

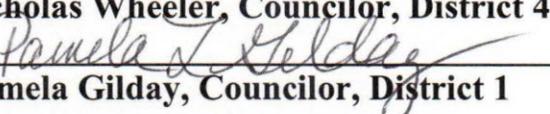


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AMESBURY CITY CLERK

**CITY OF AMESBURY
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SPONSORED BY:



Nicholas Wheeler, Councilor, District 4


Pamela Gilday, Councilor, District 1

BILL No. 2018-050

Title: A Resolution regarding the Development of Woodsom Farm

Summary: This non-binding resolution will allow members of the Amesbury City Council to express their opinion regarding the potential development of a portion of the parcel(s) known as "Woodsom Farm" for the purposes of constructing a new Amesbury Elementary School building ("the Project"). Doing so during the Project's site selection process is intended to minimize the potential impact of a future negative vote if such decision were to occur after the Project's design has progressed to the stage where the Project itself becomes dependent upon the site selected.

WHEREAS, The Amesbury Public School District (APS) is currently seeking to select a suitable site/scheme for the potential renovation or replacement of the Amesbury Elementary School (AES); and

WHEREAS, one of the stated schemes currently being outlined by the AES design team as of 6/11/18 would likely result in the construction of a new school facility on a portion of City-owned property known as Woodsom Farm, located in District 4 on Lion's Mouth Road; and

WHEREAS, the Woodsom Farm property, purchased in 1989 (See Essex South Registry of Deeds Book 9963 Page 330), represents the largest continuous open-space parcel in the City's possession; and

WHEREAS, relocation of all APS elementary-level programming to the Woodsom Farm parcel in question and adjacent area will likely lead to increased annual transportation costs for the APS district; and

WHEREAS, relocation of all APS elementary-level programming to the Woodsom Farm parcel in question and adjacent area will likely lead to the loss of the current "community school" experience for many Amesbury residents and their children, in favor of a single, centralized elementary campus, and

WHEREAS, the proposed site for the school at Woodsom will have a negative effect on the City's traditional uses of the property (in particular as the staging ground for the annual the 4th of July Fireworks display); and

WHEREAS, the Woodsom Farm parcel in question is not currently served by a sanitary sewer, likely leading to increased construction and recurring maintenance costs for the city in the event it were to be developed; and

WHEREAS, development on the Woodsom Farm parcel in question would likely have a negative effect on available recreational opportunities for Amesbury residents; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Project site at Woodsom Farm is a part of the prime nesting habitat for several threatened species of grassland birds, including the Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark (the latter of which has already reportedly lost over 75% of its habitat in the Commonwealth since 1979, according to the Massachusetts Audubon Society), and further that development on such parcel will likely have a negative effect on the ability of these species to thrive; and

WHEREAS, the original purpose for the purchase of the Woodsom Farm by the City in 1989 was to protect it from potential development, and further that work is currently under way to preserve it in perpetuity for conservation and passive recreational use by Amesbury residents; and

WHEREAS, Woodsom Farm is cited in Amesbury's 2004 Master Plan Document as Amesbury's "largest parcel of public land set aside for conservation and passive recreation"; and

WHEREAS, a portion of the land indicated for the proposed Project site at Woodsom Farm (identified as "Woodsom I" on a Plan entitled "Plan of Land in Amesbury, Massachusetts Prepared for Woodsom Trust", dated March 21, 1989, scale 1"=80', prepared by W.C. Cammett Engineering, Inc., 297 Elm Street, Amesbury, Massachusetts with a plan reference number of 89009-A recited thereon, recorded at the Essex South Registry of Deeds as Plan Book 251, Page 36), was established as open space specifically in order to satisfy the minimum requirements for a Rural Cluster (RC) Subdivision located along Lion's Mouth Road, created concurrently with the town's purchase of the surrounding property from the Woodsom Trust on April 13, 1989 (See Essex South Registry of Deeds Book 9963 Page 322); now, therefore

Be it RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Amesbury assembled and by the authority of the same, as follows:

That the Amesbury City Council does hereby state its opposition to the use of Woodsom Farm for the proposed Project site, and further does hereby request that the AES design team investigate other viable alternatives that may be available for the siting of the proposed school building including, but not limited to, the re-use of the existing AES site located at 20 S. Hampton Road in Amesbury. The stated opposition to this particular Project site shall not be interpreted as an endorsement or rejection of the proposed AES renovation/replacement Project as a whole, as the Project remains subject to continued design and ultimate approval/permitting by the City.