



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: June 21, 2018

SUBJECT: Resolution approving the acquisition of open space on Hot Hole Pond Road, and authorizing the expenditure of up to \$340,000 from the Conservation Fund for this purpose, as recommended by the Conservation Commission.

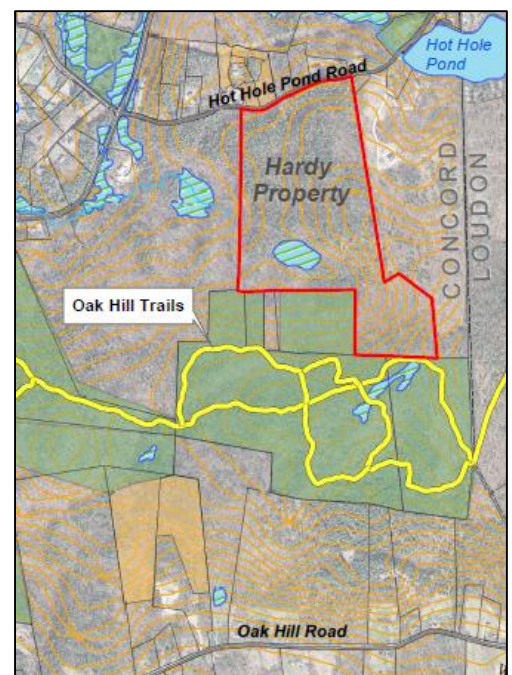
Recommendation

Set a public hearing for August 13, 2018 on a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to acquire land for open space purposes located on Hot Hole Pond Road, and appropriate \$340,000 from the Conservation Fund for the acquisition of said parcel.

Background

In December 2017, Barbara Hardy approached the City of Concord Conservation Commission on behalf of her family regarding the possibility of the City purchasing a parcel of land legally described as Tax Map 9Z Lot 21, consisting of approximately 85 acres on Hot Hole Pond Road. A letter from Ms. Hardy indicating that the family wishes for the property to be kept as a conservation area in perpetuity is attached.

The subject property is located within the Conservation Focus Area identified as "Oak Hill North" in the 2017 Conservation Open Space Plan. The area was identified as a priority for acquisition because it is a prominent scenic resource; has high resilience value due to habitat connectivity and ecological integrity; contains productive forest land; and is identified as Highest Ranked Habitat in NH in the State of NH Fish & Game Wildlife Action Plan. The project will add to a block of conservation land totaling nearly 370 acres, and will provide additional access to the Oak Hill trails network.



Discussion

An appraisal was completed utilizing funds from the Commission's FY18 operating budget. The property was appraised at \$340,000, as of January 18, 2018. In May 2018, the family agreed to sell the property at the appraised value. The Commission was not able to identify outside sources of funding; therefore, anticipates providing the purchase price from the City's Conservation Trust Fund, contingent on City Council approval.

A publicly noticed site walk was held on May 18, 2018. During the site walk, the Conservation Commission agreed that the property was worth protecting due to the valuable natural and historic resources, timber value, access to the Oak Hill trail network, and proximity to Hot Hole Pond. At a public hearing on June 13, 2018, the Commission voted unanimously in favor of the acquisition of the ±85 acre parcel, allocating no more than the sum of \$340,000 from the Conservation Fund. Acquisition and due diligence costs not to exceed \$15,000 will be paid from the Conservation Property Management account as provided in the FY2019 budget. Further, the Commission declared its purposes in taking these actions to acquire this property and allocate the funding for the same, are to 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. At the request of the family, the property will be named "Knowlton Woods" to honor their father for his stewardship of the land.

BAF