

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION

MEMORANDUM

To: Town Supervisor Cunningham
Members of the Town Board

From: Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation

Re: Map of Recreation, Conservation, Education and Municipal Lands

Date: August 16, 2007

As instructed by the Town Board at its January 24, 2007 meeting and clarified by the Town Board at its April 25, 2007 meeting, the CACC has prepared and now transmits a map showing the parcels in town devoted to recreational use (public and private), legally protected from development as conservation lands, used as school properties, and owned by local government. The map, titled "Town of Bethlehem Existing Recreation, Conservation, Education, and Municipal Lands, is attached. Also attached are the definitions of the land classifications, prepared by the CACC to identify these lands in the Town. Listed under each land classification are the associated land names and area in acres.

As shown on the map, approximately 2,118 acres of recreation, conservation, education and municipal lands are located within the Town. This represents 6.85% of the Town's total land area of 30,933 acres. Conservation lands represent the greatest area of the classified lands, approximately 788 acres or 37.23% of the areas highlighted on the map, followed by public recreation, private recreation, education, and municipal.

A review of the public parks and the conservation lands provided on the map illustrates that there are many opportunities for the Town's residents to access outdoor recreation areas (active and passive), most of which are located reasonably close to the main population centers in Town. Moreover, we show on the map adjacent areas offering public access to Town residents, such as the Stevens Farm on the City of Albany side of the Normans Kill and the major section of Five Rivers Environmental Education Center located in the Town of New Scotland. These adjacent areas are included since they also offer good opportunities for outdoor recreation by Town residents. We looked very briefly at information showing the ability of Town residents to reach these areas by walking or bicycling and could see that there are some obvious gaps in sidewalks or bike-friendly routes. The Town may wish to conduct further analysis of the connectivity between some of the lands identified on this map and the residential areas of Town.

This map sets the stage for further study in several other directions, if and as the Board so desires. For example, while this map makes no attempt to define or show "open space," the Board may wish to pursue that effort in order to determine whether the Town needs an "Open Space Plan." The Town may also want to develop a map to publicize to Town residents where they can go to engage in various types of recreation, which would require modifying this map to remove many parcels that are not open to public use.

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At the Town Board's April meeting, the Board discussed a memorandum from the CACC at which we proposed the current scope for this map and offered suggestions for a second-stage effort that might add further information, such as the amount of land devoted to agricultural districts, utility use, cemeteries, and other religious property, among others. The Board required the CACC to obtain Board authorization before pursuing such further efforts. We recommend that this Task be considered as complete with the information that we submit today and that the CACC not pursue a further stage of information-gathering. Town staff are able to develop and provide additional information directly to the Board as necessary without the involvement of the CACC. The CACC is better suited and stands ready to provide citizen advice about policies or planning for which the information might ultimately be used.

cc: CACC members
Debbie Kitchen

Town of Bethlehem
Existing Recreation, Conservation, Education, and Municipal Lands

CLASSIFICATION DEFINITIONS

RECREATION: Lands that have been specifically set aside for recreation purposes including Town-owned parks and private sports facilities.

Public Recreation Lands	Owner	Area (acres)
Elm Avenue Park	TOB	221.50
Town Hall	TOB	1.00
Maple Ridge Park	TOB	7.00
North Bethlehem Park	TOB	22.70
Selkirk Park	TOB	4.10
South Bethlehem Park	TOB	10.84
Firefighters Memorial Park	TOB	4.14
Henry Hudson Park	TOB	63.35
Colonial Acres Golf Course	TOB	32.00
TOTAL		366.63

TOB: Town of Bethlehem

Private Recreation Lands	Owner	Area (acres)
Normanside Country Club	Normanside Corporation	278.37
Tri-Village Little League	Tri-Village Little League Inc	8.45
Bethlehem Soccer Club	Bethlehem Soccer Club Inc	27.00
YMCA	YMCA	19.90
Colonial Acres Swimming Pool	Colonial-Glenmont Inc	0.88
Kenholm Gardens Swimming Pool	Kenholm Pool Association	2.34
Chadwick Square Park	Chadwick Square Park Assoc. Inc.	4.00
Albany County Pistol Club	Albany County Pistol Club Inc	0.34
TOTAL		341.28

Undeveloped Public Recreation Lands	Owner	Area (acres)
Route 144 Simmons Road	TOB	54.49
South Bethlehem	TOB	4.00
TOTAL		59.49

Adjacent Public Recreation: Public recreation lands of neighboring municipalities located adjacent to the Town of Bethlehem.

Adjacent Public Recreation	Owner	Area (acres)
Capital Hills Public Golf Course	City of Albany	425.96
Albany Pocket Park	City of Albany	10.54
TOTAL		436.50

CONSERVATION: Lands set aside by private, not-for-profit, and State entities for protection from future development not specifically intended for recreation purposes, although passive recreational opportunities may be available.

Conservation Lands	Owner	Area (acres)
Normanskill Preserve	MHLC	46.00
Pine Hollow Arboretum	Dr. John Abbuhl	32.11
Swift Preserve	MHLC	21.65
Phillipinkill Preserve	MHLC	19.84
Schiffendecker Farm Preserve	MHLC	38.80
Bioreserve (private)	Dennis O'Leary	68.10
Van Rensselaer Forest Wildlife Preserve^ (private)	First Reformed Church of Bethlehem	88.21
Onesquethaw Creek Preserve	MHLC	15.80
Hollyhock Hollow Preserve	Audubon Society of NY	129.91
Fiver Rivers State Environmental Education Center	New York State	35.30
Scenic Hudson Lands (southeastern area of Town)	Scenic Hudson	260.20
SUNY Cortland Brauer Field Station (private)	SUNY Cortland	32.70
TOTAL		788.62

*MHLC: Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy

^Deed restriction on land protects from future development.

Note: Pine Hollow Arboretum, Bioreserve, SUNY Cortland Brauer Field Station are identified as conservation use by their respective landowner, currently not legally protected from future development thru easements or deed restrictions.

Adjacent Conservation: Conservation lands located in neighboring municipalities adjacent to the Town of Bethlehem.

Conservation Land	Owner	Area (acres)
Stevens Farm	City of Albany	201.02
Onesquethaw Creek Preserve	MHLC	4.27
Fiver Rivers State Environmental Education Center	New York State	410.70
TOTAL		615.99

EDUCATION: Lands owned and maintained by public school districts (i.e. Bethlehem Central School District and Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk School District).

Education Lands	Owner	Area (acres)
Slingerlands Elementary School	Bethlehem Central School District	14.47
Elsmere Elementary School	Bethlehem Central School District	6.52
Glenmont Elementary School	Bethlehem Central School District	17.83
Hamagrael Elementary School	Bethlehem Central School District	16.22
Becker Elementary School	Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk School District	54.24
Bethlehem Middle School	Bethlehem Central School District	26.49
Eagle Elementary School	Bethlehem Central School District	20.49
Bethlehem High School	Bethlehem Central School District	134.20
TOTAL		290.46

MUNICIPAL: Lands owned and maintained by the Town of Bethlehem that are utilized to provide services to Town residents and are not intended for recreational purposes.

Municipal Lands	Owner	Area (acres)
Town Hall	TOB	3.95
Fire Training Facility	TOB	9.66
Highway Garage	TOB	16.21
Department of Public Works Yard	TOB	5.34
Compost Facility	TOB	14.12
Clay Mine	TOB	81.26
Landfill	TOB	79.65
Bethlehem Historical Association Building	TOB	0.70
Clapper Road Water Treatment Plan	TOB	30.41
Dinmore Road Sewage Treatment Plan	TOB	16.10
Veterans Memorial Park	TOB	0.14
Sewer District Lands (various locations)	TOB	14.00
TOTAL		271.54

NOTE: Acreage and owner information is based on 2006 New York State Office of Real Property Services data.