
Article 24. Community Preservation Act – Open Space Projects: Improvement at Pine Brook Conservation Area; Biocontrol of Purple Loosestrife at Cow Common; and Conservation Restriction, House Demolition, and Trail Construction for 27 Sherman's Bridge Road with Archaeological Monitoring

Proposed by: Community Preservation Committee

Estimated Cost: \$65,846

To determine whether the Town will vote to:

1. Appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund Open Space Fund:
 - (a) Not more than \$9,065 for installation of granite stairs to access the trails at Pine Brook Conservation Area; and
 - (b) Not more than \$6,000 for a biocontrol project to address invasive purple loosestrife at the Cow Common Conservation Area; and
 - (c) For the property at 27 Sherman's Bridge Road, not more than \$6,500 for legal fees associated with preparing the conservation restriction and not more than \$3,500 to endow monitoring of the conservation restriction; not more than \$13,781 for construction of an ADA-accessible trail; and not more than \$12,000 for demolition of the existing house; and
2. Appropriate from the Community Preservation Fund Uncommitted Fund for historic preservation purposes not more than \$15,000 to be expended by the Historical Commission for archaeological monitoring of the house demolition and trail construction at 27 Sherman's Bridge Road.

FINANCE COMMITTEE COMMENTS: The Community Preservation Act (CPA) may be used for the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space, as well as the rehabilitation or restoration of open space that was acquired or created with community preservation funds. This article presents the Community Preservation Committee's (CPC) recommendations of the eligible open space projects requested by the Conservation Department and an appropriation for historic purposes associated with the proposed work at 27 Sherman's Bridge Road.

Replace stairs at Pine Brook: This capital improvement project will replace the deteriorated and unsafe existing stairs at the Pine Brook Conservation Area, which provide access to conservation trails. The stairs are located between 50 and 54 Forty Acres Drive. The new granite steps with handrail will have greater tread depth, reducing the angle of the stairs and supporting access for those who are unable to ascend or descend the stairs because of the current steepness. These long-lasting steps will provide safe access for visitors to the conservation area.

Address purple loosestrife at Cow Common: Purple loosestrife is a highly invasive plant that affects wetland areas, choking out native plant species. This habitat preservation project would introduce *Galerucella* beetles at the Cow Common Conservation Area over a two-year period. The beetles have a record of effectiveness for addressing purple loosestrife and preserving wetland habitats throughout the Commonwealth. The project will be undertaken in collaboration with the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, Division of Ecological Restoration.

27 Sherman's Bridge Road: The 2022 Annual Town Meeting voted to purchase this property for open space purposes and links two conservation areas: Trout Brook and Castle Hill. This appropriation will resolve the following:

Conservation Restriction: The CPA requires imposition of a conservation restriction on property acquired for open space purposes. The Sudbury Valley Trustees, a nonprofit land trust has agreed to draft and

manage the conservation restriction. Wayland will pay for preparation of the conservation restriction and for monitoring services through an endowment.

ADA Compliant Trail: The Conservation Department will construct an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant trail to connect with an existing trail that approaches a vernal pool on the abutting Trout Brook Conservation Area. The Conservation Department proposes to install an interpretive panel and a bench to observe the wildlife that live in and around the vernal pool. An extension to the new trail will lead uphill, providing visitors with a view of the dramatic glacially-formed landscape of eskers and a deep kettle hole then loop back around to the parking area.

Demolition: One of the conditions of the purchase and sale was that the existing house be demolished. The Conservation Department does not have sufficient funds to complete demolition of the house and removal of the debris. This additional appropriation will allow that work to be completed in an environmentally-sensitive manner.

State law requires an archaeologist to monitor digging on public lands, including land at 27 Sherman's Bridge Road. This appropriation ensures the Town is in compliance with Massachusetts law and is positioned to identify and document historical artifacts found from soil disturbance associated with filling in the house foundation and constructing the trail.

The Community Preservation Committee recommends approval. Vote: 6-0-0

The Select Board recommends approval. Vote: 4-0-0

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR: These projects are funded through monies collected through the Community Preservation Act property tax surcharge and revenue from the State Community Preservation Fund.

The granite steps are a needed improvement to enhance safety and access to the Pine Brook Conservation Area trails.

Purple loosestrife has a devastating impact on native plant and wildlife species. The biocontrol of purple loosestrife has a record of effectiveness in Massachusetts without introducing harmful chemicals and requires no physical disturbance of habitat or adverse impact to native wildlife.

State law requires the open space asset at 27 Sherman Bridge Road be protected by a conservation restriction. Sudbury Valley Trustees is a trusted partner in land stewardship.

Additional funding will complete removal of the existing house from the property, fulfilling the terms of the purchase and sale.

The house demolition and trail construction at 27 Sherman's Bridge Road cannot proceed without an archaeological monitor. This appropriation funds the archaeologist's services.

ARGUMENTS OPPOSED: Some may see the granite steps as an excessive cost. The existing stairs could be repaired or replaced using less expensive materials.

Some may believe that Wayland should keep the purple loosestrife because it adds to the beauty of the wetlands and employ other means than insects of addressing invasive purple loosestrife. Others may believe that there are other conservation areas that could be a better choice for this project.

Some may believe that the property should not be disturbed with a designated trail for those with mobility disabilities.

Some may believe that demolition funds should have been designated when the property was purchased, and that the cost of the archaeologist makes the trail project too expensive.

RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee recommends Approval. Vote: 6-0-0

QUANTUM OF VOTE: Majority. See Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, Section 5.

For more information, contact CPC Chair, Susan Weinstein at sweinstein@wayland.ma.us.