



A Monthly Community Publication • Volume VIII, Special Issue • May, 2018

## Keep The Momentum Going

The Walpole Community showed its support to Conserve the Walpole we love  
The entire Community can now share in that Conservation

### D&C Transportation Withdraws Application: No Gas Station!

The CLARION first reported on the potential gas station on page one of the March 2018 issue, in an article written by Eric Merklein. Following publication of that article, applicant Paul Saba left me a phone message. An error in that article implied Mr. Saba had been in attendance at the February 13 Planning Board meeting, and he was not. Calling to apologize for that error, and to convey to Mr. Saba the CLARION would print a correction, Saba indicated to Merklein that if Walpole residents were not pleased with his proposal, he would not build his station and convenience store.

**Please Consider  
Contributing  
To Preserve  
& Conserve  
This Fabric of Walpole  
Full Details for Making  
Your Tax-deductible  
Contribution  
Will Be in The  
June Clarion**

Both Stories Continue on Page 3

### Entrance To Village To Be Preserved And Conserved

Events can happen quickly. On Wednesday morning, May 9, just barely fourteen hours after the conclusion of the Planning Board Public Hearing, Chuck Shaw was able to arrange a meeting with D&C Transportation to discuss the land they had purchased to build a gas station and convenience store to be operated by Paul Saba. The meeting was held at 10:30 am, Thursday May 10, at Paul Saba's The Big Deal, Irving Gas and Convenience Store in Spofford on Route 9. Joining Saba were Scott Oeschger, Vice-President, of D&C Transportation; Keith Dillon, Sales, D&C Transportation; and Ray Boas and Chuck Shaw.



*Looking South over the land where the gas station/convenience store was proposed*

**Plan To Contribute - Everyone's Dollars Add Up**



# It's More Than Aesthetics

*Looking North showing little-known lower field, Vet Hospital, proposed site, and intersection with Route 12*

*At the Tuesday May 8 Planning Board Public Hearing, both the Walpole Conservation Commission (WCC), and the Wantastiquet Local River Subcommittee of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions (CRJC) had prepared statements opposing the development on the rural/agricultural land at the village entrance. This parcel of land has 1,000 +/- feet of Connecticut River frontage. Reading these statements into the minutes were: Alicia Flammia, Chair, Walpole Conservation Commission; and Lynn DeWald, Walpole representative to the Wantastiquet Subcommittee. Here, in part, are their statements that evening.*

## **Wantastiquet Local River Subcommittee**

The CRJC is an organization formally established by the states of New Hampshire and Vermont. The mission is to preserve and protect the visual and ecological integrity and sustainable working landscape of the Connecticut River Valley, and to guide its growth and development through grassroots leadership. Joint Commissions for each state are appointed by the governors of the respective states.... Walpole is represented by Lynn DeWald and Tim Brush, residents of Walpole that have been selected and approved by the Walpole Select Board. The duties of subcommittee participants include advising the Commissioners on issues of local concern, including permit applications that could affect the river or otherwise may not support the goals of the Joint Commissions.

The Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan was developed under the authority of the New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Act (RSA 483). This plan guides the management and protection of the Connecticut River's unique assets and resources. This plan includes a section for each of the five river corridor reaches that was developed by the respective local subcommittees, including the Wantastiquet Subcommittee,... The New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Act provides general guidance for future land use in the New Hampshire corridor of the Connecticut River. Further, it classifies segments of the corridor. The 17 mile segment from the NH Route 123 bridge between Walpole and Westminster downriver to the Brattleboro/Dummerston town line is classified as "rural agriculture".

The law defines this classification as, "adjacent to lands which are partially or predominantly used for agriculture, forest management and dispersed or clustered residential development. Management of the rural river...segments shall maintain and enhance the natural, scenic, and recreational values of the river for agriculture, forest management, public water supply, and other purposes which are compatible with the instream public uses of the river and the management and protection of the resources for which the...segment is designated."

At the CRJC Wantastiquet Subcommittee meeting held on May 2, 2018, Members from the towns of Westminster, Putney, Brattleboro, Chesterfield, and Walpole... voted with unanimous approval, to provide this letter to the Walpole Planning and Zoning Boards. ...The CRJC Wantastiquet Subcommittee recommends to the Town of Walpole that the current zoning requirements be enforced without exception.

## **Walpole Conservation Commission**

The Walpole Conservation Commission is an advisory board established by local ordinance to preserve the Town's natural resources for the benefit of its citizens and wildlife. Protection of these resources improves water and air quality, preserves rare species of plants and animals, provides agricultural, recreational and educational opportunities, and helps mitigate the impacts of storms and flooding. Scenic and agricultural lands are vital to the character of the Town and have been identified by the Master Plan as important features to protect and preserve...

The land in question for the proposed development is designated as

agriculturally zoned land and by the State of NH as 'prime agriculture land' which is held at a higher value than other land due to its natural fertility and arability compared to upland soils. The Walpole Conservation Commission supports any effort to preserve important farmlands such as this parcel.

This parcel is directly adjacent to the bank of the Connecticut River at the scenic gateway to town from Route 12. [and is] located directly adjacent to the steep slope, approximately 250 feet from the river bank. Development of this nature so close to the 250-foot shoreland protection area should be considered with extreme caution.

...the classification of this property's soils as prime agricultural land, the location of adjacent working farmlands to this proposed development and the availability of existing commercially zoned lands in Walpole are causes for concern. The property proposed for development would require that current zoning policy for agricultural land be overturned. The Conservation Commission recommends to the Town Planning and Zoning Boards that the current zoning requirements be enforced without exception.

Prior conservation efforts along the Connecticut River and Cold River corridors have been effective at protecting natural resources including agricultural lands, riparian habitat and water quality. If farmland within the existing agriculturally zoned areas is allowed a special exception to be developed as commercial, then the agricultural character of the town will surely be diminished.

... Unanimously approved for submittal to the Town Planning and Zoning Boards by all voting members on May 7, 2018.

On May 8, at the Public Hearing to hear the Special Exception request from D&C Transportation for the construction of a gas station/convenience store at the southern entrance to the Village, the first floor meeting room at Town Hall was overflowing. Many attendees were standing around the perimeter of the room. Since that evening, many have stated it was the largest assembled gathering at a Walpole meeting in their collective memories. Estimates ranged from 150 to 300 people. Following D&C's presentation, the public had the opportunity to speak and make presentations about its concerns for the proposed project. Those speaking focused on the Town's Master Plan, and environmental issues. A great deal of work had been accomplished by a small group that has been working on

As you read further in this special issue, you see we now have the opportunity to preserve this parcel that defines Walpole, and is environmentally sensitive. Thank you to all of you who attended the recent Planning Board and Zoning Board meetings, those of you who spoke, and those of you who spread the word encouraging others to become involved. Thank you also to Paul Saba, and D&C Transportation. Together, as a community, we should all be proud.

— Ray Boas

*The attentive, possibly record assembly in Town Hall for the May 8 Planning Board session.*



PHOTO: JEN PALMIOTTO

this problem for some time. Their letters and reports were read into the minutes. Many other individuals, including 12 year old resident Sydney Palmiotto, voiced opinions encouraging the board to not recommend the Special Exception to the Zoning Board. The discussions continued for over 1 1/2 hours.

As the presentations were concluding, Merklein rose and addressed Paul Saba, challenging him, in light of the large assembled crowd and what he had heard, to honor his statement made during that earlier phone conversation. Shortly, Mr. Phippard, representing D&C and Mr. Saba, stood and said, "the applicant has asked that we withdraw the application." Everyone in attendance stood and applauded. Many people immediately went to Mr. Saba, thanking him for his decision.

I too went up and thanked Mr. Saba for being honorable and respectful to the Town's people by withdrawing his application. Further, I asked he contact me if D&C wished to dispose of the land.

From the outset, the forty-five minute meeting was cordial, respectful, with all parties wishing to do the right thing. As options were discussed, Shaw and Boas expressed the desire for the land to be preserved as is and placed into conservation hands - the best hands being the Walpole Conservation Commission (WCC). Oeschger was about to conclude the meeting, stating that D&C wanted to take some time to consider other options. Since it was clear that D&C's donating the land to the WCC was not an option, I asked, "What would it take to accomplish our goal now?" With some brief thought, Oeschger replied, "I will sell the land for what we paid." "Your purchase price of \$269,900?" I asked. "Yes," was his reply. Looking at each other, Chuck and I nodded, and said, "Done."

As business deals were done in the past with honorable individuals where your "word was your bond," all parties stood and shook hands. Dillon raised the question of the over \$30,000 D&C spent on the land in studies, plans, etc. for its Special Exception request. Oeschger in reply said, "That is our cost of doing business."

Still elated and not yet over the outcome of Tuesday night's Planning Board meeting, let alone the thrill of leaving with an agreement we were seeking, Chuck and I headed home. On Wednesday, Chuck had made a call to Stephen Bianco, Senior VP/Senior Lender at the Savings Bank of Walpole, just in case some interim funding may be needed prior to completion of fundraising. On the way home, we pulled over and Chuck called Steve at Savings Bank of Walpole to give him an update. Steve assured us that the bank was ready to assist in the interim if necessary.

Since then, work has begun on determining the best way to ensure everyone's contributions are fully tax-deductible. Those details will be outlined in the June CLARION so that fundraising may begin. Walpole is again pulling together as a powerful and caring community.

— Ray Boas

## The WALPOLE Clarion

published monthly for the Walpole community.

Ray Boas, Publisher

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Submissions about community events and achievements are encouraged for both the calendar and features.

Submit ads, articles & photographs to:

walpoleclarion@gmail.com

**June issue deadline: May 21**

Tara Sad: Copy-Editing

Jan Kobeski: Layout & Design

The Walpole Clarion on-line:

thewalpoleclarion.com

**NOTE: D&C Transportation graciously allowed the CLARION access to the property to take the photographs shared here**



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*Hidden field looking northwest with Connecticut River beyond the tree line*

