
Stratham, Our Town

An Initiative to Save our Open Land

Issue 3, January 23, 2002

Stratham Conservation Commission

The Arithmetic of Growth, Part 1

How big is Stratham?

Stratham covers 9728 acres, adding up to about 15 square miles.
There are approximately 2000 buildable acres remaining in town.

What is the "Stratham Our Town" initiative?

Our goal is to permanently protect more than 750 acres (roughly 1/3 of our remaining buildable land).
We are asking voters to approve a \$5 million bond to be paid back over 15 years.

Why \$5 million?

\$5 million will give Stratham the flexibility to save significant parcels of open space.

How would this affect my property taxes and my property values?

The project will initially cost about \$1 per \$1000 on your tax bill, but this amount will be reduced as the bond is repaid. Studies show and realtors understand that protected open space enhances property values.

Will this initiative hurt our commercial tax base?

No. This initiative does not affect areas zoned for commercial activity.

Why is this good for Stratham?

- Our 1998 Master Plan proposes the protection of open space as a high priority for the town.
 - This is an investment in the rural character of our community.
- Open space yields more in tax revenues than it costs in town services. For every dollar that comes in, only 40¢ goes out. But with residential property, for every dollar that comes in, \$1.15 goes out.
- By protecting open space, we can help to ensure our water supply and protect the health of our streams. We can help sustain the habitat of many local plant and animal species.

Who will decide how the money is spent?

The Conservation Commission recommends that the Selectmen appoint a committee which will review criteria for land protection and hold public hearings for each parcel under consideration. The Selectmen will make the final decisions. Initially, the use of Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN) will help us to borrow only what we need, without obligating the town to the whole bond amount.

Why can't we allocate money for each property in our yearly town meetings?

Town meeting comes only once a year. Landowners cannot always delay the sale of their property in order to wait for town meeting. This bond will give Stratham the financial readiness to act quickly when a desirable parcel of land becomes available.

What does this mean for landowners?

This is a totally voluntary program. It simply gives willing landowners the tools and the opportunity to sell their development rights to the town at any time during the year. This can provide income to the property owners, allow them to retain ownership and permanently protect open space.

Stratham Conservation Commission
Stratham, Our Town
Town Offices
Stratham, NH 03885

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Resident
Stratham, NH 03885

The vote to approve the warrant article
to fund the *Stratham, Our Town* initiative
will take place at Town Meeting
on Friday, March 15 at 7:30 pm.
Be there and be counted!

March 15 - Save the Date!

- Call Anne Sloan at 778-9018 to volunteer your time and expertise.
 - Donate to our Newsletter Fund
Please make your check out to
Rockingham Land Trust
and mail it to:
Rockingham Land Trust, Planning Commission Office, 156 Water Street, Exeter, NH 03833.
In the Memo section, please use the words "Stratham Our Town".
This qualifies as a charitable donation.
 - Talk to your friends and neighbors about the information in the
newsletters, and plan to attend Town Meeting on March 15th
to express your opinions and your votes!
- Here are 5 ways to help the initiative:*