

**TOWN OF NEEDHAM**  
**Weston & Sampson Presentation re: Ridge Hill Reservation/Nike Site Study**  
**MINUTES**  
**Monday, September 24, 2018**

LOCATION: Public Services Administration Building (PSAB), Charles River Room

ATTENDING: Janet Bernardo (CC), Sue Barber (CC), Gene Bolenger (W&S), Amanda Gaal (W&S), Maurice Handel (BOS), Jeanne Lukenda (W&S), Dan Matthews (BOS), Lee Newman (Director of Planning), Peter Oehlkers (CC), Debbie Anderson (Conservation Specialist), Elisa Litchman (Administrative Assistant)

Jeanne Lukenda from Weston & Sampson opened the meeting by distributing information regarding the Ridge Hill/Nike Properties. The task at hand is three-fold: 1) to assess the RH and Nike sites for possible use to be determined down the road, 2) how could there be use of the land based on zoning restrictions of site, and 3) how to improve access to and potentially between the sites.

The RHR and NS make up 223 acres of land. The Board of Selectmen owned property make up 3 acres and includes the Manor house, garage and barn. The assessment of the lands provides information which initiates a discussion as to whether the BOS property can be swapped with 3 acres of Conservation land somewhere else giving the BOS property greater access as well as the potential for a specific use. RHR and NS are entirely in Single Residence A district. The Assessment pages for discussion show how RHR and NS properties finger their way around residential streets on the west side of the property. The BOS property is embedded in RHR.

The early Figure pages of the presentation show various existing conditions such as streams and wetlands, buffer zones, priority habitats, overlay districts, trails, easements, slopes, utilities, and treeline. These attributes are shown so that when assessing these areas we are sensitive to them and conclude that they each either preclude or have some impact on land use. Figure 13 for example shows the limiting aspects of the properties. The BOS house is located in aquifer protection zone in Figure 22 as another example.

Once all the aspects of the properties are reviewed a process of elimination or "Not Recommended for Use" is exhibited on Figure 14. The Figure showing topography and property describes areas with slopes in excess of 15-25% as a limiting factor.

Jeanne also provided the meeting members a Summary of Utilities Information related to the Ridge Hill Reservation and Nike Sites, information which also impacts the decisions made regarding usable land. Figure 15 shows remaining land that could be desirable however, upon further scrutiny Figure 16 shows less desirable sections due to size (less than 3 acre sections) and oddly configured areas (for program use); Figure 17 shows the challenging areas due to access; Figure 18 shows slope average of 10% and higher which make these areas less desirable as well (due to the need for additional work/materials/financing etc. to accomplish.) Figure 19 shows areas that are less than 3 acres in size and location again that are less desirable.

Figure 20 of the Assessment displays which locations rose to the top and helps us understand the potential for site use. The total number of usable acres post elimination totals 62 and is broken down into 5 separate sites. Figure 20 shows each of the five (5) sites and their own acreage. The Figures that follow show more detailed

information for each of these five sites with potential for use as well as constraints for use. Figure 22 shows disturbed area (Option 2) and non-disturbed area (Option 1) meant to each represent a 3 acre parcel to swap if that's decided. Jeanne stated that there appears to be more potential for the Option 2 area as there are no trees, aquifer protection zone, or trails that would be impacted. Figure 23 The Nike Site (or Site 3) shows two yellow areas each a total of 3 acres. Option 1 on this figure shows existing uses not being impacted by this 3 acre site. The other areas surrounding Option 1 show the Community Farm and the Dog Park (permitted by the BOS). Site 4 on Figure 24 similarly consists of 3 acres. Site 5 on Figure 25 totals 6 acres and shows several existing trails that would be impacted.

Moe Handel clarified to the group that the BOS structures sit on 3 acres and the Nike Site consists of 18 acres totaling 21 acres of land under the control of the BOS.

The next set of Figures that Jeanne distributed show potential buildout options allowed by right on a generic 3 acres of land within Single Residence A district (which is RHR and NS zoning district). W&S referred to the Needham Zoning Bylaws and based on the uses permitted within this district provided buildout options for 5 different categories (including agricultural, greenhouse operation, place of assembly, community rec center, elderly/hospice care, and department of public works) abiding by the maximum building square footage allowed, minimum parking, and landscaped area requirements. This exercise is to see if any of these options would be eliminated if they don't make sense on 3 acres of land. For instance the place of assembly buildout option allows for the building and has what appears to be extra open area. This use requires a fair bit of parking. Jeanne explained that if you increase the number of people the building can accommodate all other requirements are tipped and the parking and setback requirements cannot be fulfilled within the 3 acres. Figure 29 shows a building (Rec Center) of a total of 31,800 square feet (2 floors) and is limited to this size as the building size drives the parking needs. Figure 31 shows a potential DPW building. The ultimate size of the building, parking and landscape is driven by what is allowed by the zoning.

Jeanne stated that depending on what the town is looking for in terms of use and attributes, there is a significant amount of land that can be used on Charles River Street (with frontage) or deep in the site. There are potentially a wide variety of uses by category and within categories than those examples provided in the assessment.

D. Matthews shared that there are two different missions of the committees involved in the discussions. The Conservation Commission values the properties in different ways than that of the BOS. The meeting and the assessment report are to create an opportunity for the two committees to discuss potential areas to swap. D. Matthews stated that the goals of the BOS are to plan and create a more useful parcel, one that has a more accessible and useful configuration (for a generic use); there is no intended use at the moment. He confirmed for the group that the Manor House is in such disrepair that it is slated to be demolished.

Jeanne then explained that the access to the Nike site is very poor due to the access road off of Pine Street (a one-way street) and that you cannot get from one site to the other without leaving the property. One goal would be to create better access. J. Bernardo stated that land that has high conservation value, the Conservation Commission will not want to swap. Large wooded areas with canopy the Commission will want to preserve.

The issue of access is a major factor for D. Matthews. He is not necessarily as concerned with what's buildable but more that an internal driveway would provide access. He would like to provide a roadway to link the two properties. D. Matthews suggested that W&S rename the Options so that not every option has an option 1 and 2 but Option 1 has a, b, c and Option 2 has a, b, and c; no two options should have the same number.

Figure 32 shows existing conditions and no connectivity. Figure 33 Option 1 shows a low impact connectivity of two possible cross connection roads between the BOS and Nike Sites. The existing access roads would be made two-way, wider and with a turnaround at the endpoints. The lower connection of the two access roads would be for emergency vehicles, bikes, and hikers; not for general vehicle use. Option 2 connection road is two-way and cuts through the lower areas and trails within RHR. Option 3 shows a one-way loop which simplifies circulation. W&S admitted that there are many potential options to connecting the two sites but they created these options considering the most feasible routes, and the paths of least resistance. D. Matthews wants to look for 21 contiguous acres for active use, not developable but useful. P. Oehlkers made clear that there is value to meadows vs. lawn. J. Bernardo added that certain areas of the Nike Site contain gravel and gravel is not valuable to Conservation. For further clarification, the roadways are active use. J. Bernardo stated that to consolidate parcels for active-use is better for Conservation as that will take the active-use areas away from Conservation land. Members of BOS and Conservation agreed that they need to show Con Com potential areas of consolidation to see what's of value to them. Now they suggest looking for largest parcel suitable for flat uses. D. Matthews shared that the Community Farm would like the BOS barn for their equipment, etc. and to expand the farm. Unfortunately the Manor house at this point is a hazard and to restore it dwarfs the value of the building.

All agreed that both the BOS and Conservation Commission must make a mutual decision regarding these parcels. The BOS requested that W&S outline the NS acreage on the figures as they have done with the RHR property which is in red.