

Comments and Questions from the 6/17/2021 public forum:

- Can you remind everyone if the goals presented are the town's goals or Land Stewardship Inc's goals?
  - At this time, the Town of Lexington has not approved or adopted anything in the plan. Currently we are reaching out to solicit feedback from the public, and then Conservation staff will compile comments and submit to the consultant. The consultant will then submit a final plan by the fall of 2021 for the Conservation Commission to review. If approved, the goals of the plan will then be the goals of the Conservation Division and the town.
  
- Will the proposed parking area at the Brent Road trailhead require trees to be removed? If so, what other options are being considered?
  - Next step of the ADA improvements would be getting into the design phase of the project where the town will put out a request for proposals to hire an engineer to create a design plan.
  
- Will the mowing schedule accommodate fall monarch migration in late September/ early October?
  - Earlier mowing to target areas with the warm season grasses would only be for the few first years, then afterwards once little bluestem takes hold the town could revert to fall mowing only.
  
- Canada lily next to Brent Road is exquisite and unusual in Lexington and we would like to see it stay!
  
- Would handicap-accessible parking spaces be included at the Brent and North Street entrances?
  - The location and feasibility of including handicap-accessible parking would be explored during the design phase of the project.
  
- What is the reason to propose changes to the on-street parking at Brent Road? Isn't the North Street parking enough- why would parking on Brent Road be necessary?
  - The parking at North Street and Brent Road would both be explored during the design phase of the project, but adding a few designed handicapped accessible spaces would be required at one or both entrances depending on what sections of the trail are made UA.
  
- Please fix the potholes at the North Street parking lot.
  
- Please describe the UA trail; for example, how much will be paved, how much excavation, land disturbance, etc, would be involved?
  - Since this is a conceptual plan, we will not be able to answer those questions until an engineer is hired to create a UA Trail design.
  
- We have a mixture of staff and volunteers who maintain Conservation lands. Will what is being proposed be able to be completed by these people or will outside contractors need to be hired?

- Consultants would need to be hired to conduct initial field edge clearing, invasive plant work and mowing restoration. However, after a 3-5 year period, those items can most likely be maintained by our staff and volunteers.
  - Many of the smaller projects such as smaller scale invasive management, bird and bat box installation, fireplace restoration, restoration plantings, and informational signage are great projects for staff and volunteers to do independently.
- So the next phase is to seek funding for a detailed design plan of the project before construction?
  - Some aspects of the project have already been allocated funding through CPA including field preservation activities and to hire a consultant for the design plan regarding the UA trail and parking options. All other aspects of the plan would need to be allocated funding before moving forward.
- Is the amount of Poison Ivy in Willards Woods's normal? Can it be addressed? Should it be addressed?
  - Poison ivy is a concern in areas along trails and benches where human users can come into contact with it, but overall it is a native species that is very beneficial to wildlife.
- With the change in seasons and increase use of the pool, there is an increase of cars along Brent Road and it is a disturbance to the neighborhood. Is there a plan to direct more cars to the North Street parking lot?
  - This would be looked at in greater detail, when an engineer is hired to design and explore options for the parking areas. Currently Brent road is not listed on town maps as a parking area, only an entrance, and there is no specific plan to direct cars to the North Street Parking area.
- Can you put out educational labels for the various features, names of the plants, and goals?
- Can you talk about poison ivy control and types of herbicides that would be used? Glyphosate might be a problem for bees.
  - Triclopyr would actually be a better product to use along the field trails so that grasses are not impacted, but a lot of productive management can be done with strategic mowing as well.
- Can you review your recommendations for dogs? Will they be on-leash or off leash? I personally would prefer them to be on-leash for a variety of reasons.
  - There are on-leash only areas from entrances to certain points into the interior of the property where dogs can be off leash and under voice/sight control during week days. During weekends dogs need to be on-leash at all times. Any changes to these rules would need to be reviewed and approved by the Conservation Commission.
- What would be gained or hope to be gained by reclaiming more field from forest and what would be lost?
  - The consultant is not suggesting any forests would be removed to create fields or meadows but rather to redefine the edge between fields and forests that have been naturally maturing into shrubland. Although the fields are too small to provide nesting habitat for grassland birds, they provide foraging habitat for birds and other wildlife, pollinator habitat, and there is value of maintaining the historic aesthetic of the field landscape.

- Willards Woods is one of the few places that allows dogs to be off-leash. Lexington has a high number of taxpayers that own dogs. Please recognize the stewardship and affinity that comes with walking the property daily.
- We need an explanation as to why a parking lot is needed, what the bike path upgrade involves, more information on the accessibility trails, and the impacts to the environment. Please summarize what is in the appendices of the report within the main portion of the report. Also the plan uses the term “park” such as “dog park” and “supporting passive recreation” why aren’t terms such as “natural conservation land” and “supporting enjoyment of nature” used instead? June 30<sup>th</sup> is too soon to submit comments, please extend the deadline. The request to change wording and to summarize the appendices will be passed along to the consultants.
  - The specific details of the placement and environmental impacts regarding any potential parking areas and UA trail will be available after an engineer is hired to create a design plan. After public feedback the comment period was extended until midnight on Sunday July 18<sup>th</sup>, to give people a full month to provide comments.
- We call the field along North Street “the field of pain” since there is so much poison ivy.
- How comfortable are we with the cost estimates provided here? Given that we are seeing increases in the Parker Meadow work and post-covid contracting costs in general? Do we have any cost estimates to restore the bike trail to previous conditions not including UA?
  - The cost estimates included in the plan do not seem to include the optional extension to Brent Road and only include the loop trail, and this will be passed along to the consultants. The current cost estimates are based on a conceptual plan basis, so after the design phase plan is in hand we will have much more solid numbers to accurately access necessary fund raising since they will be based off an engineered design. We anticipate that the fluctuation in pricing will be accurately represented in the engineered plan and we won’t have the same surprise in costs due to covid similar to what was experienced with Parker Meadow.
- Are the cart path and bike path the same thing?
  - Yes. When the property was owned by Park and Recreation there was an 8-10ft wide stone dust path that was created, which has slowly deteriorated over time.
- Volunteers can not apply herbicide on town land, only licensed employees and contractors, correct?
  - Yes, you need to be a licensed CORE Applicator within the state of Massachusetts to apply herbicide on town land.
- The new timeline for comments would help the Commission on Disabilities provide feedback.
- What are the fees that Land Steward is earning on this?
  - We can send the proposal materials to anyone who wishes to email us this request.
- When would we have these more detailed cost estimates?
  - Currently the timeline is for us to solicit feedback from the public until mid-July, Conservation staff will compile comments and submit to the consultant, by early August. The consultant will submit a final plan by the fall of 2021 for the Conservation Commission to review. If approved, staff would put out an RFP in the fall 2021 / winter of 2022 and hire a consultant to create the design plan for the spring of 2022.
- Was the Kaufman 2019 report a draft? It was referred to as “drafted”.
  - The Kaufman 2019 report was never finalized.

- Wouldn't town meeting need to approve the proposed funding before you go out to bid?
  - We have already received CPA funding for two aspects of the plan that would not need further approval before moving forward, if approved by the Conservation Commission. Those include meadow preservation and the design plan for the parking and UA trail by an engineer.