

PRESERVING WAYLAND'S FARMING AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

THE LINCOLN ROAD FIELDS

1. Where are the Fields located and what characteristics make them desirable for preservation?

The Lincoln Road Fields are located off Concord Road and bordered by the unpaved and scenic Lincoln and Hazelbrook Roads. They consist of about 22.6 acres of open fields and meadow bounded by colonial-era stone walls. For over a century, the Fields have appeared much as they do today. A substantial portion of the surrounding land has already been conserved in Wayland, Weston, and Lincoln providing a “necklace” of protected open space.

2. How was the property chosen for preservation?

The property was chosen for preservation because the Town has identified it as being one that it would like to preserve, as shown on the Town's 1995 Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Lincoln Road Fields rank as a top choice of the Town for preservation.

3. What method is being used to acquire the development rights from the owner and can you describe it?

The method being used to preserve the land is a Conservation Restriction (CR). The Town will acquire the CR by entering into an agreement with the owner/grantor whereby the owner agrees not to develop the Fields for any commercial or residential use in perpetuity. With the CR, there will never be any buildings constructed on this property. The grantor remains the owner and is responsible for maintaining the Fields. Any subsequent owner by way of a sale or otherwise will be bound by the terms of the Conservation Restriction, a recorded document.

4. What is the price the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) recommends that the Town pay for the acquisition of the CR and how was the price determined?

The price for the preservation of this open space is \$2.4 million which was derived from an appraisal conducted for the Town by an independent appraiser. Town officials, with the advice of the Sudbury Valley Trustees, negotiated the deal with the grantor. The appraisal is available for viewing at the Town Library and on the Town's website. The initial offer from the owner for the CR was \$2.9 million.

5. How will the Town's citizens have an opportunity to vote for this proposal?

The Community Preservation Committee has recommended the acquisition and has submitted a warrant article for the Special Town Meeting to be held November 20th. The citizens of the Town must approve the proposal by a two-thirds vote at Town Meeting.

6. How will the acquisition of the CR be funded ?What effect will it have on the Town's budget?

The CR will be acquired with funds from the Town's Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund. There are adequate funds in the CPA Fund to cover the transaction so there will be no municipal bonding or other financing and it will not impact the Town's credit rating. Furthermore, this will not affect the Town's budget since the CPA Fund is funded from a set per cent surcharge and matching funds from the State. Overall, the State has provided approximately sixty per cent of the total balance in the CPA Fund but in recent years the per cent has been around 23%.

7. What is the goal of the CPC in making this transaction and how will it affect the other objectives of the CPA?

The acquisition fulfills one of the principal objectives of the CPA, namely preserving open space. There will not be any impact on the other objectives of the CPA, which include preserving historic resources and assisting in the creation of affordable housing.

8. Will the general public have access to the Fields? For what type of activities?

The general public will have access to the Fields but it will be limited to the western hayfield where trails will be located around the perimeter. During the period from Dec 1st to April 1st the public will have access to the hayfield but will not be restricted to the trails. Members of the public will be able to use the Fields for passive recreational activities, such as walking, running, hiking, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, and educational or scientific activities. There will also be an opportunity for groups to use the Fields twice a year for educational purposes.

9. If the proposal for acquiring the CR fails, what can happen to the Fields?

If the Fields were developed, there could be as many as eleven homes built depending on the type of development utilized. The “highest and best use” of the Fields is projected to be five or six homes which would satisfy local zoning requirements and thus allow a builder to develop the Fields with a minimum of approvals. On the other hand, while the CR will minimally reduce real estate tax income, the Town will avoid the cost of ongoing municipal services such as schools, fire, police, etc that would be required if the Fields were developed.

10. How will the Town benefit from the CR?

The acquisition of the restriction will benefit the Town in a number of ways. First, the Town will continue to enhance its reputation as a semirural community and its heritage of agriculture and farming through the preservation of open space. Second, it will preserve the aesthetic, ecological and historic value of the Fields. Finally, it will have fulfilled its obligations under the CPA to preserve open space and to its citizens by insuring water quality, flood control, air pollution removal, storm water management and wildlife habitat.

11. How will the purchase of the CR affect the CPA Fund?

To complete the transaction, the Town will deplete the funds currently designated only for Open Space. However, the remainder- a few hundred thousand dollars- will be taken from the approximately \$5 million remaining in the Fund that is not committed to a specific CPA purpose. As always the CPA Fund will grow each year through the collection of the CPA surcharge and the matching funds from the State. Historically, annual receipts have been at least \$800,000, the first thirty per cent of which are distributed equally among the three CPA objectives (open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing). The remaining 70% is directed to the uncommitted portion of the CPA Fund and can be used for any proposals requiring CPA funds that are approved at Town Meeting.

12. Since the CPA Fund will be reduced by \$2.4 million, what can the Town do if another large open space opportunity becomes available?

In the event that another large open space transaction becomes available, the Town can utilize the portion of the CPA Fund dedicated to open space in addition to the uncommitted portion of the Fund. The CPA also permits the Town to borrow using bond financing. The receipts from the tax surcharge would be used for the debt service on the bond so no additional taxation would be required.

13. What will happen if the owner/grantor of the CR fails to maintain the Fields?

If the owner/grantor fails to maintain the Fields as outlined in the CR, the Town will have the right, but not the obligation, to take over the maintenance of the Fields. This is not unprecedented as the Town already maintains other preserved properties.