelt and Open Space Plan adopted by the Town Council in May, 2012. This plan was prepared by the Open Space Management Committee, comprised of the Conservation Commission and Town Council Liaison Jessica Sullivan. The committee met 19 times and held 2 public forums.

The management plan includes an inventory of all town owned open space. Each open space was classified into 1 of 5 management groups for the purpose of establishing common management policies for similar properties. Pages 11 and 12 include a Uses Chart designating uses allowed on each open space.

The chart and report has been updated with open spaces added since Town Council adoption. The Conservation Commission reviewed the chart, including the additional properties.

**Recommendation:** The Conservation Commission voted unanimously to re-affirm the summary of uses established in the Management of Greenbelt and Open Space Plan.

Goal: Consider allowing horses to use the greenbelt trails at all times

The "horses" goal was discussed at the April 12, 2016 meeting. Invitations were sent to everyone in the horseback riding community who had participated in discussions in 2011-2012<sup>1</sup>. One member of the horseback riding community attended the Conservation Commission meeting. She supports a trail suitable for horses that connects to Gull Crest from Fowler Rd.

<sup>1</sup>In 2012, the horseback riding community had identified greenbelt trails they used and provided an evaluation by a civil engineer of the ability of structures to support horses. Almost all the structures were not built to support horses. The Conservation Commission encouraged the group to propose structural improvements for the Conservation Commission to consider. Once boardwalk in Great Pond was upgraded as part of this effort.

**Recommendation:** The Conservation Commission would like to work on an inventory of the trails used by horses including areas needing hardening and bridging improvements, and also look at expanding access between Starboard and the Town Farm and between Great Pond and the south end of Gull Crest.

Goal: Receive a report showing missing links in the cross town greenbelt trail and detailing other significant links to neighborhoods

The "missing links" goal was discussed at the May 10<sup>th</sup>, June 14<sup>th</sup> and July 12<sup>th</sup> meetings. The Conservation Commission based its review on the 2013 Greenbelt Plan priorities and the 2015 Project Priorities designated by the Conservation Commission.

Using the 2013 Greenbelt Plan, the Greenbelt Plan potential trails were reorganized into the following neighborhood groups. Trail links with gaps are listed by number.

Dyer Woods-Northeast: 1, 2  
Canterbury-Interior: 3, 4, 6, 8, 9  
Loveitt Woods/Stonegate: 5, 10  
Winnick Woods: 7  
Great Pond: 16, 17  
Gull Crest: 14  
Spurwink/Southwest: 12, 13  
Town Center: 11  
Coastal: 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23

Since the adoption of the 2013 Greenbelt Plan, the town has made progress in implementing the plan. Completed projects include the following:

- Eastman Trail. The Conservation Commission partnered with the Eastman Meadows developer to locate and build trails located in Eastman Meadows and connecting to Winnick Woods. A connector trail in Winnick Woods was improved with a bridge over a wetland and trail signage added. A second trail has also been laid out and signage is underway.

- Cottage Brook. Again partnering with the developer of the Cottage Brook neighborhood, a new trail connection to Spurwink Ave was located, cleared and signed. Ongoing discussions with the Canterbury on the Cape to install additional trail are progressing well, including a joint site walk in June, 2016.
- Gull Crest Outer Loop. The Outer Loop trail, which includes significant wetland stretches, was completed with the addition of boardwalk and a 3<sup>rd</sup> board to an existing boardwalk.
- Great Pond steps. After years of poor conditions, the steps to the boardwalk at Great Pond were replaced with solid stone. The Conservation Commission partnered with CELT on this project, which owns the land.
- Two Lights Trail. This trail abuts the home of a long-standing trail partner. Shrub growth adjacent to the trail was removed, signage added and the trail better defined with a wood chip surface.
- Loveitt Woods. A significant northern link to the Stonegate/Robinson Woods trail system will be acquired, securing public access on well-used casual neighborhood trail.
- Pollack Brook feasibility study. The commission is addressing the failure of a 51' long bridge and extending the trails on both sides of the bridge creating better and more scenic public access to the Spurwink Marsh.

***Draft Recommendation:***

*The Conservation Commission recommends that the town continue its incremental approach to greenbelt implementation with (1) strategic investments to acquire public access rights, (2) opportunistic expansion as part of new development, and (3) partnerships with like-minded property owners.*