

TOWN OF
STONEHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

To: the Board of Selectmen

From: Open Space & Recreation Committee

Date: August 7, 2014

Subject: Weiss Farm/Stoneham Oaks Land Swap

The Open Space and Recreation Committee has recently met to discuss the proposed land swap of the Weiss Farm property, currently being planned for a 40B housing project, with the land currently owned by the Town at the Stoneham Oaks golf course.

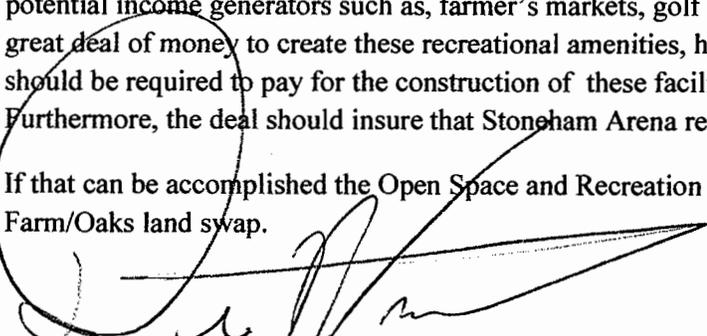
From the Town by Laws, the Committee's duties include "providing advice and recommendations to the appropriate Town Officials...regarding open space and recreation needs of the Town."

Our Committee sees potential benefits to the Town's open space with the Weiss Farm/Stoneham Oaks land swap. Weiss Farm is a larger open space than the Oaks (approximately 26 acres vs. 15 acres), and it offers the opportunity to be developed as a more varied recreational space than the Oaks, which is devoted exclusively to golf use.

The Town currently has two municipal golf courses, which is far more than any of the surrounding towns many of which have no public golf courses at all. The Oaks does not receive heavy play and has never made money for the Town, in fact it has cost the Town thousands of dollars annually to run the course. In the view of the Committee the loss of one course would not have a serious negative impact on the recreational opportunities for the Town's citizens. We believe that it could have a positive effect on the use of Unicorn Golf course by attracting more play on that course and potentially more income at Unicorn.

The Weiss Farm property is located close to the High School and could be developed for multiple recreational uses such as nature trails, tennis courts, and turf fields for Soccer, Lacrosse, and Football and potential income generators such as, farmer's markets, golf driving range, etc. It will obviously cost a great deal of money to create these recreational amenities, however we strongly believe that the developer should be required to pay for the construction of these facilities as a part of any land swap deal. Furthermore, the deal should insure that Stoneham Arena remain in place.

If that can be accomplished the Open Space and Recreation Committee would fully support the Weiss Farm/Oaks land swap.



Dennis J. Visconti, Chair

cc; D. Ragucci, T.A.