

*Town of Weymouth  
Massachusetts*

Robert L. Hedlund  
Mayor  
  
75 Middle Street  
Weymouth, MA 02189



Office: 781.340.5012  
Fax: 781.335.8184  
  
TTY: 781.331.5124

# Press Release

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## Town celebrates opening of King Oak Hill Park at Emery Estate

Contact(s): Mayor Robert Hedlund  
rhedlund@weymouth.ma.us, 781-340-5012

Weymouth, MA –Mayor Robert Hedlund joined with Planning Director Robert Luongo, Recreation Director Steve Reilley, Former Administrative Services Coordinator Nicholas Bulens, and residents from Emery Lane and other surrounding neighborhoods today to celebrate the completion and grand opening of Weymouth’s King Oak Hill Park, a new 17.9-acre passive recreational space and outdoor events venue developed on the grounds of the Emery Estate in East Weymouth. Mayor Hedlund and invited guests cut a ceremonial ribbon to dedicate the park and celebrate its transformation.

“Today’s dedication of King Oak Hill Park adds another gem to our community’s unique collection of protected landscapes and recreational areas,” **said Mayor Robert Hedlund.** “By transforming the grounds of the Emery Estate into a truly useable and accessible park, we’ve created a special place where people can gather, be active, and enjoy time outdoors, all while connecting with an important piece of the Town’s natural and cultural history. I thank everyone who helped make this park a reality, especially the Planning Department, Town Council, Massachusetts PARC Program, and the many neighbors here on King Oak Hill.”

“As Weymouth continues to grow and redevelop, it’s critical that we place a high value on efforts to preserve, protect, and expand our open spaces,” **said Town Planning Director Robert Luongo.** “The opening of King Oak Hill Park is yet another step in making Weymouth a better place to live, work, and play.”

King Oak Hill Park encompasses more than three quarters of the expansive public property known as the Emery Estate. The Town acquired the property for the preservation of open space in 2011 using \$1.9 million in Community Preservation funds. The property was home to the Emery family for nearly a century prior to the Town's purchase, serving as a secluded family retreat and, for many years, a working farm. The land is almost entirely undeveloped and is roughly equivalent in area to 18 football fields of now permanently protected open space.

Between 2017 and 2018, the Town undertook approximately \$1.7 million in renovations to improve public access to the Emery land, enhance opportunities for passive recreation, and create a unique venue for residents and local community groups to host outdoor gatherings and special events. The park's final design is intended to achieve all these goals while also preserving King Oak Hill's unique landscape and sense of isolation.

"When you visit the Emery property, you immediately feel how special it is," **said Former Administrative Services Coordinator Nicholas Bulens**. "It's a place that every person in the community should have the opportunity to enjoy, but until today, that wasn't always possible. Thanks to planning and partnerships, we've seen the grounds of the Emery Estate transformed into a modern and accessible public park where people can walk, gather, and connect with the beautiful landscape."

King Oak Hill Park was designed by Shadley Associates of Lexington and constructed by MDR Construction Company of Tewksbury. The park features a quarter-mile looped walking path, a 500-square foot restroom and utility building, and a 1,500-square foot open-air pavilion with a polished concrete base, two-tiered gable roof, and permanently affixed electrical outlets and overhead lighting to support programmed events. The walking path atop the hill encircles a roughly five-acre plateau and is 100-percent accessible. The pavilion overlooks the plateau and is designed for gatherings of upwards of 100 people.

Other site improvements made in support of King Oak Hill Park include a new drainage swale and stormwater infiltration system, two parking areas for up to 54 vehicles, and the reconstruction of Emery Lane, including new sidewalks, curb ramps, high-visibility crosswalks, decorative street lights, wayfinding signage, and a vehicular gate. The park also includes an [interpretive panel](#), which highlights the natural and cultural history of the landform known as King Oak Hill.

Construction of King Oak Hill Park was funded in partnership with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EOEEA) Parkland Acquisition and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program. In fiscal year 2017, [the Town secured a \\$400,000 PARC Grant](#) to support development of the Emery land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. This grant will assist in paying down a \$1.7 million bond used to finance the project's construction. Borrowing authorization for the bond was unanimously approved by the Town Council in December 2016.

"The new King Oak Hill Park will provide Weymouth residents an important community gathering space and opportunity to enjoy time outdoors," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton**. "Through the Parkland Acquisitions

and Renovations for Communities program, the Baker-Polito Administration is investing in parks and outdoor recreational improvements to ensure residents from every corner of the Commonwealth and of all ages and abilities are able to experience our state's beautiful natural resources."

In addition to today's ribbon cutting, Mayor Hedlund and guests at King Oak Hill Park celebrated the dedication of two purple-leaf plum trees planted in memory of Weymouth Police Sargent Michael Chesna and life-long Weymouth resident Vera Adams. These trees were generously donated by MDR Construction Company and will flower every year with the arrival of spring. A memorial stone has been placed at the base of each tree. These stones were generously donated by Daniel Canniff of the James Clarence Canniff Jr. Monument Company of Quincy.

King Oak Hill Park is now open for passive recreation during the hours of dawn to dusk. Use of the pavilion will be managed by a permitting process, and will be open to both residents and non-residents.

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