

**SECTION 10 - PUBLIC COMMENTS AND LETTERS OF ENDORSEMENT**



Deval Patrick  
GOVERNOR

Timothy Murray  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ian Bowles  
SECRETARY

*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs*  
*100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900*  
*Boston, MA 02114*

Tel: (617) 626-1000  
Fax: (617) 626-1181

October 30, 2009

Dear Open Space and Recreation Plan Author:

Recently, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs allowed communities to extend the eligibility period of the Five-Year Action Plan component of an Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Action Plan may now describe the next seven years of open space and recreation activities in your community. Due to this, accepted plans will now make a community eligible for the Division of Conservation Services' grant programs for seven years instead of the current five.

Your community's plan has been submitted to this office for review and approval within the past five years. If you would like the plan to be good for an additional two years, you may expand your action plan by two years and send it to Melissa Cryan for her review and approval. Once approved, your community's plan will gain an additional two years worth of grant eligibility. The expanded action plan must be received by February 28, 2010.

Please get in touch with Melissa Cryan at [melissa.cryan@state.ma.us](mailto:melissa.cryan@state.ma.us) or (617) 626-1171 with any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

Robert O'Connor  
Director



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs*  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

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Tel: (617) 626-1000  
Fax: (617) 626-1181

November 16, 2009

Marion Larson  
11 Matthew Lane  
Sterling, MA 01564

Re: Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Larson:

Thank you for submitting the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan for Sterling to this office for review and compliance with the current Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements. This plan was particularly thorough and has been conditionally approved through November 2014. Conditional approval will allow the town to participate in DCS grant rounds through November 2014, and a grant award may be offered to the town. However, no final grant payments will be made until the plan is completed.

Once the following items are addressed, your plan will receive final approval:

1. Agency Names – throughout the document, please be sure to use the most up-to-date agency names: the Department of Environmental Management and Metropolitan District Commission are both now the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Department of Food and Agriculture is now the Department of Agricultural Resources, and the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Environmental Law Enforcement is now the Department of Fish and Game.
2. Introduction – the Planning Process and Public Participation section should focus in on the process that occurred for this plan, not prior plans. The description gets a bit confusing as to how information was gathered for this plan. Keep in mind that each plan must have its own participation process.
3. Vegetation – please include information on public shade trees
4. Environmental Challenges – additional information on hazardous waste sites, landfills, erosion, sedimentation, forestry issues, and environmental equity issues is needed.
5. Section 5 – the tables that are included that list the town-owned conservation and recreation lands must be expanded to include columns on management agency, current use, condition, recreation potential, type of grant (if any) used to purchase or renovate the property, public access, zoning, and degree of protection. Also needed is a discussion of open space equity.
6. Analysis of Needs – the Community Needs should include information on the SCORP and how it pertains to Sterling. It can be found online at <http://www.mass.gov/Eoea/docs/eea/dcs/massoutdoor2006.pdf>.
7. Letters of review from the regional planning agency, planning board, and chief municipal officer must be included.

February 2010

8. Maps – the Regional Context and Unique Features maps are missing.
9. ADA Plan – as referred to in your OSRP, this must be updated for this version. Make sure to use the check off forms from the workbook to evaluate each conservation and recreation property for accessibility.

Hopefully the town has received a letter from EEA regarding the ability to expand the action plan to seven years, therefore making the OSRP eligible for seven years versus five years. If Sterling would like to do that, I will need the expanded action plan by February 28, 2010. Congratulations on a great draft plan! Please contact me at (617) 626-1171 or melissa.cryan@state.ma.us if you have any questions or concerns, and I look forward to reviewing your final plan.

Sincerely,

*Melissa Cryan*

Melissa Cryan  
Grants Manager

cc: Board of Selectmen  
Recreation Department  
Conservation Commission



February 2010



## Town of Sterling

1 Park Street, Sterling, MA 01564  
Phone: 978-422-8111 ext. 2315  
Fax: 978-422-0289  
Email: [tackerman@sterling-ma.gov](mailto:tackerman@sterling-ma.gov)

Office of the Town Administrator

Terri Ackerman

TO: Open Space Implementation Committee

cc: Board of Selectmen, Tom Rutherford

FROM: Terri Ackerman, Town Administrator

RE: Input to Draft Open Space Plan

November 5, 2009

The draft Open Space Plan is quite an impressive document! OSIC has obviously worked quite hard to develop this comprehensive report.

I wish to offer the following suggestions and updates:

1. Section 9-7 and other places: Replace "Town Manager with Town Administrator".
2. Section 9 and other places: Facilities Manager should be listed as a resource. I've asked Tom to review the draft document and send you his specific comments.
3. Page 7-4: The Board of Selectmen has recently appointed a new ADA Coordinator (Matt Marro).
4. Page 7-5 last line: The Board of Selectmen has created a Town Common Revitalization Committee.
5. Page 7-6 Chocksett Rd --- Project 604699 is estimated to cost \$1,500,000 and will be funded for construction through the TIP program once the design is completed. Design funds have been approved by Sterling's Town Meeting. (Take out reference to FY2011 and 2012. Funding has been moved to after 2013 but might be moved up earlier if we get the design finished.). Also change "rotary" to "roundabout."
6. There are many needs for outside consultants and a brief mention of a possible part-time professional planner at the end of page 7-10. Which is a better use of taxpayer resources or do we need both? So I recommend adding in Goal G: Objective 3. Assess pros and cons, cost and benefits of a professional planner versus outside consultant(s). (The HR Administrator can be a key resource person in that arena.)

If any of the above requires more explanation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Again, thanks for a most impressive report and we look forward to our discussion with you at the Selectmen's meeting on November 24.

STERLING CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
1 PARK STREET  
STERLING, MA 01564  
978-422-3027



January 13, 2010

Marion Larson, Chair  
OSIC  
1 Park Street  
Sterling, Ma 01564

Dear Marion

The Conservation Commission would like to express its unanimous support for the Town of Sterling's Open Space and Recreation Plan that you have submitted for draft review. Particularly, the Commission looks forward to working with the OSCI and the community to implement the goals and objectives of this plan. The Commission especially is looking forward to working on the establishment of a general open space guide for the public and to work towards improving our trail systems to establish links between our parcels and perhaps link with neighboring communities to allow a regional system.

In September 2009 for example, the Commission applied to DCR for a trails grant that would link some of our target parcels to other DCR lands and our rail trail. We will continue these types of efforts.

The Commission would note that the plan's demographic analysis was reviewed and would like to express how well done and simple to read and understand it is.

The Commission is in agreement that these are all worthy goals and will enhance the opportunities for passive and active recreational experiences within the Community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew S. Marro', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Matthew S. Marro,  
Field Agent

Cc: File  
Conservation Commission.

***Sterling Finance Committee Letter of Comment***

11/25/09 –Sent to OSIC Gmail Account

Marion,

First of all, the Finance Committee would like to commend you and the OSIC on an excellent document. We had a chance to review and discuss it at our 17 November 2009 meeting. The Finance Committee encourages and looks for planful, integrated and coordinated efforts across the various departments/committees and boards that deliver and support the various services provided for the Town of Sterling. The plan certainly includes many of these as well as incorporating citizen inputs via surveys. Our general input revolves around the need to incorporate this into a broader plan for the Town. As one member said, "This Open Space and Recreation Plan feels like it should be a chapter in a Master Plan for the Town". Along this theme, it would be beneficial to better connect the plan's financial aspect with the Finance Committee's budgeting and long range financial planning processes as well as the Town's Capital Committee 5/10 Year Capital Plans and process.

Obviously, sources of revenue (other than simply asking the taxpayers for more real estate tax), to accomplish the actions requiring financial support was a discussion point. We do wonder if there is some way that the town could do a better job at seeking grant monies and coordinating such efforts across the various groups in town. Another aspect of this part of our discussion had to do with new real estate development in the town. Is there some way the town can legally derive additional revenues from developers (particularly larger projects) that the town could then apply towards the types of financial needs mentioned in the report? That is to say, as a developer works through the various permitting processes, is there an additional "development tax" that could be levied on the developer? One other area of discussion had to do with Wauschacum Village relative to 40B requirements. Is there some way that the housing units in the Village could be counted towards the 40B total?

Finally, we again recognize the work and effort that goes into such a report and appreciate the time people have put into the document and realize it benefits the town not just in the information and direction it provides, but it also aids the town in realizing funding and support from the state. We certainly look forward to working with you and Committee in the future.

Regards,

Larry Pape  
Chairman, Town of Sterling Finance Committee

Larrypape@comcast.net

## **STERLING RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

**1 PARK STREET**

**STERLING, MA 01564**

**TELEPHONE (978) 422-3041**

**FAX (978) 422-0289**

**E-MAIL: Recreation@sterling-ma.gov**

**Web page: www.Sterling-ma.gov**

**RECREATION DIRECTOR**

**Judy Janda**

**PROGRAM ASSISTANT**

**Lisa Bristol**

**RECREATION BOARD**

**Jo-ann Cummings, Jessica Moroney**

**Bob Finizio**

**Mark Hryniewicz Heather Ruziak**

November 24, 2009

Marion Larson/OSIC  
11 Matthew Lane  
Sterling, Ma 01564

Attention: Marion Larson/OSIC

We are writing this letter in response to the Open Space Plan Draft Report. The Recreation Committee members are impressed with the diligent efforts of the Open Space Committee in the presentation of this report. The Recreation Department supports the Five-Year Action Plan put forward.

Protection of the East Waushacum Lake is one of our top priorities. The Recreation Department is working with other Departments and Committees to update the Town Beach- by-Laws and educate the public on ways to enhance and improve water quality.

Another area of concern is the field usage of the Sterling Athletic Fields. The Sterling Recreation Committee encourages a strong partnership between other sport organizations. We emphasize the importance behind field usage scheduling by requiring a permit and usage fee. The restrooms at the sports complex have been renovated in compliance with ADA guidelines.

According to the Open Space Survey it has been determined there is an interest for the development of a skate park. In attempt, the Recreation Department is working with Holden and Rutland to develop a regional site. Heather Ruziak, is the Recreation Representative for this project.

The Recreation Committee is in full support of the town mandating contractors to provide public playgrounds when constructing developments. The Recreation sub-committee S.P.A.R.C., is geared toward developing a Community Park for all ages.

The Recreation Department both endorses the actions and is open to suggestions. Recreation Committee member, Jo-ann Cummings has offered to sit on the Open Space Committee. We thank the OSC for their efforts.

Sincerely,

*Jessica Moroney*

Jessica Moroney- Recreation Chairperson

*Judith Janda*

Judith Janda-Recreation Director



From: Karen & Stuart Ormsbee [bee04@verizon.net]  
Sent: Friday, November 27, 2009 10:49 PM  
To: marion46@verizon.net  
Cc: Erin K O'Connor  
Subject: OSIC Plan

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Hi Marion,

I finally had a chance to look at the draft plan. Wow! What a lot of work you all have done! I can't image all of the hard work it took to pull this together. Kudos to you and the committee!!

There are a few general comments in reference to the park. The one thing that needs attention is consistency with the committee and park names. They should always be referred to as the Sterling Play Area Recreation (sub)Committee and Sterling Greenery Community Park. Here are some specific instances where I found inconsistencies and minor corrections, but overall the park references are accurate:

Section 3, p 3-9 – the date states 2007, while it should be 2005 – this is when we began work. I noticed that later references are correct. Paragraph also has sub- and not (sub).

Section 3, p 3-18 – missed (sub) in last paragraph

Section 4, p 4-40 – missed 'and' in the first paragraph, second sentence (...locations [and] eventually chose...)

Section 6, p 6-5 – missed Community in last line

Section 7, p 7-5 – remove 'and' from park name and please replace 'playground' with 'park' in (...created a new community [park]...)

Section 8, Goal E, Objective 3 – this paragraph is disjointed.

Section 11, p 11-4 – should be (sub) Committee and not sub-Committee

Thanks so much for all of your work on this! Please let me know if there is anything else.

Karen Ormsbee

978 422-7955

Karen Ormsbee

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better. It's not. The Lorax

From: rmaki@comcast.net  
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 2:21 PM  
To: Marion  
Cc: Richard Maki  
Subject: Re: Note about our Open Space Plan

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Marion Larson, Chairman  
Open Space Implementation Committee

Hi Marion,

This message is to confirm my interest in assisting your committee to educate our citizens and to communicate future activities to cable subscribers.

I am the clerk for Sterling-Lancaster Community Television (Channels 8 & 10) and am specifically offering to place announcements of your meetings and other requests onto our daily bulletin board. We can also cablecast your meetings from the Sterling selectmen's room to better inform viewers of the work of your committee. "Filming" is done with the assistance of volunteers, so I can't promise we will be able to accommodate every request, however you should feel free to ask us to assist and we will do what we can to help you. In the future we will be holding classes with the equipment so that local organizations, such as yours, will be able to document their work and cablecast it over our local governmental channel (10).

In my earlier email I indicated that the work of your group in assembling such a complete report was a model to other committees and boards.....well done! Let me know how I can help.

Dick Maki  
Clerk, SLCT

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----- Original Message -----

From: "Marion" <marion46@verizon.net>  
To: rmaki@comcast.net, "Sterling-Lanc TV" <slc.tv810@gmail.com>  
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 11:28:37 AM GMT -05:00 US/Canada Eastern  
Subject: Note about our Open Space Plan

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Dear Dick,

Bob Protano passed along your email indicating you had looked at the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan. We appreciate the time you took and also your offer to help with some public education and communications activities in the future. In the next week, would you be kind enough to send me a more "formal" looking email that includes the above-mentioned information and also include your affiliation with the Sterling-Lancaster Community Television? We are required to include comments and offers of support in the final draft of the plan and it helps to show what groups and committees in town have taken a look.

You can send it directly to this email address, that will be fine!

Thanks so much again for the offer to engage with our Committees activities.

Marion Larson  
Chairman, Sterling Open Space Implementation Committee



November 23, 2009

Marion Larson,  
Chair  
Open Space Implementation Committee  
11 Matthew Lane  
Sterling, Massachusetts 01564

RE: Town of Sterling, Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Larson:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment upon the 2009 update of the Sterling Open Space and Recreation Plan. After review of the portions of the plan that were submitted to us, I would like to compliment the Committee on a thorough, well written document. It is evident the Committee spent a significant amount of time in researching and writing this plan. Below are DCR's comments on the plan as per your request. We feel our comments are minor and will get addressed. Therefore, DCR would like to go on record as endorsing the plan.

The next section includes our general comments followed by specific comments to Sections 7, 8 and the 5 Year Action Plan. Particular attention was given to the portions that pertain to the Department of Conservation & Recreation, Division of Water Supply Protection.

*General Comments*

- DCR-DWSP would like to meet with you to discuss how this agency may be of assistance in helping you to meet goals of the plan. For example, DCR assistance may be available for other issues in the plan that currently do not specifically mention DCR assistance. Two examples are: staff may be able to assist with the environmental education programs through the Sterling Recreation Department (page 7-7) and staff may also be able to assist in developing a process for following up on Conservation Restriction easements (page 7-9). See our comments to Section 9 for additional information.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS • EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation  
180 Beaman Street  
West Boylston, MA 01583  
508-792-7423 508-792-7805 Fax  
www.mass.gov/dcr



Deval L. Patrick  
Governor

Timothy P. Murray  
Lt. Governor

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary  
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner  
Department of Conservation & Recreation

*General Comments (Continued):*

- The plan states that the most important goal of the plan is to protect water quality. Two of the main issues identified by the committee are more public access to DCR land and that public access to water bodies should be enhanced to improve recreational opportunities. I would like to note that your wish for greater public access to DCR lands may be in conflict with our mutual goal of water quality protection. I think it is important to say that we do not anticipate significant changes to our access rules to open more land for public use. Greater access would be in conflict with our responsibility of protecting water quality.
- The Action Plan lists DCR as a responsible party for some of the items. However, I do not think we should be identified as a responsible party for implementing certain goals. DCR instead could be considered a resource or partner but not a responsible party since this is a Town plan.

*Comments to Section 7 B Summary of Community Needs*

*Page 7-3*

Issue: Residents have a continuing interest in public access to land under the jurisdiction of DCR's – DWSP.

Response: DCR-DWSP is willing and able to do a better job in informing Sterling residents about existing locations to hunt, fish and hike on DCR land. However a change in access to allow dogs or more activities on our land is not something DCR-DWSP would likely be in favor of.

Issue: "OSIC sees need both to identify areas where such activities could take place on publicly owned land and to mitigate the loss of valued recreational access for dog owners and their pets.". The survey and forum revealed an increase in public interest in a dog park.

Response:

DCR feels it is premature to identify DCR owned lands for a dog park as dogs are not currently allowed on our property and we would not be in favor of a change in access.



***Comments to Section 7 B Summary of Community Needs (Continued):***

***Page 7-7***

Issue: Respondents to the latest 2007 survey “Expressed an overall desire to preserve the rural character” and also “strongly expressed their concern to preserve agricultural lands and farming, as well as to restrict development in open lands.”

Response: DCR would like to publicize that the purchase of land for water quality protection assists the town in the preservation of its rural character.

***Page 7-8***

Issue: New trail on DCR land. “Completion of these projects will set the foundation for creating a connection to a large DCR/DWSP owned parcel in the Wachusett Reservoir Watershed to the west of Waushacum Overlook and a possible future connection to the Sterling Spur of the Wachusett Greenways Rail Trail.

Response: DCR is open to discussions regarding trails.

***Section 8 – Comments to Goals & Objectives***

***Goal E***

***Page 8-2, Objective 1***

Issue: Review 2003 Public Access Plan and consider changes to the 2013 plan.

Response: DCR will review its education plan to determine how we can better inform residents on existing opportunities to use DCR lands. DCR will update its Access Plan in the next couple of years which will afford an opportunity for public comment.

***Section 9 - Comments 5 Year Action Plan Section:***

*The following lists indicates the areas where DCR staff may be of assistance to the Town and the OSIC in meeting its schedule for implementing goals:*



***Section 9 - Comments 5 Year Action Plan Section (Continued):***

***Goal A, Objective 1, Item 4***

***Goal A, Objective 2, Items 1, 5, 6***

***Goal B, Item 3 (invasive species)***

***Goal C, Objective 1, four of the bulleted items***

***Goal C, Objective 2, Items 1, 2 and 3***

***Goal D, Objective 1, Items 2 and 4***

***Goal D, Objective 2, Item 4***

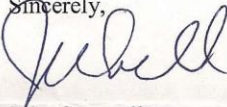
***Goal E, Objective 1, Items 1, 2 (add "all public" before DCR lands) and 3***

***Goal E, Objective 2, Items 1, 3 and 4***

***Goal E, Objective 3, Item 3***

Again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment upon this plan and I look forward to meeting with you to discuss how DCR may assist the Town of Sterling and the Open Space Implementation Committee in meeting some of the goals of this report. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate contact me at (508) 792-7806 ext 234. Thank you.

Sincerely,



John Scannell  
Regional Director



January 21, 2010

## MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

R1427 Water Street Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420  
(978) 345-7376 FAX (978) 348-2490 Email: [mrpc@mrpc.org](mailto:mrpc@mrpc.org)

Attention: Melissa Cryan  
Division of Conservation Services  
100 Cambridge Street,  
Boston MA 02114

Dear Ms. Cryan:

The intention of this letter is to indicate the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission's (MRPC) full support of the Town of Sterling's 2009 update of the Sterling Open Space and Recreation Plan. MRPC had previously forward comments to the town regarding the plan; the comments have since been acknowledged and most have already been addressed in full.

The plan contains all required sections according to the Open Space Guidebook published by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEOEA) and is well put together. Of notable mention is the plan's 5-year Action Plan Schedule (Section 9). In addition to establishing priorities, it identifies specific tasks, the schedule for accomplishing them, and a responsible party for each action. This comprehensive section of the report is of particular importance since it will guide the town towards successful implementation. The Town of Sterling is encouraged to contact MRPC if it wishes to discuss the possibility of technical assistance to help implement the plan in the future.

Thank you and if you have any questions concerning this letter of support, I can be contacted at (978) 345-7376 Ext. 302 or by email at [jhume@mrpc.org](mailto:jhume@mrpc.org)

Sincerely,



John Hume  
Planning and Development Director