



Conservation Commission

Town of

Groveland

Groveland, Massachusetts

Town Hall

183 Main Street

Groveland, MA 01834

Meadow Pond Reservation Addition

Proposal

Groveland Community Preservation Committee

December 1, 2008

Groveland Open Space and Trails Committee
Town of Groveland
183 Main St
Groveland MA 01834

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Community Preservation Committee
Town of Groveland
183 Main Street
Groveland, MA 01834

Dear Committee Members:

Enclosed are ten copies of an application requesting Community Preservation funding for an open space purchase addition to Meadow Pond Reservation.

The application includes a request for \$50,000.00. The property located at 803 Rear Salem St (Off Stephenson Way) will be a great addition to the present reservation and further protect the habitat area know as "Turtleland."

We hope that you will give the application careful consideration. We would be happy to provide you with further information you may need or to meet with you to discuss the proposal.

Sincerely,

Gene Blatt
Chairman

Applicant Information:

Name of Applicant: Groveland Open Space and Trails Committee
Groveland Conservation Commission
Contact Name: Michael Dempsey
Mailing Address: 183 Main Street
City: Groveland
State: MA
Zip Code: 01834
Daytime Phone: 978-265-5756
Email Address: btr@shore.net

Location of Project

Name of Project: *Meadow Pond Reservation Addition*
Address of Project: 803 Rear Salem St. (Off Stephenson Way), Groveland, MA

CPA Category: (Include all that apply):

Open space
 Historic preservation
 Recreation
 Community housing

Project Cost:

CPA Funding Requested: \$50,000.00
Total Cost of Proposed Project: \$ 60,000.00

Description:

The proposed project would add approximately six acres of open space to the present Meadow Pond Reservation. The property directly abuts the current reservation. Purchasing the property will protect the current reservation from potential development on the six acres. The purchase also adds another significant piece of land to the Blanding's Turtle habitat area and will bring the Meadow Pond Reservation to a total of 82 protected acres.

Goals

The current Meadow Pond Reservation consists of approximately 76 acres of open space surrounding Meadow Pond in Groveland. The reservation was originally established with a donation of ten acres in the 1960's. In 2002 the Commission was able to apply for a Self-Help grant and add 58 acres to the reservation. In 2007 the Town of Groveland purchased an additional eight acres of adjoining land using Community Preservation Act Open Space funds. Meadow Pond reservation protects the habitat of the Blanding's Turtle. This turtle is protected by the State of Massachusetts as a threatened species. The purchase of six additional acres that abut the reservation will expand protection of this important habitat. This 6-acre property also includes extraordinarily sensitive wildlife including the Wood Turtle, Blanding's Turtle, and Spotted Turtle as well as rich plant habitats. It falls within the State-specified rare and endangered species zone.

Background & Overview

The people of Groveland will directly benefit by the preservation of this six acre parcel of open space. In the last twelve years the Conservation Commission, the Board of Selectmen, the Open Space and Trails Committee and the citizens of Groveland have taken an active role in protecting open space in our town. In 1996 the town completed an acquisition of 47 acres of open space that was threatened with development at what is now known as Veasey Memorial Park. This first purchase of property by the town added a significant high profile parcel to the town's open space inventory including a large parcel of state owned land at Crane Pond Reservation and the Town Forrest. As Groveland was affected by the population growth of the 1990's and significant development due to the rising real estate values, citizens both old and new alike began to appreciate greenways, open space and a certain rural character in northern Massachusetts. In 2002, once again the citizens supported an initiative of the Commission to purchase 58 acres of open space and stop an unpopular development. The purchase became a "no-brainer" choice when a significant population of the threatened Blanding's turtle species was confirmed on the property. With purchase assistance from the *Trust for Public Land* and

financial contributions from the *Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife*, *The Stevens Foundation* and *Essex County Greenbelt Association* among others, a critical property was protected. This same rare species habitat protection value of the purchase along with open space protection and additional passive recreational area still exists today and is the driving force behind the proposed purchase of the six acre parcel.

Community Need

When purchased nearly five years ago by the town using Self Help funds as a part of an Open Space initiative Meadow Pond Reservation was hailed as a significant new area open to citizens for passive recreation. The Reservation has many well-worn trails throughout the property. It serves as an area for hiking, fishing, snow-shoeing and walking. Its beauty also lies in its proximity to many of the residents of Groveland. Within a walk or short drive, town residents can explore nature, appreciate open space and enjoy the great outdoors all within our town boundaries. Expansion of the current 76-acre reservation will insure that there will be no encroachment of the property with new housing on its borders.

In Massachusetts, there exists tremendous variety of plants and animals, natural communities, and ecosystems. Many of these species and natural communities are uncommon and under protected. As residents of Groveland we believe it's our responsibility to protect and preserve biodiversity. This property, off Stephenson Way and part of the Meadow Pond/Parker River Greenway is a rich habitat for many endangered species. In acquiring this land, the Town of Groveland will greatly benefit from the biodiversity this open, undeveloped space will provide to its residents. We will continue to secure a large portion of the perimeter around Meadow Pond and the reservation, which is now part of the property owned by the Town, under the management of the Conservation Commission.

Focusing on passive recreational uses such as trail walking, bird watching and nature observance in general, this area will continue to thrive as a source of rich and diverse habitat in which residents will be enabled to take part in an on-going effort of education in the area of preservation of our natural resources. School field trips during non-sensitive times of the year

will be encouraged in order to bring about awareness on the importance of open space preservation. Our management plans for this area will include excluding off-road vehicles and other activities that will disturb existing habitats.

Community Support

The Conservation Commission has also worked with the Open Space and Trails Committee to have the six acre parcel included in its list of priority properties to acquire and protect in the Groveland Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Groveland Board of Selectmen has actively participated in the negotiations to purchase this property and support its purchase.

Project Management:

The project will be managed by Michael Dempsey. Mr. Dempsey is the chairman of the Commission. His multiple years as a manager and conservationist make him more than qualified for overseeing this project. In 2002 he led the team that facilitated the purchase of 58 acres of open space .

Budget

The total budget for the purchase is \$ 60,000.00. This budget was derived from an estimate received from a combination of appraisals on the 6-acre parcel, and finally our negotiations with the current owners of the property.

The 8-acre parcel that will be purchased is part of a residential lot formerly owned by Agnes Kelly. Her entire residential lot consists of two parcels totaling approximately 8 acres. The 8 acres are divided into two lots including the 6-acre parcel of open space. The additional two acre lot contains a single family residence that was sold to a private owner after the death of Ms Kelly. The Town of Groveland has negotiated a purchase and sales agreement with the estate of Ms Kelly fee simple for \$60,000 by May 31, 2009. This application is to obtain Town of Groveland CPA funds for \$50,000 toward the project. The additional \$10,000 will be raised from grants.

Other Funding

The Friends of Meadow Pond and local residents have assisted us in the past to raise funds from open space and conservation-minded foundations. We anticipate the pursuit of any additional funds required will come from a similar campaign.

The Groveland Conservation Commission has already paid the funds necessary to conduct and appraisal of the property from its Open Space and Land Fund.

Timeline

If the proposed project is approved by the CPC and the Town, project implementation would begin as soon as funding is available. The project would start in May with completion during the month.

Appraisals

The appraisal of the six acre parcel was completed in August 2008 and established a value of \$ 50,000. This document can be made available to the CPC during the month of January 2009.

Map of Parcel



Compliance

There is no compliance issue related to the purchase of this property. It meets all current environmental and zoning requirements.

Environmental Hazards

There are no environmental hazards on the property.

Maintenance

All maintenance will be handled by the Groveland Conservation Commission Open Space Fund and volunteers to the Groveland Open Space and Trails Committee.