

Open Space Committee – 2005 Annual Report

The Open Space Committee (OSC) is charged with implementing the Open Space Plan presented in the town's Master Plan. That plan endorses the “village” model of town planning whereby future development ideally occurs in existing developed areas or “villages,” and the outlying areas remain rural. Most master plans have this goal; few towns achieve it. The town's active support of land conservation in the outlying rural areas is needed to achieve balanced, wise growth.

The OSC works to communicate the many varieties of land conservation – including the most popular form in the state: private land with a conservation easement deed that specifies certain limits on future development of that land. The OSC also works to fund land conservation, including purchase of development rights on land with the highest natural resource value.

The committee tackled four major projects in 2005:

- Evaluated all parcels larger than 25 acres with a point system following generally accepted natural resource criteria that coincide well with Peterborough's Master Plan (see grid below);

- Worked through the town's budgeting process to present a Town Meeting appropriation of \$150,000 for the Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund (passed, 76% in favor);

- Created a map of prioritized natural resources, assisted by Antioch graduate student Don Loock;

- Produced, with help of five local photographers, a calendar that features 12 of the town's conserved lands with stories of the neighbors, landowners, and Conservation Commission initiatives that conserved the properties (local history and nature almanac included). Calendars remain available at Steele's.

The OSC closed the year with a Bogle Road neighborhood gathering. Crotched Mountain, as co-host, spoke about plans for Sunnyfield Farm, conserved by an agricultural easement, and neighbors spoke about land conservation, past, present and future. The committee encourages and is available for similar gatherings in other neighborhoods.

Land is changing hands rapidly. The Open Space Committee encourages dialogue between major landowners and the town so that the needs of the landowner can be met, and significant natural resources – healthy water supply, forest and farmland, wildlife, trails and a scenic landscape – can be conserved for present and future generations.

The OSC meets the second Thursday of each month, 7 p.m. in the Town House, and welcomes townspeople participation.

Alan Bannister
Ed Henault, Chair
Debbie Kaiser, Alternate
Don Loock, Alternate
Leandra MacDonald
Tom Neff
Liz Thomas
Francie Von Mertens
Steve Walker

RESOURCE FEATURE	POINT SCORING
Historical / cultural feature	3 Has significant feature
Parcel is an important focal point of community activity	4 Is a community focal point 2 Is potential community focal point
Scenic vistas from <u>public</u> land / roadway / waterbody	3 Exceptional scenic vistas 2 Scenic vistas / significant road frontage 1 Significant roadside stone walls
Productive forest resources (from aerial photo)	5 Larger than 30 acres 3 Less than 30 acres
Prime farmland soils (from NHF&G map)	3 Parcel has significant ag soils 2 Parcel has ag soils
Open fields or early succession	4 Open area is 5 or more acres
Parcel is within a designated unfragmented land area	3 NHF&G unfragmented land areas 3-4 1 NHF&G unfragmented land areas 1-2
Wetlands	4 With associated uplands 2 Associated uplands on abutting land
Shoreline frontage	6 Significant shoreland/named waterbody 2 Shoreland on waterbody
Aquifer	6 Parcel over highest yield aquifer (blue) 3 Parcel over aquifer (yellow)
Size of parcel	6 > 150 acres 5 pts 100-150 acres 4 70-100 acres 3 pts 40-70 acres 2 pts 10-40 acres
Linkage / connectivity (parcel is adjacent to other conserved land)	6 Aggregate property >300 acres 5 Aggregate 200-300 acres 4 Aggregate 100-200 acres 3 Aggregate <100 acres
Unique natural feature (vernal pool, heron nest, floodplain, bog, rare/ endangered species, etc.)	6 One point per unique feature