



TOWN HALL
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To: Community Preservation Act Committee
From: David Ziomek, Director- Conservation and Development
Re: FY 14 Funding Request
Date: December 4, 2012

Preliminary Funding Proposal

This proposal represents the current open space priorities of the Conservation Commission and Department. These recommendations are based on the approved Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). A formal presentation with color images and maps of all properties will be presented to the CPAC in January.

Please note that negotiations with landowners are ongoing and appraisals for some properties are still pending making it very difficult to share more details about the projects at this time. The Commission has not formally ranked these projects but will do so later this month.

Appraisals, Surveys and Related Studies

Funding for required appraisals and surveys can often mean the difference between a land preservation project moving forward or not. Currently, the Conservation Department budget does not include funds for appraisals or any of the other due diligence costs. This funding is critical to get projects started and establish value. Town staff will update the Committee on current balances and anticipated expenditures during the review process in 2013.

Funding Request: \$ 25,000

North Amherst

Amherst has a long history of working to preserve forest and farm land along the Cushman Brook and Mill River in North Amherst. Staff are currently working with landowners and representatives from the Agricultural Preservation Program (APR) Program on two potential projects in an effort to protect remaining prime agricultural land near the Village Center. Every effort will be made to have more specific information for the Committee by January.

Acreage:	To be determined
Conservation Method:	APR
Resource Values:	Prime farmland, riverfront, wildlife habitat
Priority Level:	High
Identified on OSRP:	Yes
Threat:	Moderate
Development Potential:	Residential
Appraisal Completed:	Yes
Funding Sources:	CPA, APR Program

Funding Request: \$ 60,000

East Amherst

At this time discussions are ongoing between the Town and two landowners with property near the Fort River in East Amherst. In each case the parcels abut already protected land and are high priorities for preservation. Appraisals have been ordered and more information is expected in the next month.

Acreage:	To be determined
Conservation Method:	Fee interest
Resource Values:	Wildlife habitat, trails, riverfront, farmland
Priority Level:	High
Identified on OSRP:	Yes
Threat:	Moderate
Development Potential:	Residential
Appraisal Completed:	In process
Funding Sources:	CPA, land trusts, LAND Grant

Funding Request: Unknown

South Amherst

1. #650-652 South East Street

This property has been under threat of development for many years and is being offered to the highest qualified bidder at a foreclosure auction on December 17. A coalition of conservation minded individuals and groups including the Kestrel Land Trust and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) have been meeting to consider strategies to conserve this land. Identified as one of the last remaining unprotected parcels along South East Street, it contains wetlands, a vernal pool and wildlife habitat. The parcel is adjacent to the Norwottuck Rail Trail and offers breathtaking views of the Mt. Holyoke Range and Pelham hills.

Acreage:	8
Conservation Method:	Fee interest/Conservation Restriction
Resource Values:	Wildlife habitat, trails, viewshed, farmland
Priority Level:	High
Identified on OSRP:	Yes
Threat:	High
Development Potential:	Housing
Appraisal Completed:	New appraisal ordered
Funding Sources:	CPA, private sources, land trusts, state, limited development

Funding Request: \$50,000

2. Brunelle – Phase II (Potwine Lane)

This project represents the second phase in an ongoing effort to protect 26 acres of critical land on the north side of Potwine Lane containing woodlands, wetlands, and a beautiful hayfield. It is bounded to the west by Muddy Brook. The property is adjacent to the Plum Brook Conservation Area and would link a corridor of conserved land from Mount Holyoke Range State Park to the Norwottuck Rail Trail. This project also serves larger regional conservation interests by protecting land along these two tributaries to the Fort River. The Brunelle Family is committed to protecting this special property but cannot hold it indefinitely. The Town and the Kestrel Land Trust are awaiting word on a Partnership Grant submitted for 16 acres in the initial phase of this effort.

Acreage:	13
Conservation Method:	Fee interest
Resource Values:	Wildlife habitat, trails, farmland
Priority Level:	High
Identified on OSRP:	Yes
Threat:	High
Development Potential:	Housing
Appraisal Completed:	Yes
Funding Sources:	CPA, LAND grants, land trusts

Funding Request: \$163,000

TOTAL CONSERVATION REQUEST: \$298,000