



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Beth Fenstermacher, Assistant City Planner, on behalf of the Conservation Commission

DATE: November 16, 2020

SUBJECT: Resolution approving the acquisition of land south of and adjacent to the discontinued portion of District No. 5 Road for conservation purposes, and authorizing the expenditure of up to \$49,900 from the Conservation Fund for this purpose, as recommended by the Conservation Commission.

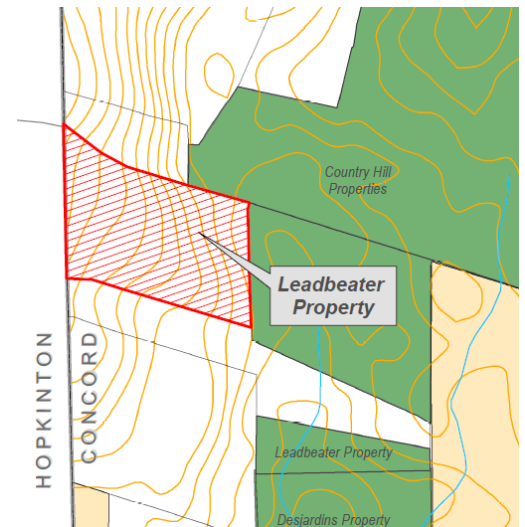
Recommendation

Set the attached resolution for public hearing to authorize the City Manager to acquire land south of and adjacent to District No. 5 Road, as discontinued in 1953, for conservation purposes, and to appropriate \$49,900 from the Conservation Fund for the acquisition of said parcel.

Background

In July 2020, the City of Concord purchased an 11-acre parcel south of District No. 5 Road from Mr. Leadbeater. Following the closing, Mr. Leadbeater approached the Conservation Commission regarding the possibility of the City purchasing another property he owns, identified by the City of Concord Assessor as Tax Map 69Z Lot 1, consisting of approximately 35 acres, located south of and adjacent to District No. 5 Road, as discontinued in 1953, at the Hopkinton town line.

The subject property is located within the Conservation Focus Area identified as "Beech Hill" in the 2017 Conservation Open Space Plan. The area was identified as a priority for acquisition because it is part of a large unfragmented forest; has moderately high resilience value due to habitat connectivity and ecological integrity; contains productive forest land; is identified as high priority in the Merrimack River Conservation Plan; and is identified as Highest Ranked Habitat in NH in the State of NH Fish & Game Wildlife Action Plan (WAP). The property adds to a large contiguous block of conservation land totaling over 1,950 acres in Concord. Country Hill Woods, a 235± acre parcel



of City-owned conservation land is located adjacent to the east and north-east of the parcel. Beyond which is Rossvie Farm, a 546.5± acre property under conservation easement with the NH Division of Forest and Lands. Other nearby and adjacent conservation land includes the 11 acre City-owned Leadbeater parcel to the southeast, beyond which is the 86 acre City-owned Desjardins Property to the south. These conservation properties link the property to other conservation land in the area, including Carter Hill Orchard, Dimond Hill Farm, and the Penacook Watershed conservation properties. Acquisition of the land will provide permanent protection of the natural resources. Further, by protecting these unfragmented lands in perpetuity, this area will continue to support a greater diversity of habitats and species.

Discussion

An appraisal was completed on September 17, 2020 utilizing funds from the Commission's FY 2021 operating budget. At the request of the property owner, final value opinions were given for the property with timber removed ("as cut") and with timber remaining intact ("as is"). The property was appraised at \$49,900 "as is", and \$36,600 "as cut." Given the timber market and short timeframe, Mr. Leadbeater agreed to sell the property at the "as is" appraised value of \$49,900. The Commission anticipates providing the purchase price from the City's Conservation Trust Fund, contingent on a City Council approval.

The Conservation Commission voted unanimously, at a public hearing on November 10, 2020, in favor of the acquisition of the ±35-acre parcel, allocating \$49,900 from the Conservation Fund for said purpose. Upon acquisition, the Commission will manage the property to protect the natural resources; maintain, improve, protect, limit the future use of, and otherwise conserve and properly utilize this property as open space together with other land and water resources within the City.

BAF