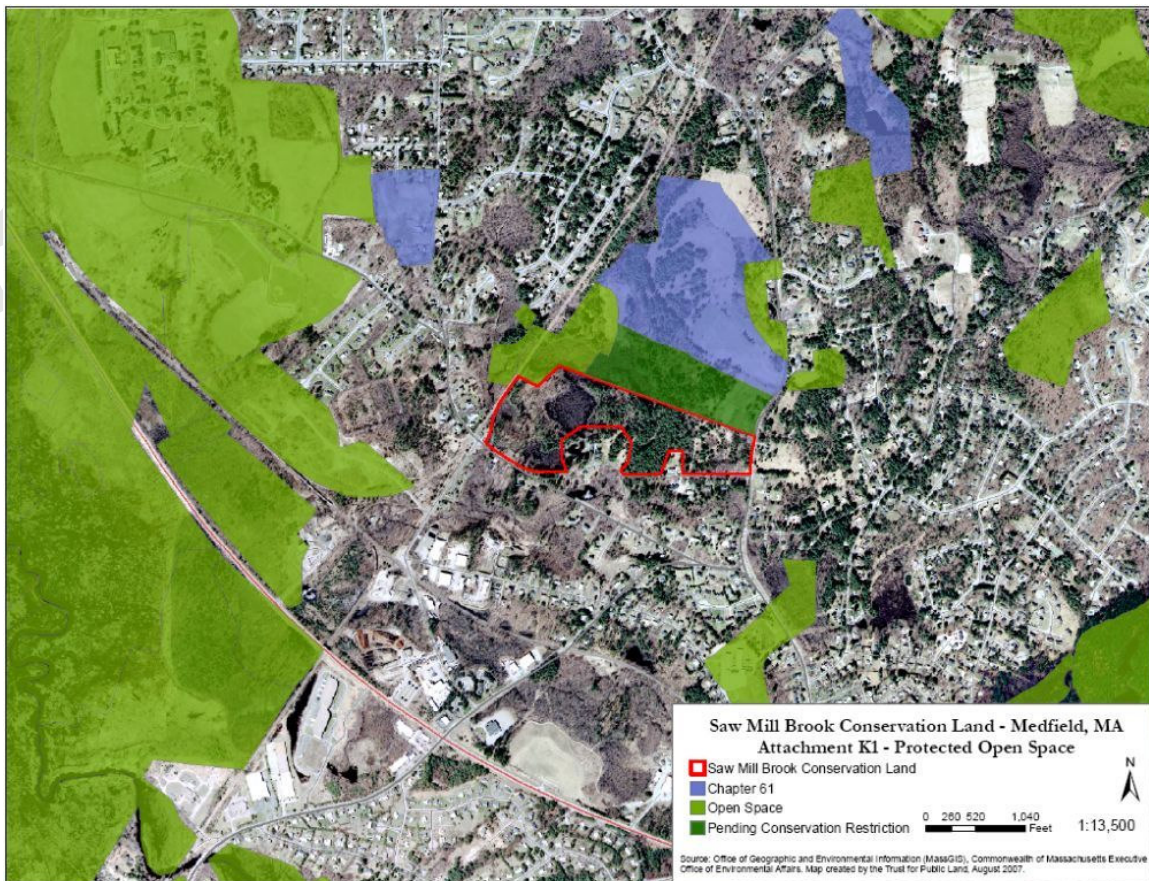


December 07, 2007

Dear Friends,

It has come to my attention that we are currently at risk of losing a significant parcel of open space in Medfield. Approximately 66 acres of beautiful wooded uplands, wetlands and fields currently owned by the Cronin and McCombs families is at risk of development. The parcels are roughly bordered by North Street to the east, School Street to the south, railroad tracks to the west and the nearly 100 undeveloped acres of the Norfolk Hunt Club to the north. This area represents one of the largest contiguous, undeveloped, usable open spaces in Medfield and supports such activities as hiking, cross country skiing and horseback riding. The Cronin homestead and its often admired tree would also be at risk if not protected. Additionally, this land provides protection for one of the Town's drinking water wells. To lose these parcels to development would irreparably diminish the distinctive rural character of our town, not to mention further stress the Town's ability to provide services to its residents.



The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has recognized the importance of protecting this valuable resource and has titled their effort the Sawmill Brook Conservation Project. Working on behalf of the Town of Medfield, the TPL has already negotiated an agreement to purchase approximately 34 acres of the Cronin property, and to permanently protect the remaining ten acres surrounding the house from further subdivision and residential development. The Trust for Public Land also anticipates receiving a gift of a Conservation Restriction that will permanently protect the 22-acre McCombs property, contingent upon the protection of the Cronin land. The cost to protect these invaluable 66 acres is \$3 Million. In order to

finalize the negotiated agreement, the residents of Medfield will need to approve the funding for the project via a Special Town Meeting in February and at the Town's regularly scheduled election on March 31, 2008. Pending voter approval of Town funding, TPL will execute a purchase and sale agreement with the Town of Medfield and at closing, the Town will assume ownership of the Cronin land. The Conservation Restriction will likely be held jointly by the Town of Medfield and a local nonprofit. The Trust for Public Land's agreements require that all funding be secured by March 31, 2008.

There are a variety of reasons to move forward with this plan and I hope that you will join me in informing your friends and neighbors of the facts and in supporting the proposal to protect this land.

- Aesthetically, the rural nature of the two parcels at risk and the abutting Norfolk Hunt Club help to define the very character of Medfield that has drawn so many of us to Town. In the mid-nineteenth century, renowned landscape artist George Inness settled in Medfield, drawn by its natural beauty. I'd like to think that many of the same scenes that inspired Inness will continue to exist for future generations. Protecting these parcels is integral to that end.
- The Cronin homestead is one of Medfield's historic gems. Flanked by its well known and often photographed stately tree, both are at risk if this land is not protected and is sold to developers. The TPL plan will protect the home and the ten acres surrounding it.
- This land provides protection for one of the Town's drinking water wells and the State has already awarded a \$500,000 drinking water grant toward that end. This grant will reduce the Town's financial commitment in purchasing the land.
- The 34-acre Cronin land has been independently appraised at \$3.17million and \$3.175 million by two Massachusetts-certified appraisers. This appraisal does not include the 22-acre McCombs land which will be protected via a Conservation Restriction **if** the Cronin land is protected. The Town has the opportunity to protect both parcels for \$2.5 million (\$3,000,000 purchase price minus \$500,000 state drinking water grant).
- According to estimates, the 34-acre Cronin land (not including the separate 22-acre McCombs property) is suitable for a minimum of 15 to 23 residential house lots. This development would incur a significant burden to the Town in terms of additional services and infrastructure necessary, and cause additional stress on the Town's school system. Additional study will be required to determine the full impact of such a development.
- The Cronin and McCombs parcels contain a network of trails that serve not only as recreational outlets for horseback riders, hikers, bikers and cross country skiers, but also serve to connect to other trail systems in Town. The Norfolk Hunt Club relies on accessibility to their land from other trail networks in Town in order to hold hunts and organized rides. A loss of accessibility from the Hunt Club land may potentially lead to that land falling into the hands of developers as well.

Again, please educate your neighbors on the facts of the plan and of its great benefits to the Town. **Please show your support for the plan at the next Selectmen Meeting on Tuesday, December 11th at 7pm at Town Hall.**

Regards,

David Lafreniere, President
Friends of Medfield Forest & Trails