



WOODSTOCK LAND CONSERVANCY

To: Woodstock Town Board
From: Woodstock Land Conservancy

September 1, 2010

Meeting Summary Regarding Proposed Expansion of Soccer Fields

On March 10, 2010 WLC received a preliminary plan, showing a proposed expansion of the soccer fields with possible structure locations and a conceptual photo of a pavilion. Per agreement with Town officials, WLC Executive Director and a board member conducted informal discussions and a preliminary site visit on May 11, 2010 with Keith Anderson, Woodstock Soccer League (WSL) President and the league's Vice President. A follow-up conversation with Mr. Anderson took place on July 16th. As of the date of this letter, WLC is awaiting receipt of the most recent set of plans from the Town, per agreement between our Executive Director and the Supervisor in August.

At the May 11 meeting, the soccer league representatives shared aspects of their preliminary field expansion plans. WLC explained Easement-related issues posed by the plans. The discussions at the May 11th mtg could be summarized in three main topics:

Drainage Design:

At the meeting, the soccer league representatives indicated their understanding that a drainage system designed by a professional engineer could be a necessary component of more fully developed plans for field expansion. Additionally, Soccer League representatives indicated their understanding that there may be drainage issues related to the lack of maintenance affecting the performance of the current system. WLC representatives indicated that more complete documentation regarding elevation, topography, wetlands and drainage design would likely be necessary in order to provide review and comments regarding compliance with specific terms of the Easement. Specific among these is addressing potential impacts of drainage from the proposed field relative to the wetlands to the south and west of the Open Area (please see p. 2 Additional Comments).

Field Expansion Location:

At the meeting, WLC representatives were shown the proposed perimeters of the two additional fields in the plans received in March. Specific perimeter locations and measurements were not measured or verified at the meeting. Confirmation of these perimeters, including the southwest corner, relative to the boundaries of the Open and Forest Areas described in the Easement documents will need to be done onsite, subsequent to the review and finalization of the baseline documentation and maps of these areas and boundaries (these are prepared and awaiting review and approval by Town officials and WLC).¹

¹ Per agreement between WLC's attorney and the Town's Special Counsel in preparation of the easement signing, the baseline document maps of the property and the different use areas will supplement the surveys and map documentation of the property. In the Open and Forest Areas, these will provide additional, agreed-upon delineation and documentation of areas and boundaries.

Conceptual Plan for a Pavilion:

The third topic discussed relative to the plans pertained to the location and concept of a pavilion and portable toilets. The Easement language is specific regarding structures in the area of the soccer fields (Open Area X) in terms of size and location. The structures shown in the preliminary plans do not appear to conform to those sections of the Easement and this was communicated to the Soccer League representatives.

Current Status:

As previously communicated to the Town Board and confirmed by phone with Mr. Anderson on July 16th, WLC understands that Soccer League representatives and Town officials are currently reviewing their plans and considering next steps and possible revised plans. WLC is prepared to undertake review of updated plans upon their receipt from the Town, and to meet with Town and Woodstock Soccer League officials to discuss aspects of same as they may pertain to the Deed of Conservation Easement.

Additional Comments from WLC:

There appear to be several potential factors contributing to the dynamics and effects of drainage and runoff from the higher portions of the property to the lower at Comeau, including in the woods south and west of the Open Area and down to the banks of the Sawkill. The performance of the current drainage system of the soccer fields appears to be one significant contributing factor warranting further investigation (please see DEP Stream Specialist, Elizabeth Reichheld's memo to the Town - Comeau Drainage Letter of March 25th, 2010).

As holder of the Conservation Easement, WLC has communicated to Town officials the importance and value of developing a better understanding of the relationships and dynamics of topography, wetlands, soccer field drainage and related hydrology (including in the Forest Area south and west of the soccer fields, the banks of the Sawkill, and the meadows surrounding the fields) at Comeau. The Woodstock Soccer League as well has spoken in support of the Town obtaining a hydrology report and wetlands survey for Comeau. Mr. Anderson has requested that WLC mention here that WSL were the first to ask that a land survey of the Comeau property, a wetlands survey, a bio-diversity study and a hydrology report be done prior to the signing of the conservation easement.

The Wetlands Delineation at Comeau (recommended by WLC in July and currently under consideration by the Town Board) will provide important information to guide the Town in cost-effective development of soccer field expansion plans in compliance with relevant laws and regulations and the Deed of Conservation Easement.

For the property as a whole, the knowledge gained will be another important component of a natural resources inventory of the Comeau property and an important contribution to the Stewardship Plan being developed by the Town. These can be incorporated with important work already accomplished: the Comeau Trails Task Force reports & trail remediation projects, The Sawkill Report (Comeau portion included in the CTTF reports), Comeau-related knowledge gained through the Town's pending Habitat Mapping Project with Hudsonia Inc., etc.).

A Note of Clarification: WLC is neither stating nor implying by the above that the activity of playing soccer *in and of itself* on the existing fields at Comeau is causing environmental damage. Further, Mr. Anderson has spoken at Town Board meetings and in the media, stating a fundamental organizational commitment of the Woodstock Soccer League: to provide essential outdoor sports/fitness opportunities for youth, engender an appreciation of nature, and help to instill a life-long ethos of fitness and environmental stewardship. WLC shares and supports these goals.

Sincerely Yours,

John P. Winter, Executive Director
Kevin Smith, President
Woodstock Land Conservancy