



Town of Natick
Open Space Advisory Committee
Massachusetts 01760

May 13, 2021

Martin Kessel, Chair
Doug Drenik, Vice-Chair
David Lodding, Co-Clerk
Mary Stuart, Co-Clerk
Terri Evans
David Ordway
Douglas Shepard

Ms. Karen Adelman-Foster, Chair
Natick Select Board
13 East Central Street
Natick, MA 01760

Dear Ms. Adelman-Foster:

The Open Space Advisory Committee understands that the Town of Natick has the option to purchase Chapter 61A land at 82 Rockland Street. We believe that the land would be valuable to preserve as open space, but we are concerned about the affordability.

This property is the last of a series of farms that once lined Rockland Street, and it presents a unique opportunity to preserve some of the rural character of that part of Natick. This parcel is further enhanced by the adjacent 8-acre protected meadow that is part of the Graystone cluster development. The Rockland Street land could be used for agriculture or simply preserved as meadow wildlife habitat.

The most obvious source of funding would be the FAR fund, which is mitigation money resulting from increased density in certain parts of town. But we are concerned that the purchase would deplete the fund without providing benefit to the very neighborhoods that experienced the increased density. We would support borrowing or grant funding for this purchase, if the town determines these are possible. If not, we would strongly encourage a cluster development as the best way to preserve some of the open space.

As we look to the future, we urge reconsideration of the Community Preservation Act to provide us with ongoing funding for open space acquisitions such as this.

Sincerely,

Martin Kessel, Chair