

# LASSER / SELECTMAN

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## Open Spaces and Other Issues

September 1, 2009

I want to take a few minutes to update you on some things going on in town. As always, if you don't want to receive these notes from me, please send me an email and I will remove you from my distribution list. If on the other hand, you find this useful and you think others you know will find it interesting, please feel free to forward it on. Anyone who would like to be added to my email list to get my notes directly should send an email to [howard.lasser@charter.net](mailto:howard.lasser@charter.net) and I will add you to the distribution list.

### A Personal Concern:

Many of you are aware that for the past few years, Brookfield has been plagued by people who, through anonymous blogs and emails, think invective, innuendo and insults substitutes for interest, intelligence and wit. To them I offer the attached column from Maureen Dowd.

### Open Space Purchase:

On September 15th there will be a town meeting at 7:00 at town hall to consider the Town purchasing 21 acres at 8 Nabby Road for open space. The total purchase price is \$800,000. The Conservation Commission has a fund containing \$576,000 from which they will use \$400,000 toward this purchase.

The Town is being asked to come up with the other \$400,000 in order to purchase this land. I am in favor of this purchase. While I know we have many demands on town resource which have gone unfunded or underfunded, it is, in my opinion, no reason to forgo the opportunity that is presented at this time.

Over the past few weeks I have heard a few concerns which I would like to address here.

First, people question how the Conservation commission has \$576,000. This is not tax dollars. When developers submit their plans, the Planning Commission requires them to reserve 10% of the property for open space. In lieu of this, they are able to place a sum of money in this fund dedicated to the acquisition of open space. I do not know how the amount is determined, I expect the Planning Commission has an appropriate way to determine this.

Another concern is the restrictions placed on the property and limits to use for the future. At the Board of Finance meeting, Michael Mattson, representing the family on this transaction, pointed out

that the price of the property has been reduced to reflect the lower value on property that has a limited use. If the family had not desired to leave the property as is, they could sell it on the open market and could probably get a higher price. Given its location, and proximity to other developments, there is no doubt in my mind that this is true, though it might take a bit longer than the family would like to wait to realize this value. I have been told that the family has agreed, since the Board of Finance meeting, that the property may be used for fields at some point.

The maintenance of the property is another concern I have heard. Too often Brookfield starts something only to underfund the endeavor and fall short of our goals. Judy Heise, Chairperson of the Gurski commission, suggested to me that in the acquisition of this property we should provide, not just for the purchase, but for the fulfillment of the vision of what that property would be used for. At our meeting this was raised and the suggestion that we add a sum of money to the amount we might borrow to insure the Conservation Commission has sufficient funds to see this project through. It was learned that the funds they have may be used not only for acquisition but for maintenance of open space, so they will still have over \$175,000 to provide for maintaining the property. In addition, the buildings on the property will provide a source of rental income that can be used for maintenance and improvements in the future.

I hope to see you at the Town Meeting on the 15th.

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