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IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-TWO

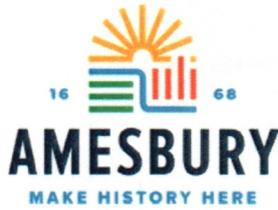
SPONSORED BY: *Kassandra Gove* **BILL No.** 2022-125
Kassandra Gove, Mayor

An Order to authorize the Mayor to expend a FY22 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Spending Bill Earmark in the amount of \$75,000 to hire a consultant to inventory and prepare an operation and maintenance plan for Amesbury's open space and natural resources.

Summary: The Legislature's ARPA spending bill last year (Chapter 102 of the acts of 2021) included the following provision: "not less than \$75,000 shall be expended for the cleanup of contamination at the Microfab site on state route 110 in the city of Amesbury." Microfab is an EPA-funded Site, and is currently receiving ample funding from the Superfund program to keep the remedial process moving forward. The Remedial Design (RD) for the selected remedy is not expected to begin until June 2024 and would run for at least a year, ending in June 2025. This timeframe would make these ARPA funds unable to be used on this project. At the request of the Mayor, former Representative Kelcourse filed an amendment in the General Governmental Bond Bill to repurpose this earmark, so that it could be used by the City immediately. Please see attached scope of service for an Open Space and Natural Resource Management Consultant. Once approved by City Council, an RFP will be issued.

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

That the City of Amesbury authorizes the Mayor to expend a FY22 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Spending Bill Earmark in the amount of \$75,000 to hire a consultant to inventory and prepare an operation and maintenance plan for Amesbury's open space and natural resources.



Open Space and Natural Resource Management Consultant Scope of Work

Introduction

Amesbury's *2020-27 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)* and findings from the ongoing *Amesbury 2030 Master Plan* have two common themes:

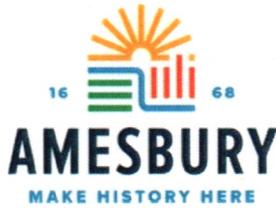
1. The City's open space and natural resources (including lakes and waterways) are highly valued. Many residents identified these assets as one of the main reasons they live in Amesbury.
2. The City does not actively or adequately plan and manage these resources. Information about them (maps, use rules/restrictions, trail signage, etc.) is scarce. Coordinated planning and active management of the resources is largely absent, with no clear frameworks for the City to make decisions, allocate constrained maintenance resources, monitor uses and resources issues, and positively harness public and private resources to make improvements and tackle goals.

With planning resources such as the OSRP, the Master Plan, a Complete Streets plan, the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness planning process, and outputs from public boards (Lakes and Waterways Commission and the Open Space, Natural Resources, and Trails Committee), the City is not lacking in concrete goals and objectives to work towards. What is lacking is the administrative foundation and coordination required to make meaningful progress towards these goals.

In January 2022, the City brought together representatives from the Conservation Commission, Lakes and Waterways Commission, and the Open Space, Natural Resources and Trails Committee to draft recommendations for how the City can improve its planning and management of the open space and natural resources that its citizens so highly value. This working group brainstormed existing planning and management resources (things we already do and have), missing pieces in the management framework (things we need to start doing), and things we do already but should change. The result of that work was a scope of work for a focused position/consultant who can assist the City in level-setting, creating management plans, and creating a formal structure for sustainably managing Amesbury's open spaces and natural resources.

Scope of Work

Meeting the City's long-term open space and natural resource management goals and objectives requires a few things: developing strong inventories, creating sound management plans, and establishing the administrative infrastructure to implement them. Maintaining and improving open space and natural resources requires the organization of information, clear lines of responsibility, good planning, the marshaling and coordination of City stakeholders and resources, the mobilization of public support and effort, funding, and accountability. To accomplish this, the chosen consultant will be knowledgeable and experienced in:



Open Space and Natural Resource Management Consultant Scope of Work

1. *Coordinating* policy, planning, and implementation regarding the management of open space and natural resources.
2. *Collecting and assessing data and resources* that will serve as the foundation for open space and natural resource planning and implementation.
3. *Collaborating with* relevant departments at the City, public boards, stakeholders groups, and the public at large.
4. *Identifying the necessary resources and funding* to sustainably manage open space and natural resources.

The chosen consultant will be responsible for a specific scope of work which includes the following tasks:

1. Inventory and document resources: Though great progress has been made in documenting and inventorying Amesbury's natural assets, we recommend that this information be thoroughly collated and made public (through Amesbury's GIS platform), including:
 - a. Parcel information (including parcel IDs and deeds)
 - b. Ownership
 - c. Unique environmental and human values/natural resources
 - d. Restrictions and protections
 - e. Allowed uses
 - f. City contact information
 - g. Map
 - h. Trail/Access information
 - i. Maintenance requirements and upkeep for current and future needs

Relevant boards and commissions, as well as stakeholders like the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, Lake Gardner Improvement Association, Coastal Trails Coalition, and Amesbury Trails can all provide invaluable support in gathering and refining this information.

2. Create management plans: Management plans for open space and natural resources are an essential component of making any progress towards the City's broader and long-term goals for the management of its natural assets. The City already has partial plans in place for some assets (e.g. Lake Gardner Beach plan, Battis and Woodsom Farms mowing plans). Resource management plans do not need to be overly complicated, but good plans in place will help the City have operational focus and manage limited resources, give goals for organizing public energy and effort, clarify for the public rules and policies about eligible/ineligible activities, and let everyone know whom to contact with questions and issues. Development of these plans take time and leadership to gather information and public input and to synthesize the information. Relevant boards and committees and dedicated citizens can provide invaluable support to developing plans, though ultimately such Plans must be led and ultimately 'owned' by the City. Management plans build on the inventory and documentation work above and may include:



Open Space and Natural Resource Management Consultant Scope of Work

- a. Geographic information, including map(s), site setting, context
- b. Identification of important environmental and human values, such as:
 - i. Climate change resiliency
 - ii. Natural communities and wildlife
 - iii. Wetlands and other important features
 - iv. Public use values
- c. Ownership and management responsibility information
- d. Restrictions
- e. Allowed uses
- f. Management plans for:
 - i. Shoreline and waterway maintenance and protection
 - ii. Control of invasive species
 - iii. Passive recreation management
 - iv. Wildlife management (e.g. practices targeting specific species, such as grassland birds at Woodsom and Battis)
 - v. Field/open space maintenance
 - vi. Trail maintenance
 - vii. Signage
 - viii. Parking and Access
 - ix. Universal accessibility

3. Implementation:

The final task for the Consultant will be to identify the ideal steps to ensure the management plans are implemented and there is ongoing support and resources allocated to do so. This includes identifying an entity to coordinate and champion resource management, a robust inventory of resources, and management plans. It also includes identification of private, state, and federal grant programs that could help support ongoing management. The items that should be in the implementation plan include, but are not limited to:

- o Ideal department/division/position(s) tasked with implementation
- o Job description(s)
- o Amount of funding required
- o Funding source(s)
- o Long-term sustainability of the position(s) required to manage our open spaces and natural resources
- o Grant funding to support the department/division/position(s)
- o Departments that need to be involved in creating/maintaining the new department/division/position(s)
- o Examples from other municipalities