

Question & Answer from 12-07-2021 Wellesley Open Space and Recreation Forum

Question text	Answer
Please review the objectives	The objectives are outlined in the survey data located on the NRC website here: https://wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/26390/WellesleyOSRPSurveySummary2021
Fuller brook park	Comment
Morses pond	Comment
The aqueducts!	Comment
What percentage of the open space in Wellesley is controlled by the town?	<p>Here is the map referenced during the meeting: https://wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1015/Existing-Open-Space-PDF</p> <p>Wellesley is made up of approximately 10.5 square miles or 6,720 acres of land in total. Open space makes up about 33 percent (2212 acres) of that total, and the remaining 67 percent (4507.29 acres) is considered developed land.</p> <p>As shown on the map, the portion of the Town that is open space is comprised of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 304 acres of town-owned municipal lands (such as Schools, the RDF, Morses Pond Waterworks, the Cochituate Aqueduct); • 546 acres of town-owned land protected under Article 97 (Parks and Conservation Land under NRC Jurisdiction); • 90 acres of state/federal land protected under Article 97 (land adjacent to the Charles River); • 1271 acres of "other open space," (State and federally-owned lands such as Mass Bay Community College and other educational institutions; the Sudbury Aqueduct; the National Guard; cemeteries; land trusts; lands that benefit from Chapter 61 tax relief such as golf courses. <p>Of the referenced 2212 acres of open space in town, significantly less than half are protected. Just under 10% of open space in Wellesley is protected under Article 97. (Note, since this map was created, the Town has purchased the North 40, which is under the jurisdiction of the Select Board.)</p>
Confirm number of required sections	Per the OSRP Handbook, there are 11 sections
Does Wellesley NRC have any influence on the use of Elm Bank, given that Wellesley soccer rents space?	This is DCR property, and Youth leagues arrange permits through the state agency, not through any Town Department.
How hasn't the athletic field improvements not be considered as creating field space as noted in goals and progress?	The active recreation facilities improvements at Hunnewell (Track and Field, Lee and Diane Warren softball fields) and Sprague tennis courts are included in the "goals and progress."

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<p>How does the NRC work with Wellesley Park and Tree Dept? Does the Town Horticulturist have major input?</p>	<p>We work almost daily with the Park and Tree division and seek out its expertise on a host of issues, including playing field upkeep, and hazard tree removal when necessary. This work most always includes the Town Horticulturist, who advises the NRC on a large number of topics, including invasive species remediation and land management. The DPW acts as general contractor and project manager on most NRC capital projects, such as the two recent softball field renovations, the coming bathroom located near the Aqueduct at Hunnewell Fields, and the extensive Morses Pond Shoreline Restoration project - all funded for the most part through the Community Preservation Act.</p>
<p>How does Wellesley NRC coordinate with neighboring towns like Weston, Needham, Dover?</p>	<p>We are one of 24 towns involved in the Charles River Watershed Association Climate Compact, working together on projects and sharing information to mitigate and prepare for Climate Change. We also interact with neighboring communities, for instance Natick, as they undertake evaluating the South Natick Dam. At times projects overlap across municipalities, and there are discussions on which town will lead on Wetlands permitting. We often support grant requests from other towns when the project benefits the area as a whole. We also participate in the Metrowest Area Planning Council (MAPC), especially on creating Trails connections between towns.</p>
<p>Do you think this process gives enough weight to preservation and protection of wetlands? Particularly as it rebates to carbon capture</p>	<p>Goal Number 2: <i>Protect, enhance, and restore Wellesley's sensitive land, water, and wetlands resources, especially those resources that have been degraded or impaired</i> was deemed as "very important" by almost 80% of respondents and scored in the top three priorities. Wetlands protection is one of the NRC's primary statutory responsibilities. We will look into incorporating carbon capture into the regulatory regime.</p>
<p>Can people group together to propose establishing a solar farm on Town open space?</p>	<p>Yes. Citizens can create a citizen petition. As part of the Green Communities program, the Town voted to approve a solar overlay district at Route 9 and 128. https://wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9815/Zoning-Bylaw-for-Solar-Overlay-District-Article-31-PDF</p>
<p>Can the NRC enforce anything?</p>	<p>The NRC is vested with the statutory authority of Park Commissions, Tree Warden, Town Forest Committee, Conservation Commission (Wetlands Protection), and Pest Control Officers. Therefore we are able to create and enforce policies, rules and regulations under these statutes on lands and resources under jurisdiction, including but not limited to pesticide use, tree and land use/management, Wetlands Protection bylaws, and encroachment onto park and conservation lands.</p>

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NRC doesn't enforce traffic	Noted. This is the Town's OSRP, and comments and suggestions will be shared with the proper Boards and Departments.
The options for "protect natural resources and human health" put more emphasis on water quality than air quality.	Noted. Action items will include air quality as well.
What does focusing nrc commission activities on non rec specs mean?	Unclear, but possibly refers to the idea that some members of the community would like to see the NRC focus on Natural Resources only, and another body focus on active recreation, which is the role of the Recreation Commission.
How about a dog park in the park space next to the police station	Dogs are allowed off-leash under voice command at all NRC park and conservation areas. (Specific hours apply at Perrin Park).
What if we think one of the suggested actions is stupid? I should be able to Not select	We have asked everyone to rank each action step. Actions can be ranked as "not so important," or listed as "last" to indicate level of priority. It would be helpful to the process for residents to provide suggested edits to the language, and to clarify what and why specific actions are considered objectionable.
Re the category before (the currently re-visited) 9: what does split between adding not adding mean in terms of ranking? Just the topic in general?	More clarification about this question is needed in order to answer it properly.
Can the town establish a revolving fund to purchase potential open space if it becomes available? To act quickly.	The Statutory authority of Conservation Commissions enabled through the Conservation Commission Act MGL Ch. 40 S8.c. allows Towns to create accounts that allow the NRC to purchase land. We would need to identify funding sources.
These goals are admirable. How does the Town and the NRC prioritize its efforts?	The NRC holds an annual Retreat where goals and projects are prioritized. Minutes from the 2021 retreat are here: https://wellesleyma.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Minutes/ 09232021-5360 We also give credence to Town-wide goals as identified in the Unified Plan, the MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) Plan, the Climate Resolution passed at Annual Town Meeting, Wellesley's Municipal Sustainable Building Guidelines, the Town's emerging Climate Action Plan, and the OSRP.
Several rankings involved lights vs no lights but nothing addressed sound v quiet (except w respect to leaf blowers) but light and sound pollution matter	Noted. We can make sure that sound pollution is considered in the action steps.
Update wetland bylaws	Comment
Police cars need to stay on for safety reasons I believe	Comment

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<p>So a homeowner can cut down all the trees and then sell or construct?</p>	<p>Please see a summary of the Tree Preservation bylaw here: https://wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21769/Wellesley-Tree-Preservation-Bylaw There is a 12-month look back period in the bylaw. The bylaw does not prohibit the removal of trees, but gives homeowners/developers the option of saving trees, replanting trees to replace the trees removed, or paying into a tree fund when trees are removed.</p>
<p>For all town owned property, what is the ratio of active to passive recreation acreage</p>	<p>We are working on this analysis. In essence it is the difference between this map: https://wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1015/Existing-Open-Space-PDF and this map: https://wellesleyma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1010/Recreation-Resources-PDF</p>
<p>Thank you so much for the good work you do.</p>	<p>Comment</p>
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<p></p>	<p></p>

Thank you all so much for attending and participating! Please send any additional questions, comments, ideas, and any other input to nrc@wellesleyma.gov