

*Town of Weymouth
Massachusetts*

Susan M. Kay
Mayor

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March 27, 2014

Melissa Cryan, Grants Manager
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Town of Weymouth 2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan,

On behalf of the Town of Weymouth, it is my pleasure to endorse the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan prepared by the Weymouth Department of Planning and Community Development. This plan is the product of more than two years of persistence and hard work provided by numerous Town staff as well as multiple boards, commissions, and committees. I am very grateful to the many individuals who contributed their time and energy to the preparation of this very important document.

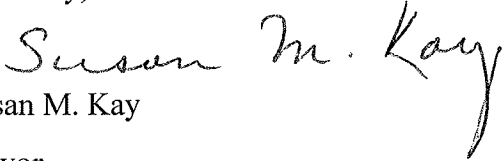
Through the preparation of an Open Space and Recreation Plan, Weymouth had the opportunity to assess as a community where we are and where we would like to go with our open space infrastructure. The Town's 2013 plan provides a blueprint for thoughtful development and active stewardship of our many green spaces, natural habitats, waterways, neighborhood parks, and quality outdoor recreation facilities. Already the Town has taken a number of actions to preserve, protect, and enhance these resources for all Weymouth residents:

- Since 2010, the Weymouth Community Preservation Committee and Town Council have authorized the acquisition of more than 25 acres of formerly private land for public open space and recreational opportunities. Three newly acquired properties are immediately adjacent to a neighborhood or state park, and another is the historically significant Emery Estate, which is being considered for such public uses as walking trails, community supported agriculture, and an indoor-outdoor events venue.

- The Weymouth Board of Zoning Appeals adopted new Smart Growth design guidelines for Weymouth's office, retail and village-center district in January 2013. These guidelines will promote the development of mixed-used districts that are pedestrian friendly and transit oriented and hence preserve open space that would otherwise be lost to sprawling or low density development
- In April 2013, the Weymouth Town Council approved adoption of the Massachusetts Local Option Meals Excise (M.G.L. c. 4, §4) with the specific intention to dedicate new revenues from the tax to the improvement of Weymouth's athletic fields and outdoor recreational facilities. The Local Options Meals Excise is anticipated to add \$500,000 in annual revenue for this very important purpose.
- With funding provided by the Weymouth Community Preservation Committee, the Whitman's Pond Working Group partnered with a lake management consultant to prepare the Whitman's Pond Vegetation Management Action Plan in September 2013. This important document provides a framework for managing nuisance and invasive vegetation at the pond while also preserving the water body as a critical herring spawning ground, recreation asset, water supply, and central aesthetic feature.
- Design plans are currently underway for rehabilitation of Weymouth's Legion Field and Lovell Playground – two large, multi-functional parks that have historically hosted popular sporting and community events. The 75 percent design plans lay out a variety of improvements for both active and passive recreation at the sites, including artificial turf fields, hardtop athletic courts, playgrounds for multiple age groups, tree planting, walking trails, and wetland replication.

Of course, the Town of Weymouth will continue to invest in our community's open space infrastructure, from Weymouth's neighborhood parks to its beaches and waterways. I am confident that the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan will allow us to pursue this goal with thoughtful planning and access to new resources, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, PARC Program, and other grant programs administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Since receiving conditional approval of its Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Town has already submitted a number of funding proposals for the improvement of its walking trails and neighborhood parks. I am optimistic that the goals and action items stated in Weymouth's 2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan will address our community's need to confront and manage future growth in a way that preserves, protects, and enhances Weymouth's unique natural environment.

Sincerely,


Susan M. Kay
Mayor