

TOWN OF SOUTHBOROUGH



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

17 COMMON ST · SOUTHBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS 01772

<https://www.southboroughtown.com/southborough-stewardship-committee>

August 19, 2024

Dear Board Members and Commissioners,

Given our mission and duty at Breakneck Hill Conservation Land, the Stewards appreciate the direction that revised site plan for 120 Turnpike Road (dated July 24, 2024) suggests. We do have some questions and concerns about the open space portion of the revised plan, which I share below.

- **Layout of the 6.2 acre-donation:** Given the 6.2 acres designated, a site plan review is critical. To that end, the Stewards would like to know when the site plan modification will be scheduled. We understood a modification would be forthcoming.
- **Value of the donation as conservation land:** It appears the acreage designated for donation will have swales in some portions, be denuded of trees, and significantly graded. This negatively affects its value as conservation land. The Stewards are concerned about clearing the land, its adverse effects on sight lines from the conservation land, the light pollution from the proposed buildings and parking lots, among other detrimental affects given the proximity to the trails. The light pollution is especially concerning as it interferes with the life cycles of fireflies and causes other wildlife harm.
- **Buffer adjacent to the conservation land:** For any plantings anticipated in cleared areas, we respectfully request that the Stewards be consulted so that we can advise on appropriate native plants that would support our goals for the conservation land that is adjacent. Those goals include providing habitat for native at risk pollinators, which require very specific native plants. Appropriate plants would be those found on the research-based list developed by Dr. Robert Gegear (available <https://gegearlab.weebly.com/plant-list.html>).
- **Connecting trail and preserving the historic stonewall:** As Stewards of the property, we welcome future residents of 120 Turnpike Road to enjoy the abutting conservation land. We need to weigh in on where the connecting trail will be, keeping in mind that we want to preserve that stonewall as a visible and historic feature of the property.
- **Signage at the new trail:** With a new access point to the conservation land, we can provide signage that welcomes residents and posts rules. Additionally, if a kiosk is provided, the Stewards can provide beautiful artwork featuring a trail map of the conservation land suitable for posting outdoors.
- **Dog waste:** Dog waste has significant adverse effects on the conservation land and local water resources. Therefore the dog park should include receptacles for waste. This would also make abiding Southborough's bylaws easy and to prevent dog waste from harming the conservation land.

The Stewardship Committee asks that you consider our concerns as the planning proceeds. We look forward to working collaboratively toward an acceptable layout for the proposed development.

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joyce Greenleaf
Chair, Stewardship Committee