

The Town of Acton

Morrison Farm

Reuse Committee Recommendations
to the Board of Selectmen

January 2007



Morrison Farm Reuse Plan

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Note: Property appraisal available at Town Hall

Morrison Farm Reuse Plan

Introduction

The Morrison Farm is located at 116 Concord Road in East Acton. The Farm is a 32-acre parcel that lies between the Woodlawn Cemetery and Ice House Pond, both of which are Town-owned properties. The rear of the property (approximately 15 acres) is wooded. The front portion of the property (approximately 17 acres) is open fields with a farmhouse, garage, barn, and three out-buildings next to Concord Road. (See Map 1.)

In the spring of 1997, Town Meeting voted to acquire the property for \$1.3MM. At this Town Meeting, the warrant article was supported for three overriding reasons: 1) use for passive recreation and conservation; 2) potential use for active recreation; 3) elimination of a potential for residential development.

The Town of Acton purchased the Morrison Farm with a life estate to the resident, Betty Morrison. In 2003, Mrs. Morrison permanently vacated the property, and it then came under the control of the Town. In 2004, the Board of Selectmen appointed an advisory committee made up of members representing various constituencies interested in the recommended reuse of the property.

Morrison Farm Reuse Committee Goals, as established by the Board of Selectmen:

- Provide for an active multi-use field, preferably in the upper field area beyond the barn.
- Maintain the existing system of walking trails and construct a trail connection to the future Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and the East Acton Village.
- Preserve the lower meadow, areas bordering Ice House Pond, woodland areas, and other environmentally sensitive areas on the Morrison Farm property.
- Preserve the characteristics of the Morrison Farm and the views looking at the property from Concord Road.
- Provide space for equestrian activities such as trail riding.
- Provide for Community Garden space.
- Provide space for a playground.
- Determine the future use of the farmhouse, barn, garage, and out-buildings.
- Prioritize any development plans and include cost estimates and general timeline.

Introduction, continued

The Morrison Farm Reuse Committee is made up of the following members:

Committee Member	Representing
Walter Foster, Chairman	Board of Selectmen
Linda McElroy	Land Stewardship Committee
Alison Gallagher	Recreation Committee
Bonnie Geithner	At Large Representative
Ethan Baxter	Abutter
Julia Miles	Conservation Commission
Brewster Conant	Cemetery Commission
David Brown	East Acton Village Planning Committee
Tom Tidman	Staff-Natural Resources Director

Property Description

The Morrison Farm property can be separated into four general areas: pine woodlands, open hayfield, lower meadow, and farm buildings and paddocks. (See Map 2.)

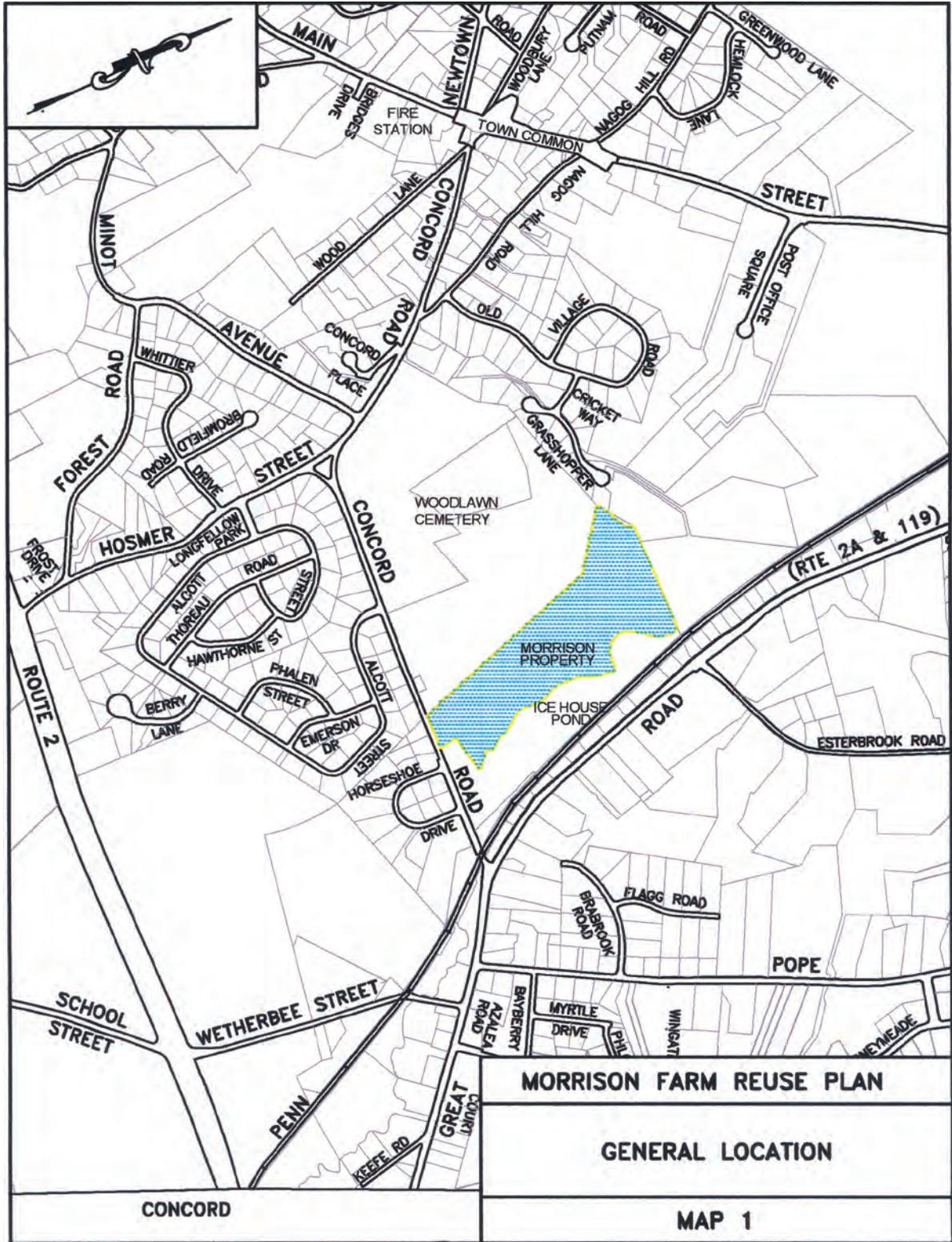
Pine Woodlands: This portion is approximately 15 acres and is located in the northerly area to the rear of the farm. The pine woodlands are heavily forested, with an existing loop trail. This area is bordered by Nashoba Brook to the east, private property to the north, Woodlawn Cemetery to the west, and the open hayfield to the south. (See Map 2.)

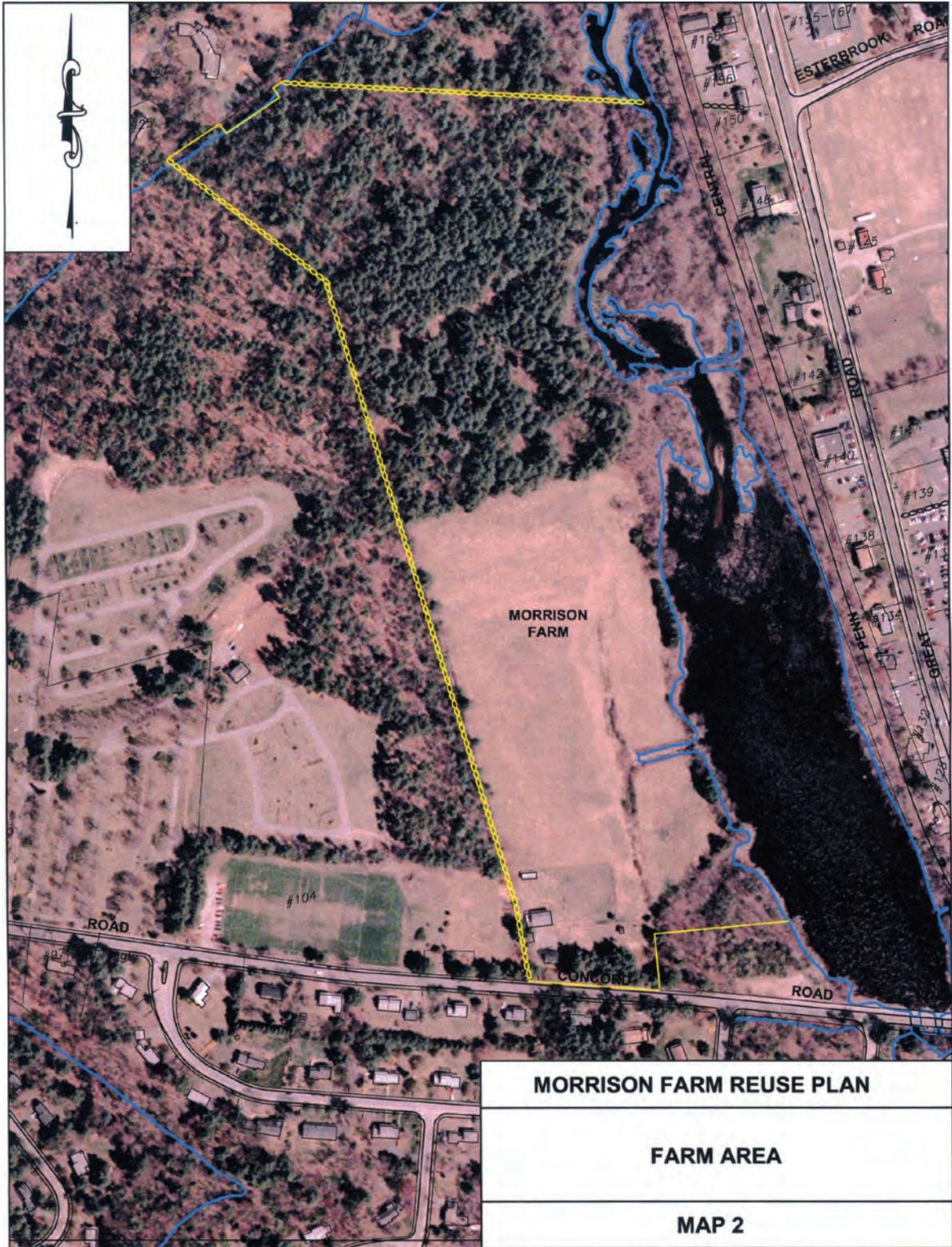
An existing hiking/equestrian trail follows the perimeter of the property, with a branch that bisects the pine woodlands. This trail formerly continued over a short section of private land to the north and connected the Morrison Farm to the Conant Well land and the Isaac Davis Trail. Due to recent development (2005), this connection has been eliminated.

Abutments of a former bridge that spanned Nashoba Brook remain in the southeastern corner of the pine woodlands.

Open Hayfield: This portion is approximately 7 acres and is located at the central, westerly side of the property. The field has been cleared and used for agricultural purposes. It is bordered by the lower meadow to the east, pine woodlands to the north, Woodlawn Cemetery to the west, and the farm buildings and paddocks to the south. The property rises slightly in grade from the farm buildings in the south to about 2/3rd of the way to the pine woodlands. The grade then drops more dramatically before rising slightly in front of the pine woodlands. (See Map 3B.)

Existing hiking/equestrian trails extend along the western and northern boundaries and connect with the pine woodlands trail network. Another trail begins in the Woodlawn Cemetery and travels diagonally through the center of the open hayfield, eventually connecting to the southeastern corner of the pine woodlands trail.





Property Description, continued

Lower Meadow: This portion is approximately 6 acres and is located in the central, easterly portion of the property. The majority of this land is cleared, with small stands of trees and wetlands along the pond. This meadow is bordered on the east by Ice House Pond, pine woodlands to the north, open hayfield to the west, and the former Ice House Property (now Town-owned) to the south. (See Map 2.)

The lower meadow's westerly border next to the open hayfield has a significant gradation change (see Map 3B), and there are drainage ditches at the base of the hill that drain water from the open hayfield to a T-shaped canal bisecting the lower meadow. This canal connects the drainage ditches directly to Ice House Pond. The northern portion of the lower meadow has a slight grade change to the west, and is significantly wet. The area immediately adjacent to Ice House Pond is slightly elevated, with walking trails.

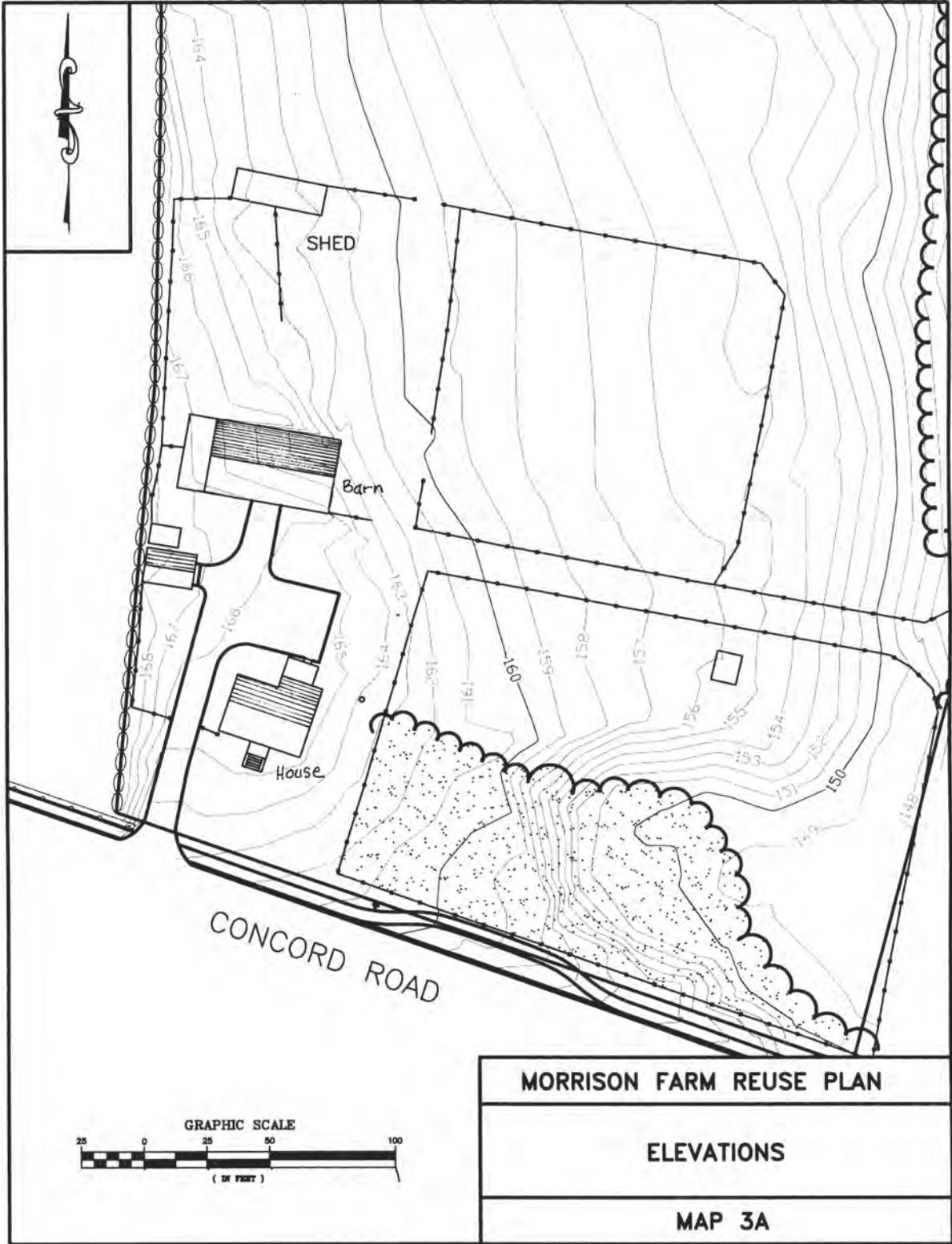
Farm Buildings and Paddocks: This portion is approximately 3 acres and is located in the southern portion of the property. This area is mostly cleared of trees around the farmhouse, barn, garage, chicken house, and walk-in sheds. The farm buildings and paddocks are bordered by the former Ice House Property to the east, open hayfield to the north, Woodlawn Cemetery to the west, and Concord Road to the south. There are six structures in this area plus the three paddock fences. (See Map 4.)

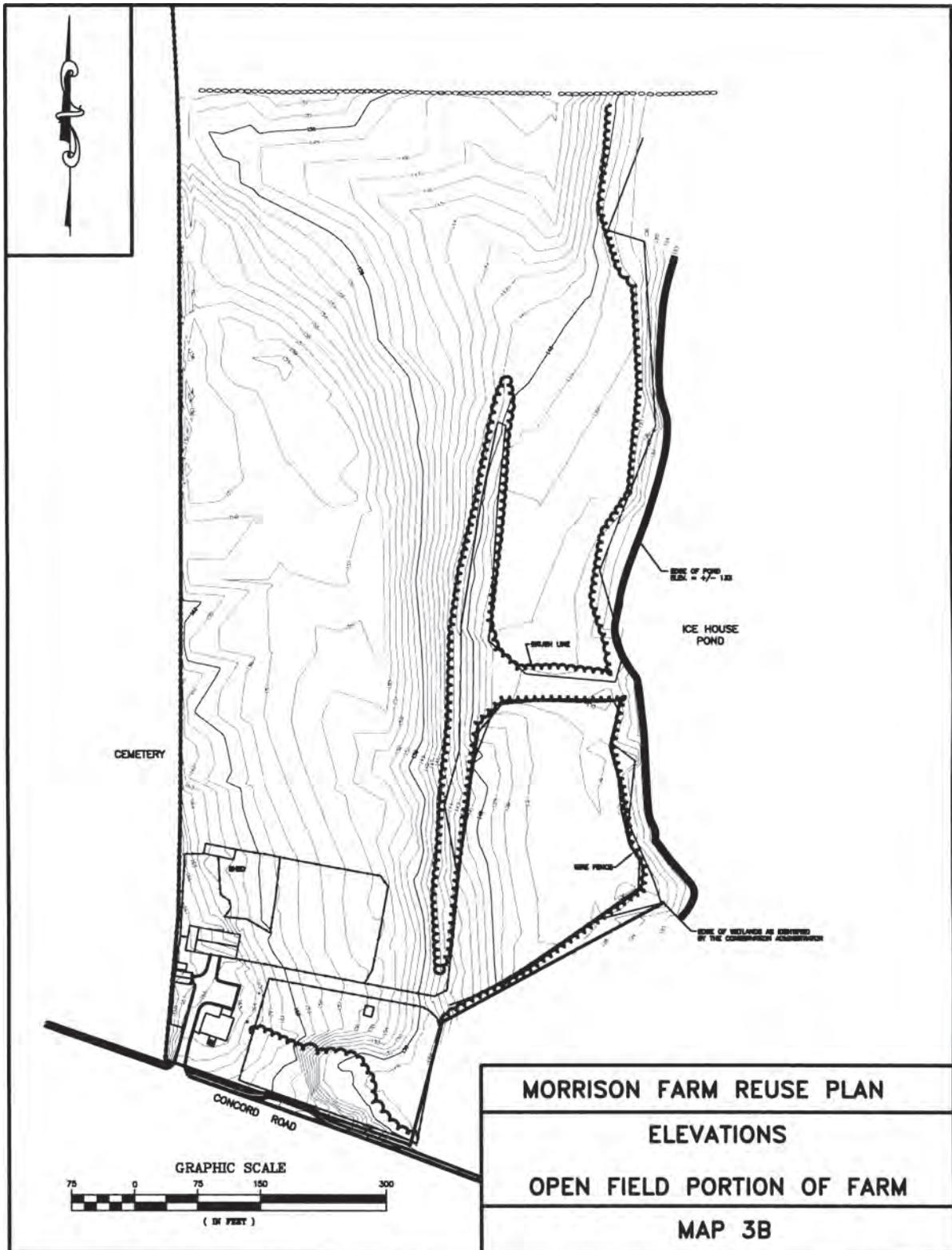
Farmhouse: This structure appears to have been built around 1932-1933 and is a 1,565 square-foot, two-story, Colonial Revival-Craftsman style house with minimal architectural designs. The first floor has 941 square feet and contains an outdated kitchen, dining room, living room, and sunroom/porch. The second floor has 624 square feet, containing three bedrooms and the only bathroom. There is also a 624 square-foot third floor, unfinished attic and a 688 square-foot unfinished basement. The house has an asphalt-shingled, gable-end roof with a concrete foundation and wooden shingle siding. (Appraisal available at Town Hall.)

Barn: This structure appears to have been built around 1932-1933 and is a 1,500 square-foot, two story, wood-framed structure on a concrete foundation with an asphalt-shingled, gable-end roof. The barn has two central sliding doors on each of the north- and south-facing sides, which allow a central passage across the barn. On the south face there is a smaller door to the right. On the first floor there are several animal stalls. On the second story there are haylofts on the east and west ends of the barn. Currently, the barn is used for storing municipal equipment. The architectural design is similar to the main house, with shingle siding and small-paned stable windows on some sides of the barn. On the western end, a one-story carport is used for farm equipment storage.

Garage: The car garage is a single-bay structure, containing 280 square feet with gable ends and shingle siding likely built contemporaneously with the house and barn. The doors are the original Dutch-style, hinged doors. The structure is on the property's west border between the house and barn.

Chicken House: This small structure is adjacent to the garage. The structure has an earth foundation and is sided with clapboards, unlike the shingle siding of the house, barn, and garage.





Property Description, continued

Walk-in Sheds: To the north of the barn is a 154 square-foot, single-story shed. The structure has three sides and is open to the south. There are two bays in the shed. One bay appears to have stored farm equipment, and the other bay was used as a small-animal shelter. The roof is corrugated metal with a small section missing.

A smaller, three-sided wooden structure is located in the south paddock. This 40 square-foot structure appears to have been used for large-animal shelter and feed storage.

Paddocks: The farm has three paddocks enclosed with wooden fencing that are located in the southern portion of the property, east of the house and barn. The largest paddock (south paddock) is bordered by the former Ice House Property to the east, another paddock to the north, the house to the west, and Concord Road to the south. The second largest paddock (north paddock) is due north of the south paddock. It is bordered by the lower meadow to the east, the open hayfield to the north, the barn and small paddock to the west, and the south paddock to the south. The smallest paddock (west paddock) was used for small animals and is situated between the barn and the shed near the western border of the property.

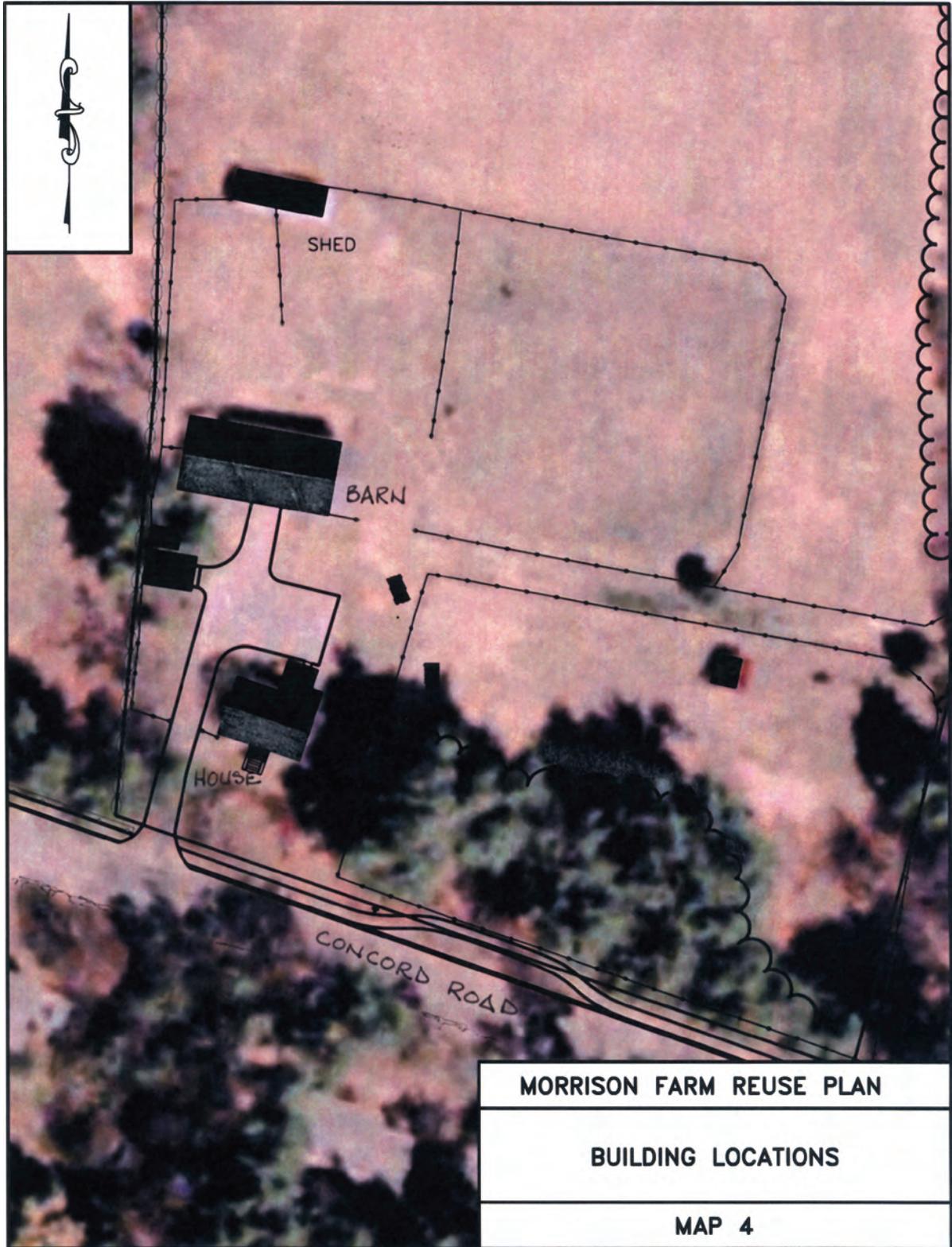
Abutters

Town of Acton—Ice House Pond: To the east of the Morrison Farm, from the lower meadow to Concord Road on the south, the property is bordered by the Town of Acton-owned Ice House Pond and the former site of the Ice House storage facility. The Town of Acton purchased the 17-acre Ice House Property in 1980.

The Ice House Pond area was used for a saw mill and iron forge after a mill dam was established in 1750 at 127 Concord Road, located across Concord Road from the now Town-owned land. The earliest map that indicates the existence of Ice House Pond is dated 1856. The earliest Ice House is shown on an 1875 Beers Atlas on the southwestern corner of Ice House Pond. It appears that, in approximately 1932, the existing Ice House foundation, also located at the southwestern corner of Ice House Pond, was poured. The Ice House facility was in operation until approximately 1954-1955. Most of the foundation can be seen from the adjacent Ice House Pond parking lot. (See Photograph 1.)

East Acton Village Green: On the southeasterly side of Ice House Pond there is a one-acre site which is owned by the Town of Acton. This parcel is at the intersection of Concord Road and Great Road. The site has been designated as the future site of the East Acton Village Green as a result of the acceptance in 2004 by the Board of Selectmen of the East Acton Village Planning Committee's Village Plan. The Green will have a seating area that frames the site of the depot foundation. It will also connect to the Morrison Farm via the Concord Road sidewalk and the future Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

Historically, this was the former site of the East Acton Railroad Station for the Nashua, Acton & Boston Railroad and the Framingham and Lowell Railroad, built in 1871. Originally, the site contained a train depot, freight shed, and water tower. The depot building burned in 1874, so the freight shed was moved onto the depot foundation and stood there until 1938. The station was reportedly dismantled and used as building material. The establishment of a green at the site of the former depot (see Plan 1) is part of the Village Plan.



Abutters, continued

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail: The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) will be a 25-mile, state-designated rail trail that runs through Lowell, Chelmsford, Westford, Carlisle, Acton, Concord, Sudbury, and Framingham. The BFRT abuts the Village Green, Ice House Pond, and Nashoba Brook to the west. (See Map 5.) The Trail will enter the Town of Acton from the north near the intersection of Rt. 225 and Rt. 27 and will exit the town in East Acton at the junction of Rt. 2 just west of the Concord rotary.

Acton currently has a sidewalk that runs between the designated BFRT and the Morrison Farm across the Concord Road bridge. A second connection between the BFRT and the Morrison Farm is proposed to cross a former causeway over Nashoba Brook. The causeway was comprised of a spur of land and a wooden bridge that originally connected the John Robbins' house at 144 Great Road (Lottery House) to the pasture lands of the Morrison Farm. The bridge was likely built in the early 19th century. All that remains of the bridge are the granite abutments on either side of the brook.

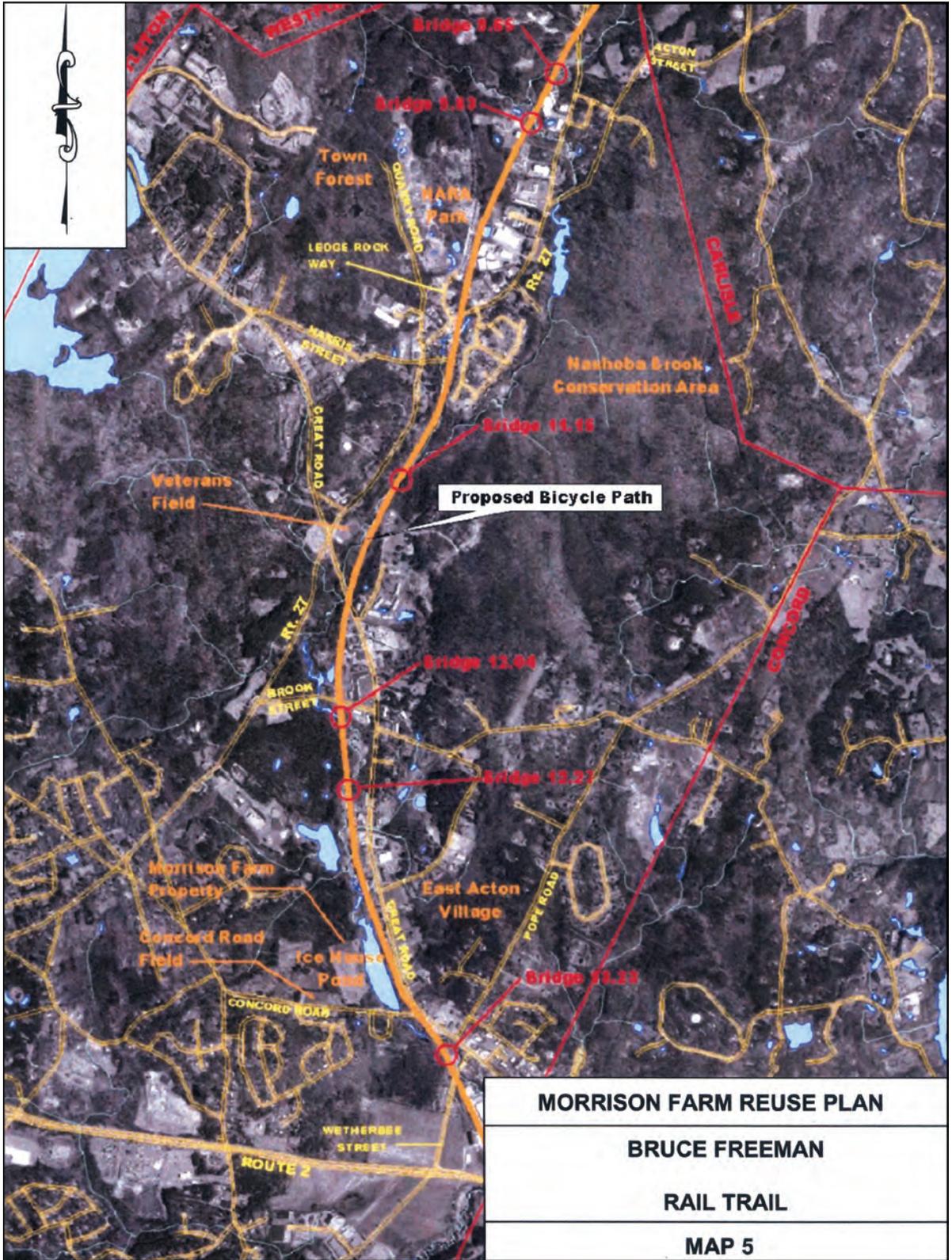
The Town completed a feasibility study for the BFRT in 2004 and has approved funds for the initial designs. Phase 1 (7.5 miles from Lowell to Acton) is in a design phase scheduled for completion in 2007. Phase 2 (13 miles from Westford to Sudbury) is in various stages of study and design. Phase 3 (4.5 miles through Framingham) is a proposed extension. The Acton portion of the BFRT totals 4.6 miles. The majority of the funding for the project will come from Federal Highway funds which have been budgeted for FY 2008.

Private Property: The Morrison Farm is bordered to the north by a private residence, where a stone wall separates the two properties. The former trail segment which traversed the private property was discontinued in 2005 when the house construction began. Per the request of the current owner, no trespassing is permitted. There are also three private residences directly across Concord Road from the Morrison Farm. All three have direct views of the Morrison Farm Property and are part of the Robbins Park neighborhood.

Town of Acton—Woodlawn Cemetery: The Town-owned Woodlawn Cemetery borders the Morrison Farm on its westerly boundary. The cemetery is a 70.5-acre site that was established in 1738. In 1951, the 42-acre portion of the Woodlawn Cemetery that abuts the Morrison Farm was purchased by the Town. All but 4.5 acres were approved for burial uses. The exempted 4.5 acre parcel borders the Morrison Farm from Concord Road to the end of the open hayfield. (See Map 6.) Because of a well on the Morrison Farm, this triangular parcel was restricted by the Town for burial use. Since the 42-acre acquisition in 1951, the Morrison Farm has been connected to town water, and the well is no longer in use. However, according to Town officials, the restricted area would need Town Meeting approval to be used for burials.

For discussion purposes, Woodlawn Cemetery will be separated into three sections that border the pine woodlands, open hayfield, and farm buildings. A stone wall separates the cemetery from the Morrison Farm along all three of these areas.

Pine Woodlands Border: The portion of the cemetery that abuts the Morrison woodland remains wooded but eventually will be used for burial purposes. Two trails through the cemetery land connect to the trail network on the Morrison Farm.



MORRISON FARM REUSE PLAN
BRUCE FREEMAN
RAIL TRAIL
MAP 5

Abutters, continued

Open Hayfield Border: The aforementioned restricted parcel abuts the entire open hayfield. This area comprises approximately 3 acres of the 4.5 acres of restricted property. The entire parcel is wooded, with a vernal pool at the center, eastern portion of the cemetery property.

Farm Buildings Border: The remaining 1.5 acres of the restricted cemetery property, that abuts the area containing the farm buildings, has been cleared and was used by the Morrison Farm horses.

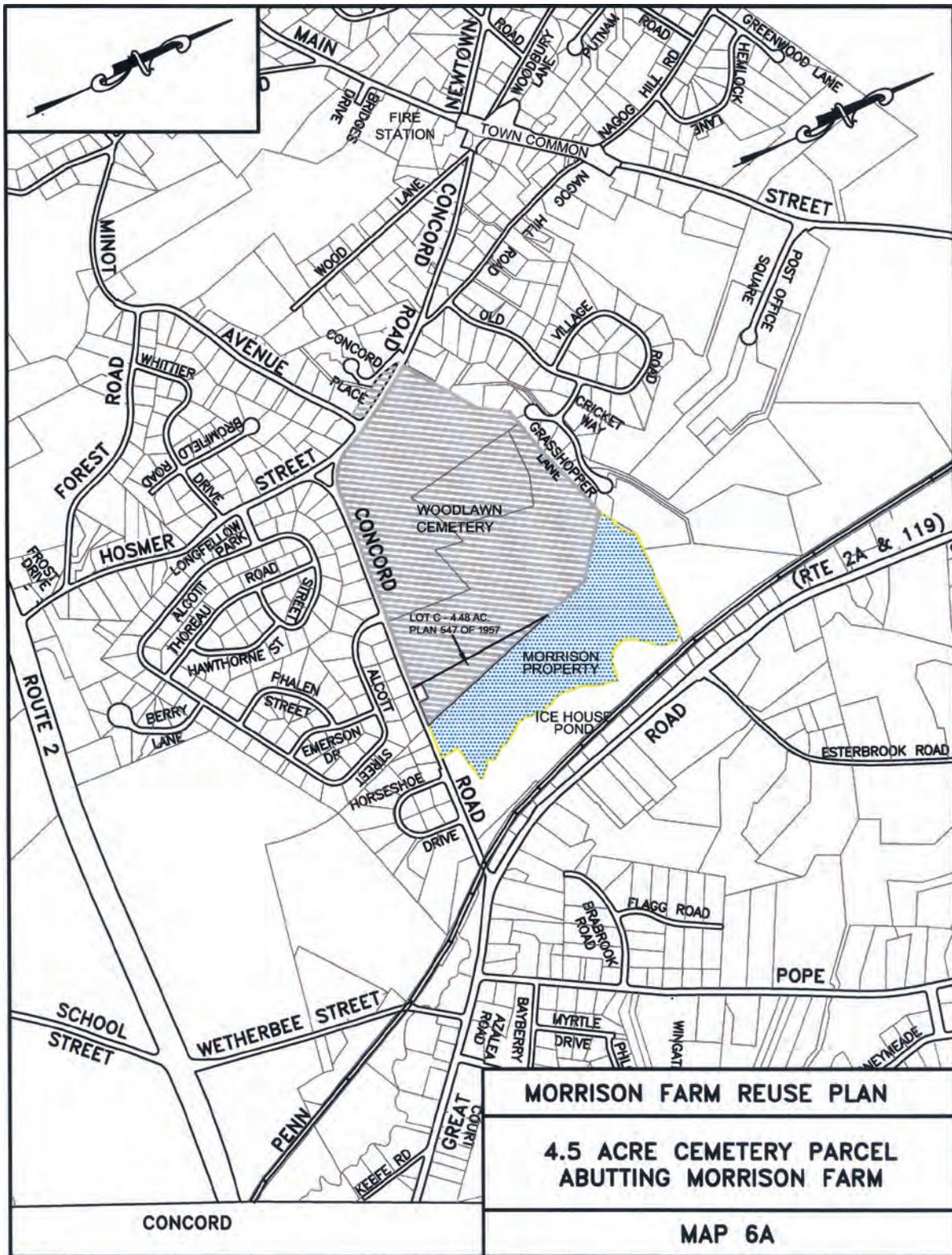
In the southwestern side of the restricted parcel (but not part of the 1.5 acres) is the historic foundation of the Captain Joseph Robbins House where the Acton Militia was first alerted to the British troops marching into Concord. “Captain Robbins! Captain Robbins! Up! Up! The regulars have come to Concord! Rendezvous at old North Bridge quick as possible! Alarm Acton!” was the cry from the rider.

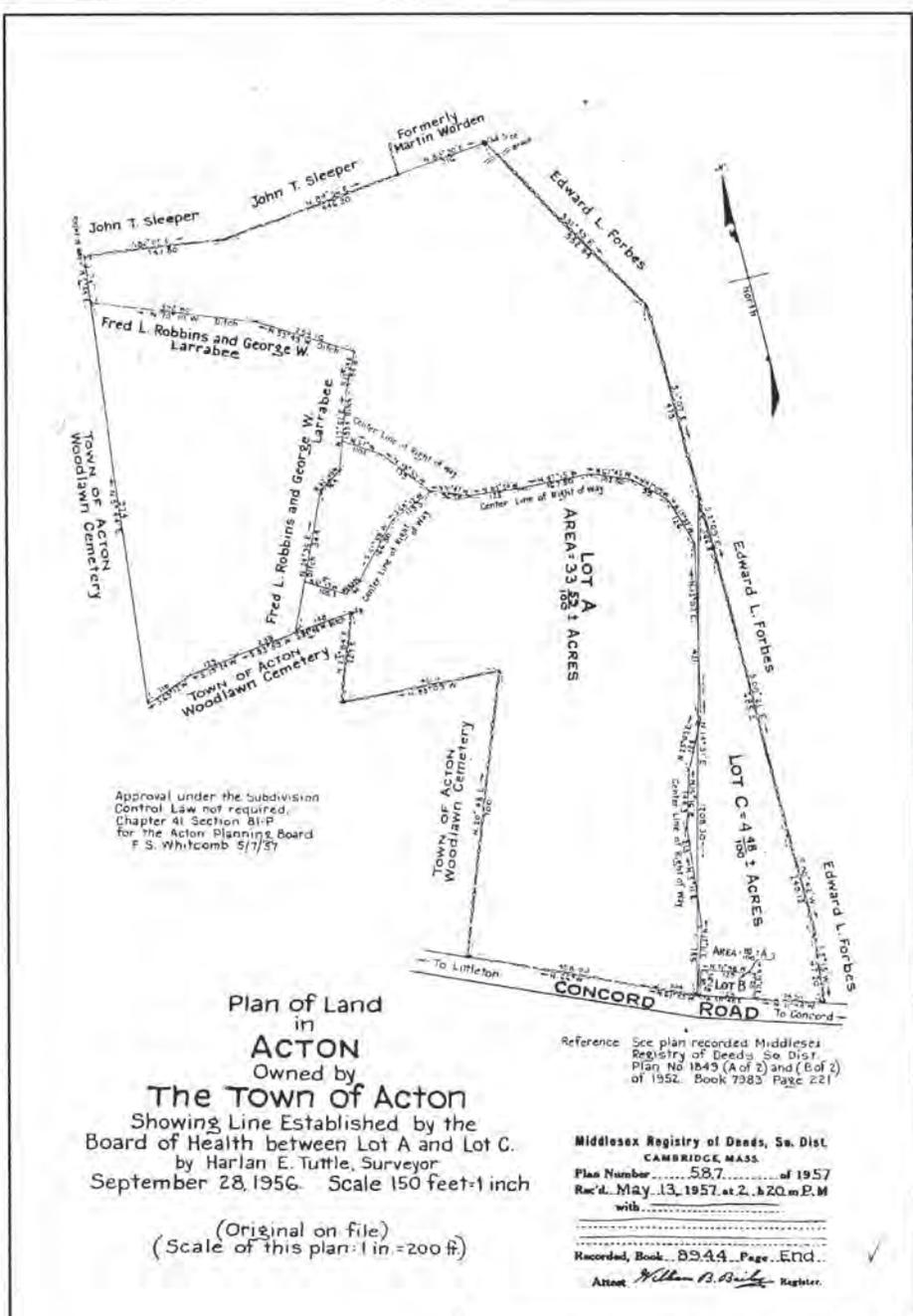
Abutting this parcel to the west is the Concord Road soccer field. The field is owned by the Town of Acton through the Woodlawn Cemetery and is being temporarily used as a soccer field until needed by the Cemetery.



Photograph 1: Ice House Pond

Courtesy of Acton Historical Society, Inc.





Plan of Land
 in
ACTON
 Owned by
The Town of Acton
 Showing Line Established by the
 Board of Health between Lot A and Lot C.
 by Harlan E. Tuttle, Surveyor
 September 28, 1956. Scale 150 feet=1 inch
 (Original on file)
 (Scale of this plan: 1 in.=200 ft.)

Reference See plan recorded Middlesex
 Registry of Deeds So. Dist.
 Plan No 1845 (A of 2) and (B of 2)
 of 1952. Book 7983 Page 221

Middlesex Registry of Deeds, So. Dist.
 CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
 Plan Number.....587.....of 1957
 Rec'd. May 13, 1957, at 2.12 P.M.
 with.....
 Recorded, Book. 8944..Page..End..
 Attest *William B. [Signature]* Register.

MORRISON FARM REUSE PLAN

**4.5 ACRE CEMETERY PARCEL
 ABUTTING MORRISON FARM**

MAP 6B

History

Overview: In February 2005, an historical presentation was made by Bill Klauer of the Acton Historical Society and detailed the history of the Morrison Farm and the surrounding area. In March 2006, an historic inventory (see Appendix 1) was prepared by Arthur Krimm of the Mass. Historical Commission and was presented to the Morrison Reuse Committee by Peter Grover of the Acton Historical Commission. The inventory focused on the 32 acres of Morrison Farm as well as the 17 acres at Ice House Pond, also owned by the Town of Acton. Mr. Krimm concluded that both properties would be eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

Early Development: The 32 acres of land that currently make up the Morrison Farm were part of the 1669 Captain Thomas Wheeler grant of 200 acres used for dry (beef) cattle grazing land west of Nashoba Brook. Then, in 1676 the subject land, amongst other property, was inherited by Nathan Robbins. The property was passed down through the Robbins family as undeveloped pastures until 1929. In 1929, the parcel was sold to the Concord Ice Company. The Concord Ice Company purchased not only this 32-acre portion but 17 acres of wetlands along Nashoba Brook, which included Ice House Pond and the former Ice House Property.

Later Development: In 1932, the Concord Ice Company, which was established by John Forbes and William Grace, sold the 32-acre Morrison Farm parcel to Edward Forbes, the brother of John Forbes. Edward Forbes built the house, barn, and garage around 1932-1933. The barn was used to stable the oxen that were needed for the operation of the Concord Ice Company. The fields were used for grazing animals. The 32-acre farm was sold twice in the 1950s, with John Morrison purchasing the property in 1954. The property was converted into a horse farm by John Morrison. Elizabeth Thompson Morrison lived in the house until 2003.



Photograph 2: *Acton Train Station*

Courtesy of Acton Historical Society, Inc.

Process

Morrison Farm Reuse Committee: A study committee, whose members were appointed by the Board of Selectmen, was formed in November 2004. The committee first met on January 20, 2005. All meeting dates were posted per open-meeting law and placed in the Beacon whenever possible as a courtesy to interested attendees. Throughout the meetings, any resident who was present spoke freely. The committee operated by building a consensus concerning possible uses for this property. The committee encouraged a number of specific groups to make presentations:

Land Stewardship Committee
Recreation Commission
East Acton Village Plan Committee
Cemetery Commission
Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
Acton Historical Society
Historical Commission

In addition, throughout 2005, the committee welcomed any proposals from residents of the town. Amongst others, the following proposals were presented, details of which may be found in Appendix 2:

- A Multi-use proposal, presented by a resident of Acton
- A Frisbee Golf Park, presented by a resident of Acton
- A Dog Park, presented by a resident of Acton
- A Pre-School that would re-use the farm house, presented by two members of the Acton Cooperative Barn Day Care
- Continued equestrian use, presented by a resident from Hybrid Farm representing the town's equestrians

On February 2, 2006, the committee held an open forum at Town Hall. The event was well-publicized. Besides the normal channels for posting notices for a committee meeting, the Acton Beacon ran an article concerning the meeting. Ethan Baxter (abutter committee member) solicited input from neighbors through a direct mailing. All constituencies who had made a proposal at prior meetings were allowed to make a short presentation at the public forum. After that, a lively discussion took place on all the proposals with inputs from non-committee attendees. Over the next few meetings, reviewing the input from the open forum, the committee eliminated several of the proposals and focused on a set of recommendations.

Recommendations

Consensus: After more than 18 months of meetings, the committee has reached consensus concerning the following general goals:

Agricultural Heritage: Preservation of the property's agricultural heritage is paramount. The land has most likely been used for agricultural purposes since 1669. Specifically, the fields have been in use and in the same general condition for approximately 337 continuous years. Few properties in Acton, or in all of the U. S., can make the same claim.

Recommendations, continued

Concord Road Views: The familiar rural views from Concord Road should be protected.

Area Complex: Integration of the Morrison Farm Property into the surrounding cultural context should be effected by incorporating the contiguous Town-owned properties into the design proposed for the Morrison Farm Property.

Recreational Use: Reuse plans should recognize that the original Town Meeting vote in 1997 to acquire the Morrison Farm Property anticipated using a portion of the property for active recreational use.

Required Improvements: For simplicity, the recommendations will be detailed individually, but can be viewed in their totality in the 3-D model prepared by Alison Gallagher and Tom Tidman. The individual recommendations listed below relate to components of the proposed complex, which, when implemented, would provide an integrated whole consistent with the feedback that the committee has received.

Trail Network—Pedestrian and Equestrian: The committee recommends the augmentation of the existing trails into a trail system that would incorporate ½ mile, 1 mile, 1½ mile, and 2 mile loops. The longest trail route would connect both the EAV Green and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail with the Morrison Farm property. This 2-mile trail would travel along the existing Concord Road sidewalk, cross the Ice House Pond bridge, connect with the EAV Green, and then turn north along the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail to the intersection with the site of the former Nashoba Brook causeway and bridge.

On the Morrison Farm side of the proposed reconstructed bridge (see ‘Nashoba Brook Bridge’ below), the route would lead through the pine woodlands along an existing trail and return via the open hayfield and the lower meadow along the western bank of Ice House Pond to the Ice House Pond parking lot. By selecting various portions of this trail system, hikers could vary distances from ½ mile to 2 miles. (For more detail, see Map 7.)

EAV Green: The proposed Green at the intersection of Concord Road and Great Road has been waiting for the recommendations of the Morrison Farm Reuse Committee before its establishment. The design was completed in 2003 but the Town requested that the Morrison Farm project be analyzed before starting the work. The Town has cleared most of the area needed for the Green. An application for CPC funds was submitted but tabled until completion of this report. It is anticipated that a member of the East Acton Village Planning Committee will resubmit an application to the CPC upon the acceptance of this report by the Board of Selectmen. The prior CPC application was for \$24,000 with the balance of \$50,000 to come from donations.

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT): The BFRT will run parallel to Ice House Pond along its eastern shore. While the Federal Government has the trail construction budgeted for 2008, there is no guarantee that it will be completed during that year. However, there is no need for the Morrison Trail to wait for the BFRT to be completed. The friends of the BFRT (a guiding not-for-profit group) recently cleared the rail trail from Concord Road to Brooks Street, well past the Nashoba Brook causeway. The Town should petition the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (current owners of

Recommendations, continued

the rail property) to allow access on the trail for this short stretch. As a precedent, the Commonwealth has previously granted access to the rail property to a private residence off of Wetherbee Street.

Nashoba Brook Bridge: Behind 144 Great Road, the former John Robbins residence, there was a wooden bridge that crossed Nashoba Brook to the Morrison Farm. The 19th-century bridge should be reconstructed. The bridge would provide access to the Morrison Farm Property from locations along Great Road which might be used as alternatives to the Concord Road parking lots. The current owner of 144 Great Road has agreed to allow an easement across his property to access the BFRT and the reconstructed bridge.

Ice House Pond Trail: A handicapped-accessible trail should be established from the Ice House Pond parking lot on Concord Road, along the western shore of Ice House Pond, to the Nashoba Brook Bridge (see preceding paragraph). Such a trail would require two short boardwalks over wetlands. The existing trails will be widened and maintained as accessible trails.

Observation Platform: A pier for wildlife observation is recommended to be constructed along the northern marsh of Ice House Pond.

Canoe Launch: A suitable place for launching non-motorized watercraft from the Ice House Pond parking lot should be established. The water is shallow and the distance from transporting vehicles is short.

Community Organic Farm: The Land Stewardship Committee has proposed the development of a community organic farm on the southwestern portion of the Morrison Farm Property. The MFR Committee recommends the establishment of an oversight committee, comprised of some land stewards together with other volunteers with appropriate specialized abilities, to establish such a farm. Said farm would comprise crops, animal husbandry, a strong component of educational programs integrated with the school system, and possibly, later, approved forestry practices.

The Land Stewards foresee the development of said farm and its programs progressing in phases. Initially, garden plots would be offered to Acton residents as are the present Community Gardens in North Acton, with the stipulation that organic farming be practiced on these plots. Later, the Farm Program would include its own organically grown vegetables, cutting flowers, and berries. First phase livestock would include bunnies and chickens, and later expand to include goats, sheep, and possibly other working farm animals.

The area that includes the existing farm buildings and paddocks would be sufficient for the initial phase of such a community organic farm. Later expansion would require use of an additional 30-yard zone beyond a line from the current walk-in shed on the west and the north paddock's back fence on the east. Eventually, the farm might expand into the entire open hayfield, provided such expansion was consistent with other town goals.

Recommendations, continued

After initial financial assistance from the town to renovate various farm structures, the Acton Community Organic Farm could be operated as a self-funding 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation and would not require taxpayer funding. For further details, see Appendix 3.

Components of the Community Organic Farm would include the following:

Farmhouse: The house would be used as living quarters for the farm's caretaker (and family). The caretaker would be responsible for the routine maintenance of the buildings and care of the livestock and crops during periods when farm programs were not in operation.

Garage: The small, one-bay garage would be used to store farm and garden equipment.

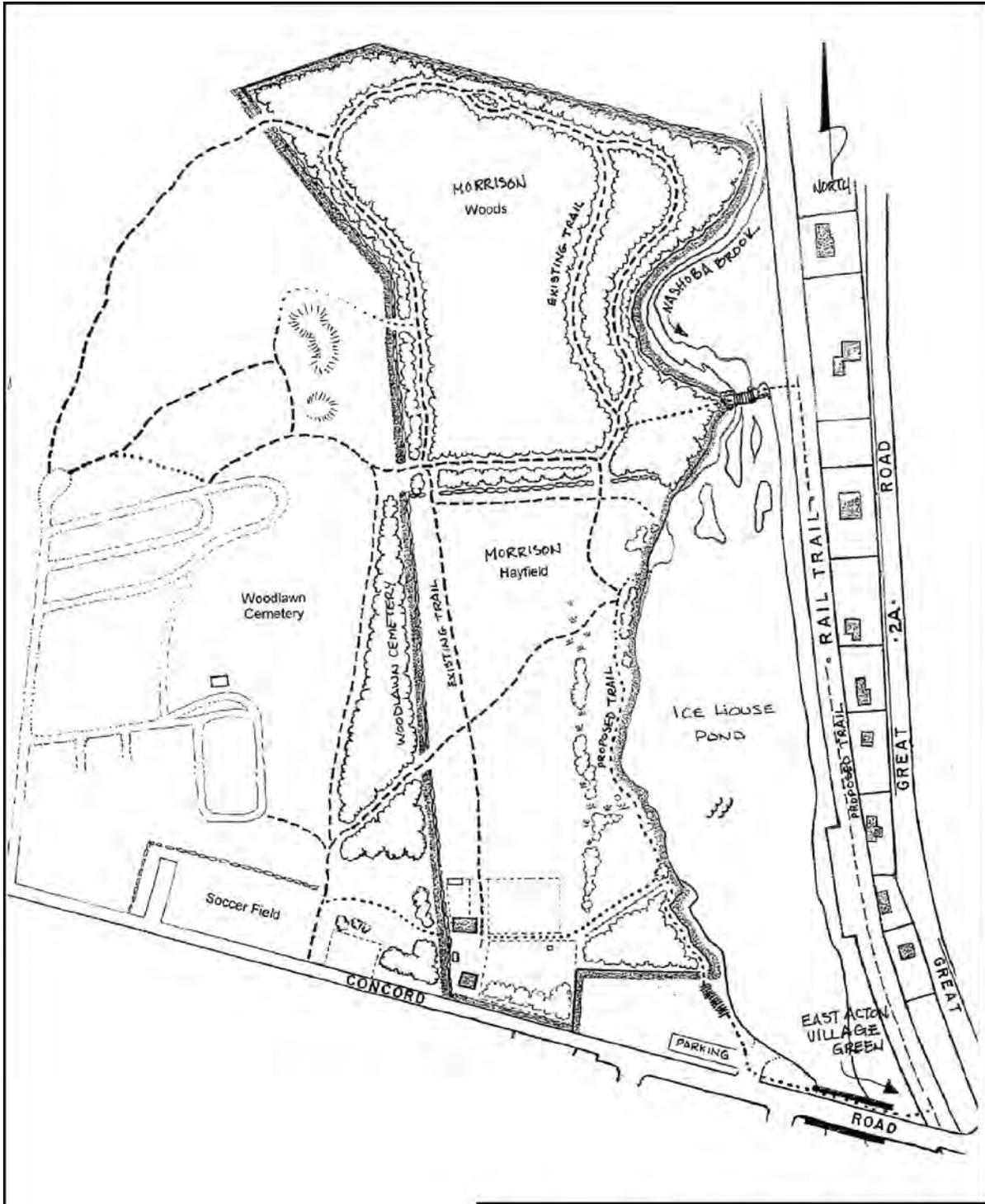
Barn: Although other venues already exist within the town for gatherings of various kinds, the barn's atmosphere would promote communal activities consistent with a more traditional, rural lifestyle, while not excluding contemporary uses. The renovated and appropriately furnished barn could also be rented for private functions (scout meetings, family reunions, birthday parties, weddings, even corporate retreats, etc.).

Although apparently fairly sound structurally, the barn needs renovations. Because the Community Organic Farm does not anticipate needing the barn for sheltering animals, the horse stalls would be



Drawing: *Bridge by Arthur Davis*

Courtesy of Acton Historical Society, Inc.



MORRISON FARM REUSE PLAN
TRAIL MAP
MAP 7

Recommendations, continued

removed and a large open area on the lower level with wooden floors would be created. Large sliding glass doors would be installed on the back wall facing the open hayfield and open onto a large wrap-around deck or patio. Large windows along the remainder of the north side and the east end of the barn would provide increased natural light and wonderful views of the fields, pond, and forest. The large space, perhaps with movable partitions, would be used for classrooms for the educational programs of the organic farm, as well as for various types of community functions such as music, dancing, presentations, etc.

Walk-in Sheds: The shed nearest the open hayfield would be used as shelter for the small livestock. Some repairs are necessary.

Paddocks: The west paddock (between the north side of the barn and the rear walk-in shed) would be used for the smaller livestock: chickens, rabbits, and goats. The south paddock, next to Concord Road, could eventually be used for larger livestock, such as sheep, pigs, and domestic turkeys. The north paddock, on the east side next to the open hayfield, would be used for the Community Farm's organic vegetable and cut flower gardens. (See Map 8.)

Gardens: All garden plots would be organic. The Land Stewards propose community garden plots (similar to those in North Acton) in the initial phase. The Community Organic Farm plots would follow at a later phase. These gardens would be located within the present north paddock, next to the open hayfield. Berry bushes (raspberry, blackberry, and blueberry) on the north and east sides of the north paddock would provide some protection for the vegetables from deer, other browsers, and wind. It is anticipated that gardening spaces would be expanded as needed into a portion of the open hayfield consistent with other town needs.

Other Community Organic Farm Issues: It is anticipated that the nonprofit established to manage the Community Organic Farm would be fully responsible for funding its work. It is likely that CPC funds would be solicited for renovations and start-up costs. Further, the caretaker would be responsible for minor maintenance on the buildings. The Land Stewards anticipate significant donations in kind from businesses and residents of Acton and beyond.

Recreation Field: Town Meeting supported the acquisition of the Morrison Farm in 1997 with the understanding that a portion of the property would be reserved for active recreation. More recently, the Recreation Commission reported to the MFRC that, even with the addition of the School Street recreational fields and the improvements to Leary Field, Acton has a shortage of recreation fields. In consideration of these factors, the committee recommends that a multi-use active recreation playing space be reserved on the level portion of the southerly open hayfield, consistent with the 30-yard expansion zone set aside for the Community Organic Farm. Such a playing field could be used for soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, Pop Warner, or other active recreational activities.

Such a playing field would need to be maintained organically. The committee strongly suggests, however, that the town look for other more suitable sites for additional recreational fields before committing the Morrison Farm Property to such a purpose, since the soils in the open hayfield have been identified as most suitable for the agricultural uses which would complement the proposal for the Community Organic Farm (see Appendix 4).

Recommendations, continued

Required Improvements: The open hayfield has a slight upward grade from the south to the north. There may be a need for some cut and fill to create a level recreation field.

Parking: The parking access to the recreation field located behind the farm buildings could be both difficult and disruptive. A parking area should not be built on the open hayfield. Whether it would be hard packed gravel or asphalt, run off into the Nashoba Brook wetlands and into the organic farm crop areas would be inevitable and undesirable. Also, preservation of the 300 years of agricultural use would be irreversibly ended with the construction of a parking lot. The visual impact from Concord Road would also be compromised.

Conservation: Because of the natural assets located on this property, a significant portion of the property is recommended to be reclassified as conservation land. In total, 15 acres of the 32 acres, or 46% of the Morrison Property, is recommended for conservation classification.

Pine Woodlands: The entire pine woodlands (approximately 15 acres) are recommended as conservation land.

Lower Meadow: The lower meadow (6 acres) from the Ice House Pond parking lot north to the pine woodlands is not recommended as conservation land but is entitled to protection under wetland legislation.

Playground on Ice House Foundation: A playground is recommended for the area where the foundation of the old Ice House building is located, on the southwestern side of Ice House Pond. The playground should incorporate the historic elements of the old Ice House. The East Acton Village Plan states that a playground in this general area is a high priority. East Acton is the only village within the town without a playground. Around the Ice House area, picnic tables are recommended. Because of the proximity to the water and Ice House Pond, the playground should be fenced.

Concord Road Soccer Field: The Cemetery Commission has voted to allow the Concord Road soccer field to remain for an additional 5 years. The Morrison Reuse Committee recommends that the Concord Road soccer field remain where it is until the remainder of the Woodlawn Cemetery is developed. It does not make economic sense to eliminate a well-used asset when there is other expansion property to the north of the existing developed cemetery, and the cemetery plan calls for eventual development of this undeveloped land.

The Morrison Reuse Committee strongly recommends that the much-needed recreation field be a last out-use for the cemetery. If this recommendation is adopted, the active recreational use could go on for many years to come and would complement the Morrison Farm. These recommendations must be substantiated by cost trade-off studies before use of the Cemetery soccer field can be extended beyond the present 5-year extension.

Parking: Adequate parking is always vital to the success of any multi-user facility. The Committee recommends exploring with businesses located along Great Road the use of existing parking areas, and supports the idea of using other existing parking throughout the area surrounding

Recommendations, continued

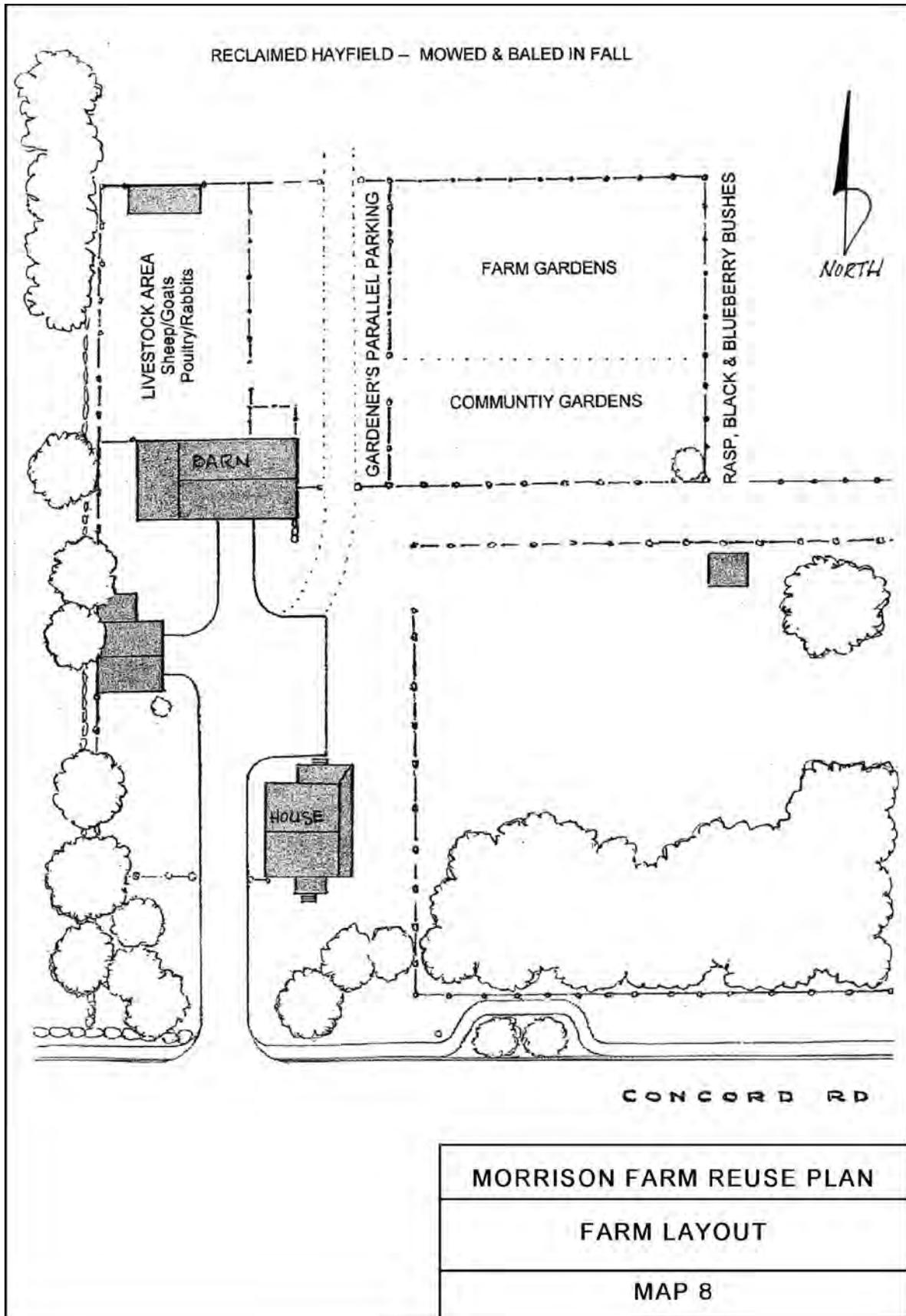
Morrison Farm. With the exception of the farm parking noted above, the committee does not recommend that any large parking area be placed on the Morrison Farm Property. With that in mind, only one additional off-site parking lot is recommended. The Ice House Pond parking lot and the Concord Road soccer field parking lots both would be expanded to accommodate approximately 36-40 cars each.

New Recreation Field Parking: It should be noted that the parking recommendations herein and in the following two paragraphs, are strongly and unanimously opposed by the Cemetery Commission. It is the Cemetery Commission's opinion that new parking for recommended Morrison Farm Property activities should be provided on the Morrison Farm property itself. The concept of using Cemetery land for purposes other than those related to cemetery activities must take into account the concerns of the Cemetery Commissioners, cemetery plot owners, visitors, and relatives of the deceased.

Taking note of the position of the Cemetery Commissioners stated above, MFRC recommends that the parking lot being discussed in this section should be implemented only when/if the recreation field in the open hayfield is constructed. The location of this parking lot would be on the 4.5-acre restricted cemetery land that abuts the Morrison Farm (see Maps 6a and 6b). This lot would be accessed through the cemetery with an access road that is linked to the Concord Road soccer field parking lot.



Photograph 3: *Ice House Pond, fall 1996.*



Recommendations, continued

A secondary emergency entrance would connect through the Morrison Farm. This access would be used when a burial service is held in the southeastern corner of the Woodlawn Cemetery. It is estimated that there are approximately 25-30 burial services a year held at the Woodlawn Cemetery, most during the weekday when the playing field would not be in use.

Concord Road Soccer Field Parking: The current parking lot is $\frac{3}{4}$ the width of the Concord Road soccer field. The parking lot should be extended to the full width of the soccer field. This would allow an additional 10 parking spots and ease some of the on-street parking. However, on-street parking will continue due to the timing of the games on the field. Since games are held back to back there is a short window when all of the participants from the first game and all of the participants of the second game are at the field at the same time.

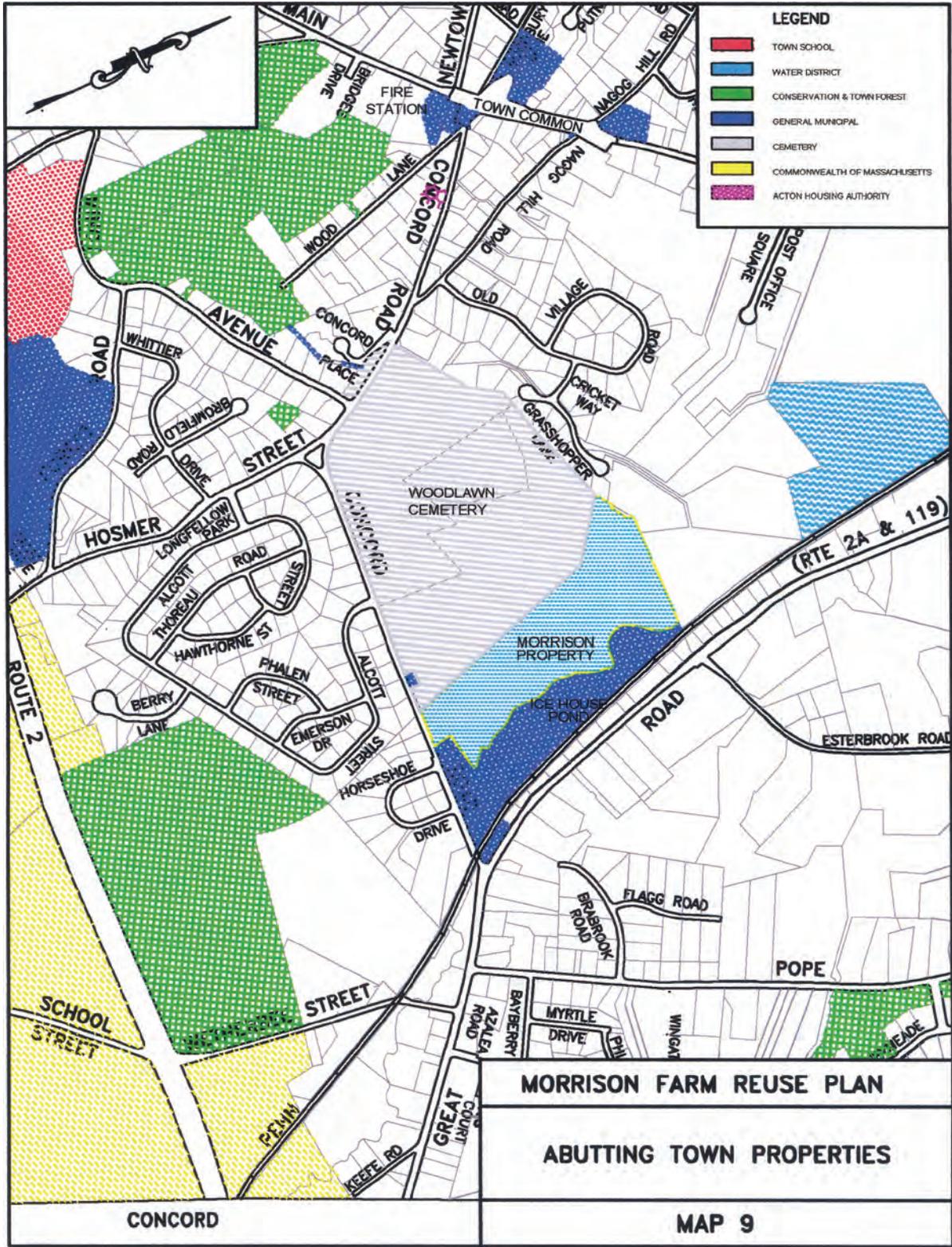
Equestrian Parking: It is recommended that a small portion of the Woodlawn Cemetery field behind the Robbins Monument be used to park horse trailers. The Committee was solicited by horse riding residents to insure that there is room to park a truck with a horse trailer. Such transportation might require several parking spots. The plan recommends that a small area immediately to the north-east of the existing Concord Road soccer field be designated for horse trailer parking. The area would be kept as grass but with a sign allowing horse trailer parking.

Farm Parking: There is currently a paved driveway and parking area between the house and barn that can accommodate 5 cars. This area would be expanded to allow for the future needs of the Community Organic Farm and barn activities. Two parking spaces would be reserved for the caretaker's residence. Two spaces would be handicapped only. Additional parking for gardeners off-loading or picking-up would be provided along the western fence of the north paddock. This area can accommodate several cars and can remain in grass as at present.

Ice House Pond Parking: There is an existing parking lot at the southwestern edge of Ice House Pond. Because the current configuration does not allow for two rows of parking, the plan recommends slightly widening and lengthening the lot to be similar in size to the Concord Road soccer field parking lot.

In order to widen the current lot, a portion of the 1932 Ice House foundation would be removed. Though the site is historic, the need for adequate parking outweighs the need to keep this historic foundation completely intact. The Committee recommends that the historic foundation area be cleaned up, and that a playground and picnic benches be installed.

A formal canoe/kayak launch is also recommended at the eastern end of the parking lot.



Conclusions

The Morrison Farm is a treasured historic site, one of few such links to Acton's agrarian past. The property has been used for agricultural purposes continually going back to 1669, when Captain Wheeler was granted the property as pastoral lands. Rarely does a town have the opportunity to continue a 337-year-old tradition. Since 1669, the only improvements have been the addition of the current depression-era farmhouse, barn, and outbuildings.

The plan calls for the preservation of 73% of the property through conservation restrictions and for approximately 13% to be reserved for active agricultural purposes. The Committee is recommending approximately 14% of the property be used for active recreation in the form of a multi-use playing field. The recreation field would have the least impact on the historic site if it requires no structures, parking lots, or major changes to grade. If in the future the town desired to reclaim the field as an open hayfield, little change would be required.

The Committee's recommendations are aimed at integrating abutting Town-owned properties, such as the EAV Green, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Woodlawn Cemetery, and the Nashoba Brook ecosystem, into the Morrison Farm design so as to create an enhanced complex for the local and other residents. The recommendations allow the town to link the historic Captain Joseph Robbins' site into the historic Morrison Farm. (See Map 9.) Retaining the existing Concord Road soccer field together with its parking lot as long as possible will also enhance the property. Utilizing the 4.5 acres of restricted cemetery land for active recreation and parking allows the town to minimize non-historic uses of the Morrison Farm land and to preserve its visual beauty.

The Community Organic Farm proposal received only strong praise whenever it was discussed, whether in the public workshop, monthly meetings, or casual conversations. The Nonprofit managing the farm will be responsible for the upkeep of all the buildings and non-conservation land. This upkeep will reduce the financial burden to the town while still maintaining the historic agricultural uses. The community barn will be used by town residents for public or private functions, and agricultural educational programs will be a strong component of the community farm's mission.

The walking/riding trails will add both a fitness component to the farm as well as a wildlife-viewing aspect. Residents can walk measured ½ mile to 2 mile trails or meander through the fields. They can walk in the woods, along a stream, a pond, or a field. Rarely does one property offer so much diversity. Picnic areas will be set up throughout the farm property, Ice House Pond, EAV Green, and Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

This area will also be an asset to the businesses in the East Acton Village Area. An anticipated crosswalk at the EAV Green will cross to the businesses on the east side of Great Road. Some businesses, such as Subway Restaurant, have already embraced the concept of an integrated activities area by putting out picnic tables to view the BFRT, Ice House Pond, and the Morrison Farm. The town should work with these businesses to encourage them to allow parking at their locations so as to provide access to all that BFRT, EAV Green, and Morrison Farm have to offer. Many who park near a business will frequent that business. Also, Powers Gallery at 144 Great Road, has granted an easement across its property to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and the anticipated reconstructed bridge that will connect to the northern portion of the Morrison Farm. (See Map 10.)

Conclusions, continued

The Committee believes that its recommendations provide a vision for an optimal, integrated, and historically and environmentally appropriate use of a remarkable town resource. We hope the town can use this vision to create a wondrous and enduring asset for generations of Acton citizens.

Next Steps

Below is a conceptual timeline that may be used by the Board of Selectmen as a guide when planning for the future. The entire project will not be implemented at one time. The time of such elements as an additional soccer field and associated parking must be balanced with the recreation and budgetary needs of the town. Many of the simpler enhancements are recommended to begin in the first year (2007). The Committee has detailed a projected timeline for the improvements. Some items, such as the Community Organic Farm, should begin immediately so the physical structures on the site are not compromised by neglect or vandalism. Other projects may wait until either the town can afford them or an advocacy group comes forward to fund and manage the process. Below is the Committee's proposed timeline:



Photograph 4: *East Acton Village*

Work plan for 2007 through 2011

Below are suggested guidelines and timelines and will only be deemed necessary by the Town.

2007

Responsible Parties

Establish a governing board for the Organic Farm Nonprofit and select a caretaker	Land Stewards with other volunteers
Apply to the Commonwealth for access to the BFRT	Recreation Department
Submit application to CPC for the EAV Green construction	EAV Organization (EAVO)
Improve existing trails	Natural Resources Department/ Land Stewardship Committee
Construct EAV Green	EAV Organization (EAVO)
Plan construction of wooden causeway bridge and boardwalks	Natural Resources Department
Expand the parking behind farmhouse	Municipal Properties Department
Keep hayfields cut – year one	Municipal Properties Department
Plan/begin renovations of farmhouse, sheds, paddock fences	Land Stewards/volunteers/town
Begin planning for barn reuse and renovations	Land Stewards/Farm Nonprofit

2008

Establish community garden sites (or possibly in 2007)	Farm Nonprofit
Plant farm crops	Farm Nonprofit
Begin animal selection	Farm Nonprofit
Assume maintenance of haying fields	Farm Nonprofit
Finalize barn reuse plan	Farm Nonprofit
Apply for CPC funds for barn renovations	Farm Nonprofit
Construct wooden causeway bridge over Nashoba Brook and boardwalks in the lower meadows	Natural Resource Department/Boy Scouts

2008, continued

Responsible Parties

Establish trail on BFRT between Concord Road and wooden causeway bridge.	Natural Resource Dept/Friends of the BFRT
Finalize .5-mile through 2 mile walking trails	Recreation Department
Expand Concord Road soccer field parking lot	Municipal Properties Department
Expand Ice House Pond parking lot	Municipal Properties Department
Establish a Playground Fundraising Committee	Board of Selectmen

2009

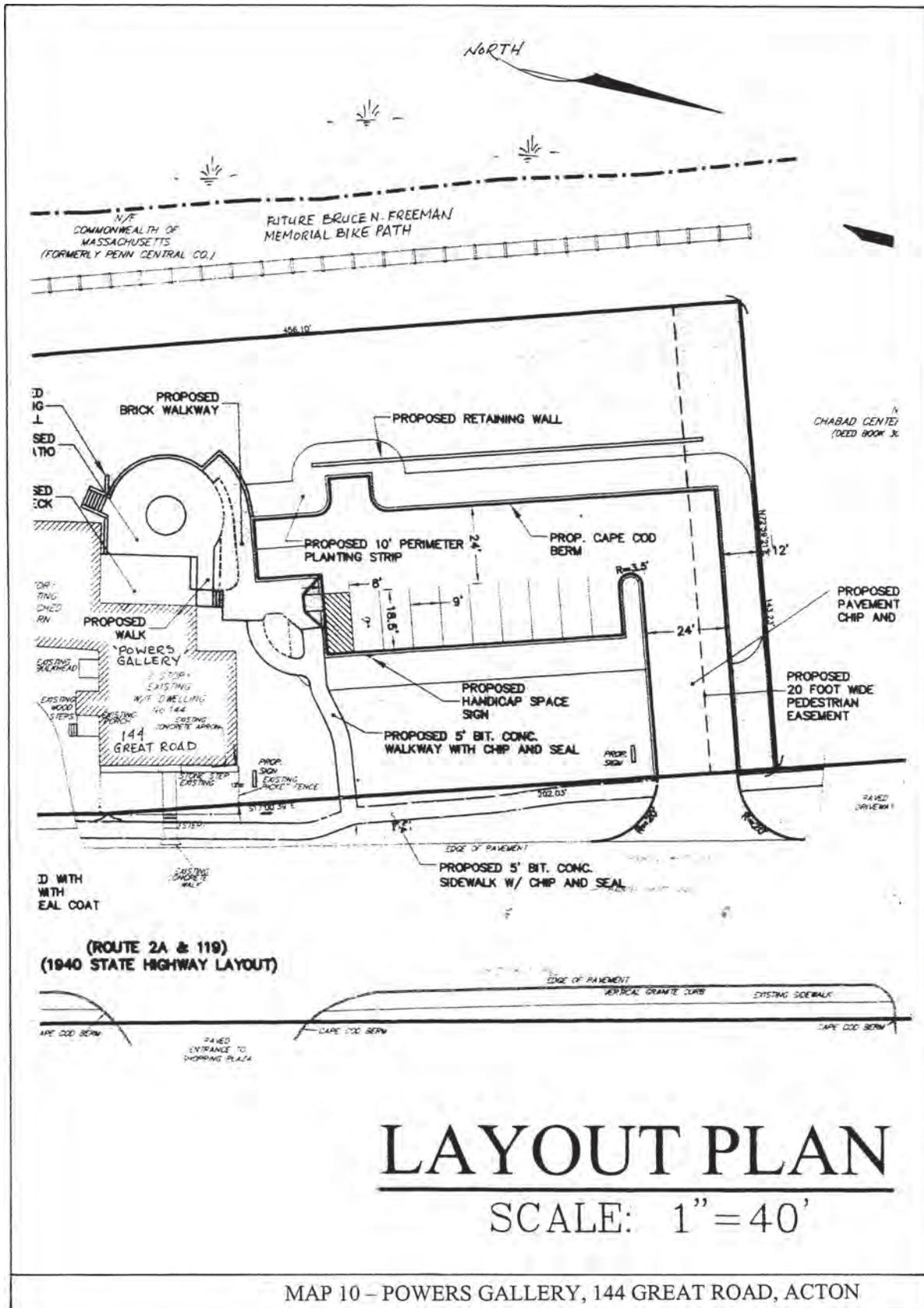
Begin barn reuse renovations	Farm Nonprofit / Municipal Properties Department
Planning for soccer field and parking lot	Recreation Department
Apply for CPC funds for soccer field and parking lot	Recreation Department

2010

Apply for CPC funds for playground	Playground Fundraising Committee
Construct soccer field and parking lot	Recreation Department/ Municipal Properties Department
Begin construction of BFRT	Municipal Properties Department/ Friends of the BFRT

2011

Finish construction of BFRT	Municipal Properties Department/ Friends of the BFRT
Construct playground	Recreation Department/ Playground Fundraising Committee



Appendix 1: Historic inventory

FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets

USGS Quad

Area Letter

Form Numbers in Area

F-4/34
G-4/27

Maynard

0

657-660
923-928

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town Acton

Place (neighborhood or village) _____

Photograph



East Acton

Part of Area Forbes-Morrison Farm

Present Use recreational
(municipal)

Construction Dates or Period 18th-20th Cent

Overall Condition fair

Intrusions and Alterations _____

Size 49.5 acres

Prepared by Arthur Krim

Organization Acton Hist. Commission

Date (month/year) March 2006

ii. Circle and number properties for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Attach a continuation sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.

see attached map

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

AREA FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION *see continuation sheet*

Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE *see continuation sheet*

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this area relates to the historical development of the community.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES *see continuation sheet*

Recommended as a National Register District. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

7/92

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

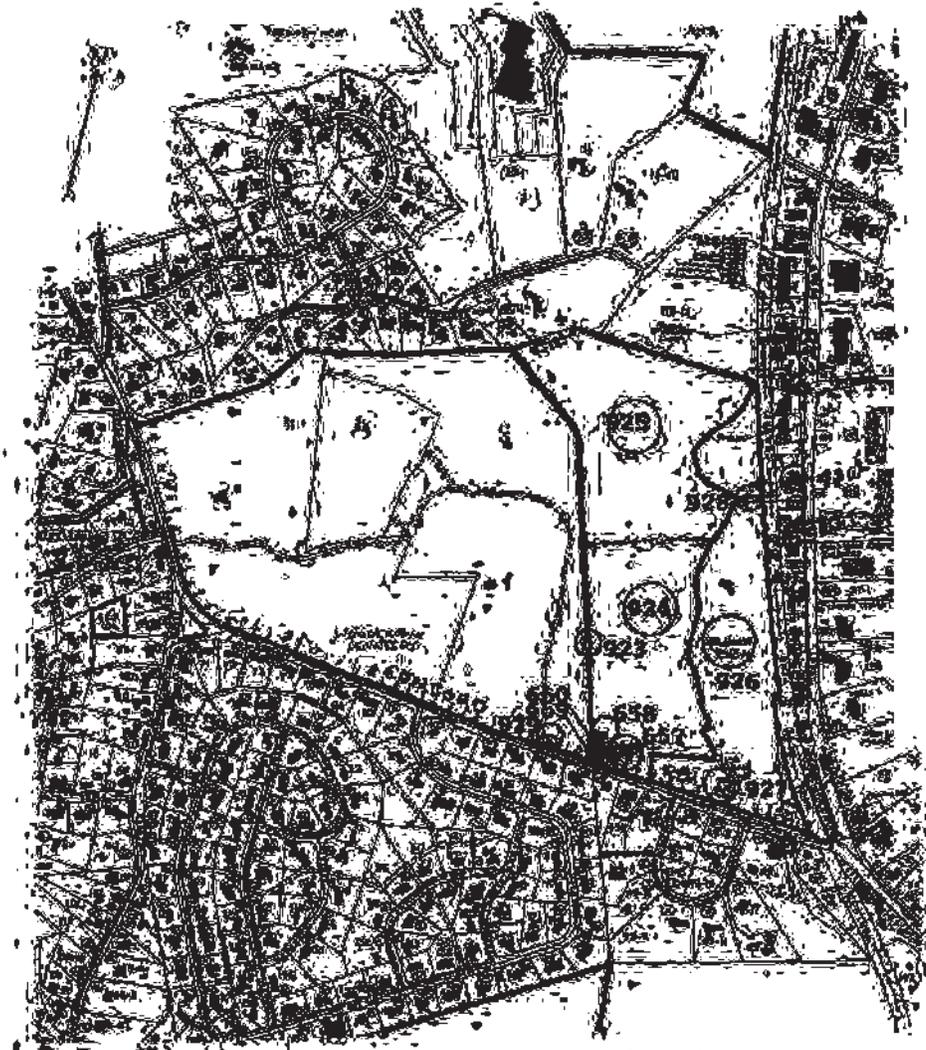
Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Montserrat Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02129

Acton, 115-175 Concord Rd.

Sheet	Volume
10	257-560
	573-628

Location Map



Acton, Massachusetts Maps 7-4, 8-4

1/28

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

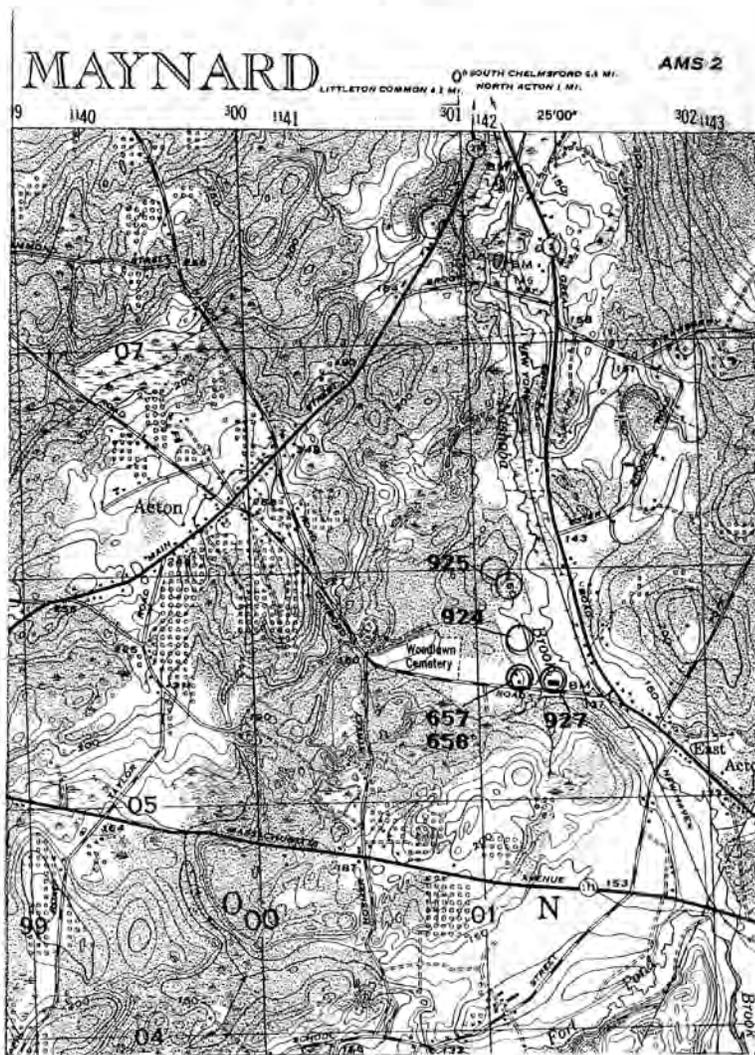
INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town Acton Property Address 116-128 Concord Rd.

Area(s)	Form No.
0	657-660 923-928

ARCHIVE MAP



AMS. Maynard Quadrangle. 1943

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Inventory Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Robins Dairy Farm

Scale	Scale No.
0	001-500
	501-999

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The former Robins Dairy Farm is comprised of the former Robins Dairy Farm at 116 Concord Road of 12.7 acres of alluvial glacial silt on a level plain of Washob Brook, including 15.5 acres of pasture land (ACT 924) and 16 acres of woodland (ACT 925), now owned by the Town of Acton, with an additional 17 acres of wetland along Washob Brook of Ice House Pond at 120-122 Concord Road (ACT 926), also owned by the Town of Acton. The area contains several buildings and other structures related to the original dairy farm and ice business formerly operated on the site. The oldest surviving structure is the sidewalk (ACT 926) over Washob Brook at the upper (north) end of Ice House Pond, just behind the John Robins House at 121 Great Road (ACT 91). The sidewalk was apparently constructed during the early 19th century, likely after the Robins House was built in 1798-1800, and before the Framingham & Lowell Railroad (then Central, abandoned) was built in 1871. The masonry consists of an earthen roadway lined with stone walls on both the east and west side of Washob Brook, with a gap at the brook where a wooden bridge was formerly located (now raised). A 20th century structure is also evident in the west shore of Ice House Pond at 120-122 Concord Road. The concrete foundation of a former ice house (ACT 927), apparently built in 1928-1932, located on the site of an earlier wood framed ice house shown on the 1875 and 1899 Atlases. The present foundation is aligned to Concord Road with a poured concrete wall approximately 100 feet in length and the remains of a curved concrete wall overlooking the House Pond, apparently part of the original structure. The ice house remained active until ca. 1935 when it was abandoned after hurricane damage (Kramer, 2004). The original mill dam for Ice House Pond was formed by the location of Concord Road, established in 1795, with reconstruction as a granite embankment and driveway in the mid-19th century (Kramer 2001:22). Recently rebuilt as a concrete culvert in 1995 by the town (Tuck, 2005). The original driveway is located at 123 Concord Road at the site of the saw mill established in ca. 1870 by Capt. Wheeler (now surveyed).

The former Robins Farm at 116 Concord Road consists of a former dairy farm with the former Robins House (ACT 657), barn (ACT 658), auto garage (ACT 659), tool house (ACT 660),

(continued)

1175

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Address: 116-128 Concord Rd.

Sheet	Comments
11	627-630 625-628

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

and other outlying structures. These were apparently built by the Concord Ice Company for Edward Forbes in 1882-1883. They were standard plans by an unknown architect. The Forbes-Morrison House (ACT 577) follows a side hall plan of two stories with a gable end roof and eight side sun rooms, set on a concrete foundation. The design is a plain-functional Colonial Revival-Craftsman style with original details. As seen is the flared belt course and the portico electric lamp. Other details include the paired windows on the facade and the geometric brick fireplace in the main parlor room. The wood shingle siding and separate veranda of the portico entrance are original to the design. The barn (ACT 668) is a substantial wood framed building, set on a concrete foundation, with a gable end roof. The barn has two central all-wood doors on both north and south side facing a central passage with a smaller door on the right facade, reportedly for the oxen used in the ice harvest on Ice House Pond (ACT 826) by the Concord Ice Company (Whittier 2006), with the interior apparently intact, remodeled for later use as a horse stable. The design is similar to the main house with shingle siding and small paired window windows on both the north and south sides. The milk house (ACT 650) is a single bay plan with gable ends and shingle siding, with original hinged doors in Dutch style. In adjacent hen house (ACT 660) is built of clapboard on a earth foundation, and a rear chicken coop is of plain, functional construction (not surveyed). Other related structures include wood handling near the main house and barn that likely date to the horse era, erected after 1954 when the farm was purchased by John Morrison (not surveyed).

The Forbes-Morrison farm is bounded by a stone wall (ACT 823) on the west side with Woodlawn Cemetery, and on the north side, with a division wall between the open pasture and the woodland. These are of rough stone boulder construction in the traditional style, and likely date to the mid-18th century Joseph Robbins farm (see ACT 828) of ca. 1750. The original Robbins farm occupied part of the Capt. Wheeler grant of 1669 for pasture grazing, and it is possible that some of the walls might predate the Robbins farm development. At present, the open pasture land (ACT 824) has been actively maintained since the mid-20th century, and might have been possibly part of the original Wheeler grant pasture. The north section of the

(continued)

629

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Massachusetts Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Town: Concord Parcel Address: 116-120 Concord Rd.

Parcel No.	Town No.
116-120	000

STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION

George Morrison Farm is woodland (ACT 925), not primarily second-growth white pine forest since before World War II. A former quarry site is also located within the woodland area. Inventory of 19th century data (Trinick 2005).

The George Morrison Farm Area comprises one of the last intact surviving farmsteads in Acton with original buildings dating to the mid-20th century, including a farm house dairy barn garage. The Dairy House Pond area contains several structures of note, including an early 19th century residence behind 1st Great Road (ACT 41) and a mid-20th century ice house foundation at 116-120 Concord Road. The farm land is composed of 32.5 acres of pasture and woodland that have remained intact from farmland dating to the mid-18th century, defined by surviving stone walls. Moreover, the present open pasture possibly dates from the Wheeler grant of the late 17th century, a remarkable continuity of agricultural landscape in the Boston area.

1125

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MOUNTAIN ROAD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Topic: Robbins Farms
 Accession: 115-128 Concord Rd.

Accession	157-660
Box	22-228

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Forbes-Morrison Farm area consists of 22.6 acres of former the Forbes-Morrison Farm at 116 Concord Road (ACT 924-925) with buildings dated to 1912-1935 (ACT 657-660) by deeds and local histories, and 17 acres of wetland along Nashoba Brook forming the House Pond at 120-124 Concord Road (ACT 926) with earlier structures dated to the 18th and 20th centuries (ACT 927-928) by deeds, maps and photographs. Both properties are now owned by the Town of Acton, acquired in 1997 and 1998 respectively. The area was originally part of the Captain Thomas Wheeler grant of 1669 for 200 acres of cattle grazing land west of Nashoba Brook (Wheeler 1690:211). Reconstruction of the Wheeler grant on modern maps indicates that a section of the original grazing land includes the section for the present Forbes-Morrison Farm (Shore 1994), comprising the present open pasture land at 116 Concord Road. The area was then included as part of the William Robbins Farm after the death of Capt. Wheeler in 1678, and later inherited by Joseph Robbins as his farm at 116 Concord Road (see ACT 929) established in ca. 1750 (Bylander ca. 1980). The Robbins farm was inherited by John Robbins before 1800 and portions of the property, including the parcel at 116 Concord Road, inherited by Abner Robbins from George W. Robbins after 1836 (Bylander ca. 1980). It is likely that the surviving stone wall (ACT 925) on the west boundary of the Forbes-Morrison Farm at Woodlawn Cemetery is possibly dated to the mid-18th century Joseph Robbins Farm including the surviving stone wall dividing the present pasture land from the rear (fourth) pastured area. The 1830 Atlas Map shows the Robbins Farm area as open land, including the present Forbes-Morrison Farm, both pasture (ACT 924) and rear woodland (ACT 925). After 1836 the Robbins Farm was abandoned when George W. Robbins moved to Lowell (Bylander ca. 1980). The present area of the Forbes-Morrison Farm was apparently included within the John Robbins Farm at 114 Great Road (ACT 41) after 1836. It is likely that the surviving gateway over Nashoba Brook (ACT 928) to the rear of the John Robbins House (ACT 41) was constructed during the early 19th century to connect the two Robbins farms, although no indication is given on the 1830 Atlas or the 1850 Selling Map of the gateway location. The farm land at 116 Concord Road was subsequently included with

(Continued)

1/95

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Date

Project Address

Section 115-125 Concord, MA

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Project	Section 115-125
Parcel	657-660 699, 928

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Robbin's estate in 1892 as part of the "100-acre west of Washob Brook" in the sale to his wife, Mary Robbin (Middlesex 315-125). Thereafter the present parcel was transferred from Mary Robbin to Amelia Robbin in 1898 and to Bernard Morath and Thomas Morath in 1928 as the 100-acre parcel. In 1929 this parcel was sold to the Concord Ice Company (Middlesex 514-17), established in 1921 by John E. Forbes and William Grace, employees of the Boston Ice Company. In 1932, the portion west of Ice House Pond was sold to Edward J. Forbes, brother of John Forbes, with his wife Anna (Middlesex 565-201), including the present Forbes-Harrison Farm at 116 Concord Road. Edward Forbes is first listed in the Acton Tax valuation in 1933, thus dating construction of the house (ACT 557), and likely the barn (ACT 558), garage (ACT 559) and hen house (ACT 560) to 1932-1933 as unique Depression period farm buildings in Acton. The Farm was apparently used in conjunction with the Concord Ice Company ice harvest operations on Ice House Pond (ACT 926), with open stables in the barn (ACT 558) and related grazing pasture (ACT 924) (Waltier 2005).

The land use of the Forbes-Harrison Farm can be reconstructed from 1886 topographic maps of the Harvard Quadrangle for 1840-1843 that show the present pasture land (ACT 924) was open land in 1841, while the rear woodland (ACT 925) was forested in 1841 at the start of World War II. This confirms the field survey by Tiquan (2005) that reports the present white pine forest dates to ca. 1830 as a second growth woodland. The Forbes Farm was sold in 1882 to John B. Parton of Waltham and purchased in 1894 by John C. Harrison with 16 acres of pasture, 16 acres of woodland, and a half-acre for the house and barn. The property was converted for use as a horse farm after 1924 and was maintained until 1988, sold to the son, John E. Harrison in 1978. In 1997 the Forbes-Harrison Farm was acquired by the Town of Acton as municipal property.

The Ice House Pond (ACT 926) area of 17 acres along Washob Brook has been used for saw mill and iron forge water power since a mill dam established in ca. 1750 at the site of present 127 Concord Road (not surveyed), outside the town municipal property area. The earliest detailed map of the area, the 1794 Town Map, shows Washob Brook as a dotted

(continued)

1195

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MEMORIAL HOUSEWAY
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Object ID: 116-128 Concord, MA

Accession No.	Item No.
0	657-860 023-026

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE FOR

Site, with the saw mill south of Concord Road (127 Concord Road), without indicating a mill pond. Likewise, the 1850 Bates Map also shows Nashoba Brook as a flowing stream without a mill pond indicated. The earliest map to show the present Ice House Pond is the 1888 Walling Map, suggesting the present pond was formed sometime after 1830, possibly in relationship to the Nathaniel Mill at 34 Great Road (Bureau Oil Co., not surveyed). The Ice House Pond (AON 926) has been a semi-permanent feature, reportedly drained periodically, the most recent in 1995 (Fact 2005). The earliest ice house is shown on the 1875 Beers Atlas of East Boston Village, on the north side of Concord Road, and again on the 1889 Walker Atlas, near the present foundation of the Concord Ice Company Ice House (AON 927). This ice house also appears on the 1889 Walker Atlas and in late 19th century photographs (Klauser 2001, 27). The present ice house foundation (AON 927) was apparently built after 1929 with the purchase of the Abbridge Robbins property by the Concord Ice Company, and likely completed in 1932 with the sale of the pasture and meadow to Edward Forbes for the Forbes-Morrison Farm (see above). The ice house is shown clearly on the 1950 Hayward Quadrangle, and was active until the hurricane season of 1954-1955 (Klauser 2004).

The Forbes-Morrison Farm area is of significant historic value as a surviving remnant of open pasture land from the 17th century Cpt. Wheeler Grant and a rare intact 20th century farmstead within Astor. Including the 19th century Ice House Pond wetland along Nashoba Brook and surviving 18th century stone walls of the earlier Robbins Farm. The Forbes-Morrison Farm at 116 Concord Road includes a unique collection of Depression era farm buildings from the 1930s, while the Ice House Pond includes remains of a modern 1930s ice house that functioned until the 1950s, as well as an early 19th century causeway over Nashoba Brook behind the John Robbins House at 104 Great Road. As an ensemble, these features preserve an agricultural landscape that has been in continuous use since the early colonial period of the Cpt. Wheeler Grant in 1669.

116

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET Town: Acton County: Middlesex

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Accession #: 111-124-050000-04

Map #: 15

Sheet #: 657-658

AREA DATA SHEET
FORBES-MORRISON FARM
ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

APR#	ADDRESS	NAME	DATE
657	116 Concord Rd.	Forbes-Morrison Barn	1932-33
658	116 Concord Rd.	Forbes-Morrison Barn	1932-33
659	116 Concord Rd.	Forbes-Morrison Garage	32-33
660	116 Concord Rd.	Forbes-Morrison Barn	32-33
923	116 Concord Rd.	stone wall	18th C.
924	116 Concord Rd.	pasture land	17th C.
925	116 Concord Rd.	woodland	18th C.
926	120-124 Concord Rd.	Ice House Pond	19th C.
927	120-124 Concord Rd.	Ice House foundation	19th C.
928	14 Great Rd. near	Nashoba Brook gateway	19th C.

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Property Address

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Acton 126-128 Concord St.

Serial	Form No.
6	873-588

bibliography

Acton Town Tax Valuations, Acton, by the town, 1932-1934.
 Army Map Service, Harvard Quadrangle (1:25,000) Washington: 1938, 1945.
 Acton Tax Valuations, Acton, by the town, 1932-1934.
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Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Property Address

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Acton 116-128 Concord Rd.

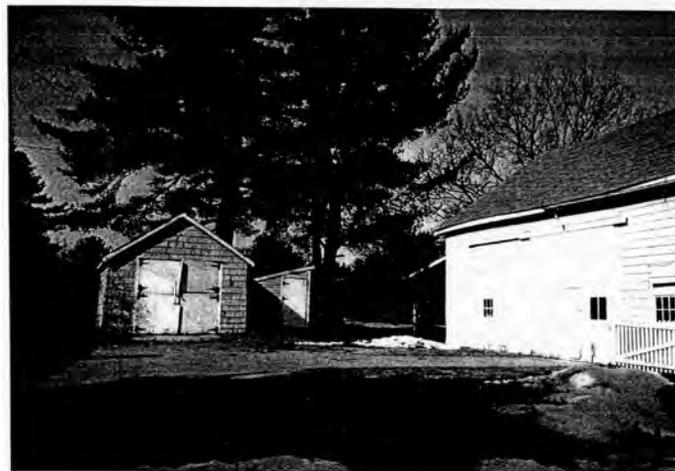
Area(s)	Form No.
0	657- 660 923-928



Forbes-Morrison House
 6 Concord Road
 T.657



Forbes-Morrison Barn
 6 Concord Road
 T.658



Forbes-Morrison Farm
 6 Concord Road
 Garage ACT.659
 Men House ACT.660

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET Town

Property Address

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Acton 1116-128 Concord Rd.

Area(s)	Form No.
0	657-660 923-928



Forbes Morrison Farm
 116 Concord Road
 Stone Wall ACT.923
 West Boundary



Ice House Pond
 120-128 Concord Rd.
 Causeway ACT.928
 (144 Great Road Rear)
 (ACT.41)



Ice House Pond
 120-128 Concord Rd
 Causeway ACT.928
 (144 Great Road Rear)
 (ACT.41)

Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Town: Acton Property Address: 116-128 Concord Rd.

County: Middlesex File No: 87-588

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible historic site or building
- Contributing to a historic district District historic district

Criteria: A B C D

Other Considerations: A B C D E F

Statement of significance by Arthur Klein
 The criteria checklist checked in the above section may be justified here.

The Forbes-Harrison Farm Area is composed of two parcels, including the Forbes-Harrison Farm at 116 Concord Road of 32.5 acres and the Ice House Pond at 129-128 Concord Road, along Nashoba Brook of 17 acres, both acquired by the Town of Acton in 1987 and 1988 respectively. The Forbes-Harrison Farm reached its peak as a mid-19th century farmstead established during the Great Depression by Edward Forbes, and later owned by John Harrison after 1934. The property includes the original 1882-1934 barn house and barn, with 18th century stone walls bounding the pasture and woodland, that comprise the grazing land of the 17th century Captain Thomas Wheeler Grant of 1669. The Ice House Pond contains the partial structures of a 20th century ice house, built in 1922-1923 by the Concord Ice Company, and a 19th century causeway over Nashoba Brook behind the John Popple House at 144 Great Road. The Ice Pond was created sometime after 1830 and before 1855 for commercial ice harvesting, that continued until ca. 1925. The Forbes-Harrison Farm Area is recommended for National Register consideration under Criteria A for its association with the early history of Acton and Concord, and Criteria C for its historic agricultural landscape, intact since the 17th century, and the well-preserved Depression period farmstead or house, barn and out buildings.

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Appendix 1: Historic inventory, continued

Massachusetts Historical Commission
 Massachusetts Archives Building
 220 Morrissey Boulevard
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Town: _____
 County: _____
 Address: _____
 Parcel: _____
 Date: _____

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually significant in the history of the United States
- Contributing to the general historic character of the area
- Associated with the lives of persons significant in our history
- Associated with historic events or activities
- A fine example of the architecture, art, or handicraft of a particular period, style, or method of construction
- A fine example of the work of a master craftsman
- A fine example of the work of a particular architect, artist, or craftsman
- A fine example of the work of a particular architect, artist, or craftsman

Criteria: A B C D

Criteria Consideration: A B C D E F G

Statement of Significance by Arthur Eric

The criteria that are checked in the above section must be justified here:

The Forbes-Harrison Farm Area is composed of two parcels, including the Forbes-Harrison Farm at 136 Concord Road of 22.5 acres and the Ice House Farm at 128-129 Concord Road along Nashua Brook of 17 acres, both acquired by the Town of Acton in 1987 and 1988 respectively. The Forbes-Harrison Farm contains intact as a mid-20th century farmstead established during the Great Depression by Edward Fiches, and later owned by John Merrifield after 1954. The property includes the original 1932-1933 farm house and barn with 18th century stone walls bounding the pasture and roadways that comprise the growing land of the 17th century Captain Thomas Wheelwright Grant of 1559. The Ice House Farm contains the relic structure of a 20th century ice house, built in 1929-1932 by the Concord Ice Company, and a 19th century driveway over Nashua Brook behind the John Robbins house at 144 Great Road. The Ice Farm was created sometime after 1880 and before 1936 for commercial ice harvesting, that continued until ca. 1937. The Forbes-Harrison Farm Area is recommended for National Register consideration under Criteria A for its association with the early history of Acton and Concord, and Criteria C for its historical agricultural landscape, intact since the 17th century, and the well-preserved Depression period farmstead of house, barn and out buildings.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards

Acton Board of Selectmen

Morrison Farm Master Plan

Background:

The Morrison Farm property on Concord Road was listed as the highest priority for Town acquisition in both the Town's Master Plan and the Open Space and Recreation Plan. In late 1996, the property became available for purchase by the Town through its 61A "first right of refusal" option. At the 1997 Annual Town Meeting (and capital override ballot vote), Acton voters appropriated \$1.3 million to purchase the 32.56 acre Morrison Farm. In addition to purchasing the property, Town Meeting also zoned the Morrison Farm land parcel for "General Municipal", which could include a variety of municipal uses.

A planning effort preceded the 1997 Annual Town Meeting to determine what types of uses could be feasible on the Morrison property. A conceptual use plan was prepared and showed that the property could support at least 2 playing fields in the upper meadow area immediately behind the barn, and that it could support necessary parking on the site. During Town Meeting, proponents for the purchase of the Morrison property noted that due to the unique features of the parcel, the property could support a variety of uses, especially recreational activities. In addition, the East Acton Village Plan (January, 2004) urged that playgrounds be considered as an additional use for the property.

Although the property was purchased in 1997, Mrs. Morrison retained the right, through a life estate, to continue to live in the farmhouse. In 2003, Mrs. Morrison vacated the farmhouse and it then came under the control of the Board of Selectmen. Since that time, citizens have begun to use the property for walking, hiking, horse riding, bird watching and plant and wildlife observation. A number of citizens have come forward advocating for the construction of badly needed playing fields, while other citizens have advocated for complete preservation of the property.

Rather than initiate a process to appropriate funds to develop some of the property, the Board of Selectmen has decided to appoint an advisory committee of representatives of various constituencies interested in the future uses and/or preservation of the Morrison Farm property.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Morrison Farm Master Plan
Page 2.

This advisory committee will have the principal mission to develop a Master Plan for Morrison Farm according to the intent of the purchase of the property at the 1997 Annual Town Meeting and according to the following goals set forth by the Board of Selectmen:

Selectmen Goals for Morrison Farm:

1. Provide for active recreation/play space (1 or 2 soccer/play fields, preferably in the upper field area behind the barn).
2. Maintain the existing system of walking trails and construct a trail connection to the future Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and to East Acton Village.
3. Preserve the lower meadows, areas bordering Ice House Pond, woodland areas and other environmentally sensitive areas on the Morrison property.
4. Preserve the characteristics of the Morrison Farm and the views looking at the property from Concord Road.
5. Provide space for equestrian activities such as trail riding.
6. Provide for Community Garden space.
7. Provide space for a playground.
8. Determine the future use of the farmhouse, barn and any other out buildings.
9. Prioritize any development plans and include cost estimates and general construction timelines.

The Board of Selectmen has been granted CPA funds for the purposes of engaging a Land Use consultant to assist the Morrison Farm Master Plan advisory committee, Town Staff and the Board of Selectmen to develop the Morrison Farm Master Plan.

The specific mission of the Morrison Farm Master Planning Committee is to:

1. Prepare an RFP and select a Land Use Consultant to assist in the preparation of a Master Plan.
2. Review all available information and data available about the Morrison parcel and update the information as appropriate for reference during the development of the Master Plan.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Morrison Farm Master Plan
Page 3.

3. Prepare a comprehensive Morrison Farm Master Plan that is:
 - a. Consistent with the vote of the 1997 Annual Town Meeting;
 - b. Achieves the goals of the Acton Board of Selectmen, to the extent feasible;
 - c. Leverages the unique features of the property for the benefit of future generations.

The Morrison Farm Master Planning Committee will consist of 10 representatives of the following Boards, Commissions, and citizen interest groups:

2 Selectmen (co-chairs of the committee)
1 Recreation Commission member
1 Youth/Adult Recreation league(s) representative
1 Cemetery Commission member
1 Conservation Commission member
1 Acton Conservation Trust member
1 East Acton Village Committee member
1 Abutter
1 At-large representative

The Committee will meet on a regular basis and meetings will be open to the public. As such, any interested citizen may attend committee meetings. The Committee will keep minutes of the meetings and once approved by the committee, these minutes will be forwarded to the Town Clerk for filing and public inspection. The Committee will have primary staff support from Tom Tidman, Director of Natural Resources for the Town of Acton. Additional staff support will be provided, if necessary, under the direction of the Town Manager.

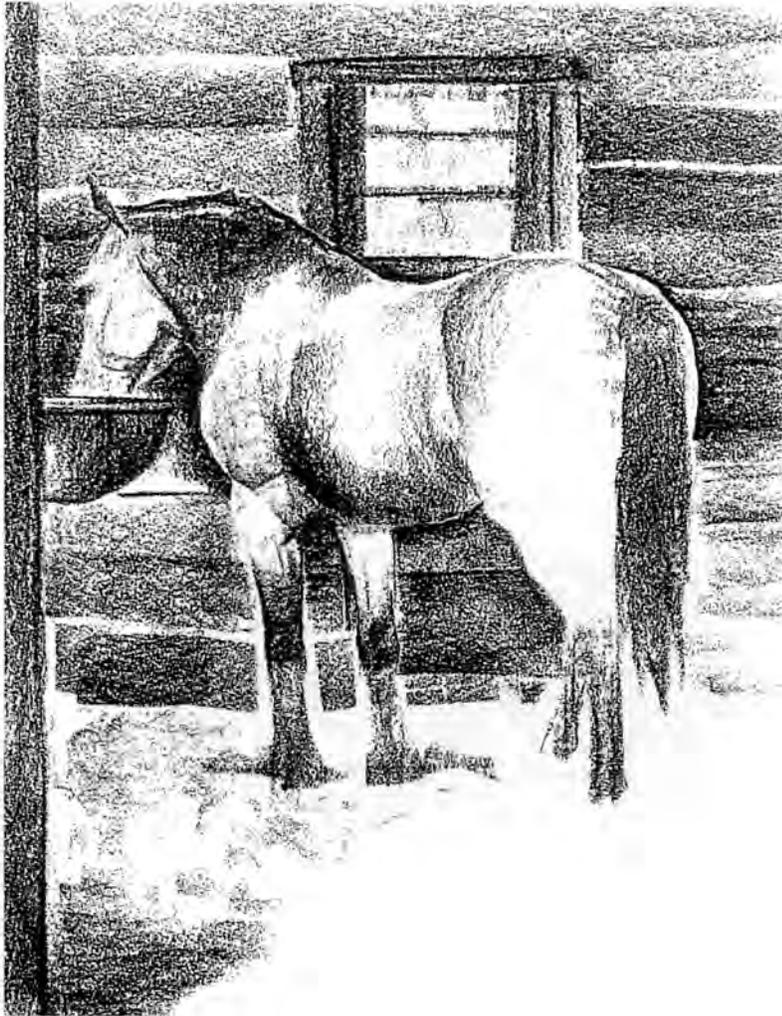
As with previous planning efforts, it is anticipated that the Committee will seek out broad citizen input and recommendations through public forums, site tours and newspaper articles. Additionally, the committee co-chairs will update Board members (and the public) about the committee's progress, at Selectmen meetings.

It is anticipated that the Master Plan can be completed within ten (10) to twelve (12) months and upon its completion, the plan will be submitted to the Acton Board of Selectmen for adoption.

It is emphasized that implementation of any of the recommendations of the Morrison Farm Master Plan must be prioritized with other municipal needs, priorities and available financial resources.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

THE MORRISON FARM; A SHORT HISTORY



"The Rock" -- one of Betty Morrison's school horses

G Hopkins - 1964

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

THE MORRISON FARM; A SHORT HISTORY

The story of the Morrison land, its English history anyway, is actually the story of a larger piece of land surrounding that which was to become Morrison.

In 1635, this larger property, which would total 260 acres, was part of the Incorporation of Concord.

In 1642, Concord's Captain Thomas Wheeler and several companions petitioned the Bay Colony General Court for a new grant which would include 200 acres of upland and 60 acres of meadow just west of Nashoba Brook. This land was to be used for pasturing 80 to 120 head of dry cows under a contract of protection by the Captain. It took decades, but finally, the Wheeler Lease was approved, and Wheeler was herdsman, as sworn, for the next 6 years. He built himself one of the first dwelling houses in the area just south of Concord Road. (A state historical marker places the site on Alcott Street across and in from Woodlawn Cemetery.)

Captain Wheeler also built a dam and grist mill on Nashoba Brook [where the current Dam House stands at 127 Concord Road].

This mill was to see a series of owners and uses, but at some point, it was converted to an iron works where nails, hinges and latches were forged for local use. Its final refitting was as either a grist mill or sawmill, which was operated by Daniel Wetherbee from the 1840s.

In 1666 - a new Massachusetts grant renamed the Wheeler Lease 'Concord Village'.

In 1675, at the start of the Indian Wars, Captain Wheeler was caught in a Nipmuck ambush at Brookfield and gravely wounded; he died of his injuries the following year.

1700s:

The town of Acton was incorporated in 1735

Much of the Wheeler Lease (the Morrison land within) was taken over by Nathan Robbins upon Captain Wheeler's demise. In 1736, Robbins sold a parcel off to the town for the new east burying ground (established a year later as East Cemetery; now Woodlawn).

(Thirty-three years later, Robbins' son, Joseph, sold more land off for cemetery use -- and in 1812, Joseph Robbins' son, John sold a third section for the same purpose.)

In the mid-1700s, meadow lots were divided off and farming became the primary activity in the area.

[Cannot find the date], Nathan Robbins' son, Joseph, built a two-story dwelling house-with-ell over the cellarhole that lies just north of the Morrison house; some of the structural timbers used came from the earlier Thomas Wheeler dwelling.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued



An early bridge, the millpond, and a much smaller icehouse are noteworthy in this c. 1880 image. The bridge was later replaced with granite, and, more recently, a new bridge has been installed.



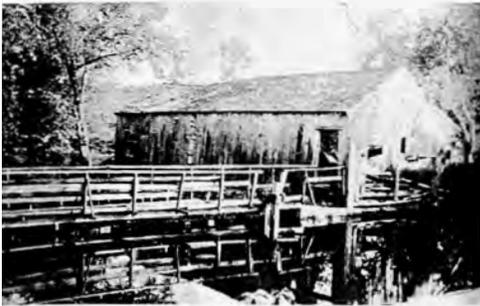
The train depot in East Acton was probably built c. 1872 when the railroad went through.

What is now the Morrison hayfield is seen beyond the Pond to the right of the depot

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued



Daniel Wetherbee's Saw Mill stood on the dam at 119 Concord Road. An early mill owned by John Robbins was on this site, and this may be the actual mill. Nelson Tenney replaced the mill with a hydroelectric generating plant c. 1907.



On one side of Concord Road at Great Road was a saw mill active from 1788 to 1890. On the other side, ice was cut from the 1870's to the 1950's. (AHS.)



Before the ice was cut, these 19th century Actonians had a skating party. (Glass negative, AHS.)

The Morrison land lies behind the skaters and to the left of the ice cutters.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

"...that rude bridge"

Joseph Robbins had earned promotion to captain in the Acton Militia -- and in the predawn hours of April 19, 1775, he was brought the town's first alarm. Dr. Samuel Prescott galloped up, pounded on the house and bellowed "The Regulars are coming! The Regulars are coming!" Roused, Robbins fired three shots into the air as quickly as he could reload, signaling surrounding militia to report immediately for duty. Robbins' 13 year-old son, John, saddled his father's mare and raced off to spread word to Captain Isaac Davis and Deacon Simon Hunt, who led their companies that morning to Concord and their places in history.

In 1830, the Joseph Robbins barn was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. The house stood empty for many years until finally, it, too, was set ablaze. The remaining cellarhole is honored by a large, inscribed boulder.

By the mid-1850s, farming had become vital to Acton. The town's impressive array of agricultural products included Indian corn, oats, rye, barley, millet, wheat, hops, hay, potatoes, beans, field vegetables, apples and even cranberries. After the Civil War, new peach orchards were laid out, and peaches, apples, cidar and vinegar became important sources of income.

Ice House Pond and the Morrison place

In 1886, Theophilus Mason founded the Mason Ice Company and winter-harvested the Nashoba Brook millpond for the next 35 years; he may have given the pond its name.

In 1921, John Forbes and William Grace purchased Mason's business, ice house and pond, renaming the firm the Concord Ice Company. They cut, stored and sold ice for another 26 years.

In 1932, John Forbe's brother, Edward L. and his wife Anna moved into what is now the Morrison house. It's likely that brother John split the property off from the pond acreage for the couple's personal use. Edward worked for his brother in the nearby ice house; he had the critical task of 'placing' or stacking the 350-to-400 pound ice bars for storage with insulating layers of hay between.

In 1947, Everett Dillman bought the company in turn (keeping its name) with pond and ice house, and he operated the firm until 1979. His timing could not have been worse. In 1945, two years before his new venture, U.S. manufacturers turned from their previous war-footing to manufacturing consumer items, and new refrigerators steadily replaced ice boxes.

Dillman finally gave up and in 1980, sold the 7-acre pond and 1.5 acres of land to the town.

Remarkably, the Concord Ice Company still operates at 255 Walden Street, Concord.

In 1954, the Edward L. Forbes house, barn and land was bought by John Morrison of Morrison Orchards in Littleton; he purchased the property for his former wife, Elizabeth. She, Betty, ran a small riding stable on the site for the next 35 years, teaching horsemanship and a love of animals to generations of local children.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Recreation at Morrison Farm

Background

Current Situation

Conclusion / Recommendations



*Acton Recreation Commission presentation to the
Morrison Farm Master Planning Committee 05/03/05*

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Background

- 1997 Morrison acquisition focused on recreation
 - Defined as General Municipal Property
 - Open areas as ball fields
 - Trails in forested Areas
- Acton 2000 population: 20,331 (Federal Census)
- Open Space & Recreation Plan: 2002-2007
- 2002: 63 acres of active recreation fields (3.1 acres/1,000 residents)
- National Recreation and Park Association recommends 10.5 acres/1,000 residents



*Acton Recreation Commission presentation to the
Morrison Farm Master Planning Committee 05/03/05*

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Current Situation

- Large users (youth soccer, baseball, football) all have registration limits due to lack of fields
- Smaller users (softball, lacrosse) growing at 10%+/year
- No ability to “rest” fields
- By end of 2005: 81 acres of active rec available
 - 20 acres coming online soon
 - School Street (14 acres)
 - Leary Field (6 acre-equivalent)
 - Losing 2 acres (Concord Road / cemetery land)
- 2005 Population: 19,865 (Town of Acton)
- 4.1 acres/1,000 residents



*Acton Recreation Commission presentation to the
Morrison Farm Master Planning Committee 05/03/05*

Conclusion / Recommendations

- Original acquisition of Morrison targeted its use for active and passive recreation
- Still a large unmet need for recreation space
 - We cannot meet current interest
 - We cannot preserve our fields by “resting” them
 - Interest is still growing
- Set aside the upper plateau area of Morrison for active recreation
- Defer decisions on how to configure it
- Plan for adequate parking now to accommodate usage of that area



*Acton Recreation Commission presentation to the
Morrison Farm Master Planning Committee 05/03/05*

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Organization/League	Person Completing Survey	Are they a league for adults or children	Brief Description	How Many Participants do you have in your league	How many seasons does your organization use the Town facilities	Do you have enough field space	How many times are you not able to obtain a field permit for time requested due to lack of field space	How many registrations have you had to turn away due to lack of field availability which acquires more field space	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 1997	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 1999	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 2001	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 2002	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 2003	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 2004	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 2005	What do you predict for the upcoming registrations--a growth or decline? Do you have an expected number?
Acton- Boxboro Youth Baseball (ABYB)	Randy Steines. ABYB Field Coordinator	children	ABYB provides the opportunity for children ages 5-15 to play organized baseball during Spring, Summer and Fall baseball seasons	we max out at approximately 1120 players during our top Spring participation season and have over 2000 participants in the combined Spring, Summer and Fall seasons	3 Seasons (Spring, Summer, and Fall)	we are short of field space, especially at the Babe Ruth age level (13-15) and had a record 16 teams in the age 11-12 (Majors) group this year, so the demand for Babe Ruth fields will only be increasing in the near future	We get permitted by Acton Rec fields, but we do have to share the high school fields and cannot get all the time we actually need for the teams that use those fields.	to this point, none that we are aware of			1284	1663	1803	1979	1990	we are expecting about 5% annual growth
Acton Adult Softball League (AASL)	Rich Gottesman, AASL Commissioner, rich.gottesman@verizon.net http://www.actonasl.com	Adults, 21+ years old (no exceptions)	AASL runs an adult softball league in a social yet semi-competitive environment catering to people working or living in Acton or	310 adults are registered for the 2006 season	Spring and Summer evenings (Late April to Mid-August)	While we are able to receive field permits from the Town for league use, having access to only 2 softball diamonds (Elm, NARA) makes us limit the number of teams and players we accept. We need more space, whether through additional fields in Acton or elsewhere, additional evenings	Since AASL is sponsored by the Acton Recreation Department, we obtain a known schedule of permits for our season. AASL participates in the field use meeting in March and plans our season and acceptable number of teams based on the permits received. We would like to	This count is not known. We've grown from 8 teams in 2000 to 16 teams in 2006; from roughly 150 players to over 300. Based on our knowledge of field space and our pre-season planning around this, we determine the allowable number of teams. This year we turned away 4 complete	None (league started in 2000)		209 adults		274 adults		300 adults	This count is not known. We've grown from 8 teams in 2000 to 16 teams in 2006; from roughly 150 players to over 300. Based on our knowledge of field space and our pre-season planning around this, we determine the allowable
Acton-Boxborough Youth Soccer (ABYS)	Dave Scheuer, Executive Director	ABYS, itself, is a youth soccer league (Kindergarten-High School). We also actively provide soccer training, scheduled play, and education for all adults who coach and assist in the league. In addition, we work with a number of locally-oriented outside groups, both youth and adult, to schedule additional team and training opportunities for A-B youth and adult players.	See league age question.	1800-2000 youth	All --- as noted: regular league play at 3 competitive levels/leagues in Fall (mid-August through late-November) and Spring (late-March through end-June), training sessions all Summer (late-June through late-August), as much training as possible during Winter (late-November through late-March)	There is currently "sufficient" field space to fit in the requested needs of ABYS (and the external groups that we work with); however, there is not currently enough space available which is of adequate quality to support the needs on a consistent basis. This is generally attributable to the need to rest and regenerate active soccer fields on a regular basis (every 3rd season, optimally) , which implies that the total needed is approximately 30% more than simply fitting in all the practice and game slots. Current examples of issues: - School St (original area) has not had rest/maintenance for at least 7 years ; - Concord Rd is offline for at least summer repairing center of field; - 1/3 of Nara Park is offline for at least summer repairing the front field	Not applicable	None - we don't close registrations until after a season has started	Following are the actual registration numbers for each league season. Total participants is roughly 120% of the higher value (i.e., approximately 80% play BOTH seasons and overlap in the counts)	S99 – 1,563 F99 - 1,715	S01 – 1,382 F01 - 1,488		S03 – 1,387 F03 – 1,527		S05 - 1,372 F05 – 1,530	Directly proportional to total Acton-Boxborough population changes. Estimate a continued growth trend
AB Youth Softball	Tom Reuther/ABYSB President	Youths	Girls youth softball league	Aprox. 200 participants per season	Three	We have sufficient space at this time; Though we have sufficient field space for normal league use, we do not have the facilities necessary to run our own tournament, which generally requires three softball fields of sufficient size collocated or very close together.	Rare - some minor conflicts with Acton Adult Softball league	None	Pretty consistently around 200 per season in the Spring and Fall and 50 in the summer.	Pretty consistently around 200 per season in the Spring and Fall and 50 in the summer.	Pretty consistently around 200 per season in the Spring and Fall and 50 in the summer.	Pretty consistently around 200 per season in the Spring and Fall and 50 in the summer.	Pretty consistently around 200 per season in the Spring and Fall and 50 in the summer.	Pretty consistently around 200 per season in the Spring and Fall and 50 in the summer.	Pretty consistently around 200 per season in the Spring and Fall and 50 in the summer.	Expect no change.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Organization/League	Person Completing Survey	Are they a league for adults or children	Brief Description	How Many Participants do you have in your league	How many seasons does your organization use the Town facilities	Do you have enough field space	How many times are you not able to obtain a field permit for time requested due to lack of field space	How many registrations have you had to turn away due to lack of field availability which acquires more field space	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 1997	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 1999	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 2001	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 2002	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 2003	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 2004	Do you know the amount of participants you had in 2005	What do you predict for the upcoming registrations--a growth or decline? Do you have an expected number?
Acton Boxboro Girls Youth Lacrosse	Ingrid Joyce, President	Children	ABGYL teaches the games of lacrosse to girls grades 3-8.	Apx. 150 girls	One - Spring	We are currently AT capacity. and most likely can not add another team without additional field space. We practice after the high school teams end their practices and can not use the fields until they are off of them. Also, if they need the high school field for a game, we can not use it. This is all completely understandable, but an additional field would certainly be wonderful.	Generally we are able to obtain the fields we have asked for (thank you!). However we do not ask for very much. If our program were to grow we would need more field space.	We have capped our program at 7 teams this year. We expanded some teams to reduce our waiting list creating very large teams, which made some people unhappy. We had a waiting list of apx 5 girls. Next year we anticipate reducing the sizes of our teams - we expect the waiting list to grow.					apx 100		apx. 120	We expect an increase in our numbers as lacrosse has been gaining in popularity. However, we anticipate reducing the sizes of our teams, there for adding an additional team or two. I am GUESSING we would increase our use of field space in order to accommodate the girls who would like to play, our hope is that every girl who wants to play, gets to play.
Pop Warner Football and Cheering	Jim Maxwell/Gerry McGavick	children	5 Levels/Age and weight groups play football against Merrimac Valley teams (6-14 years-old)	Boys--approx. 200 Girls--approx. 125	One season--fall	With expansion of Elm Street and Leary Field our space is adequate. In addition, we utilize the Jr. High field and High School gyms for cheering. Lighted venues are critical to program growth!	This happens infrequently, as we have almost complete access to Elm Street. Cheering has difficulty with lighted fields and indoor practice access due to conflicts with indoor sports.	We turn away 25-50 kids per year, depending on registration		180	180		200		225	Numbers will remain similar to current totals.
Acton Pick-up soccer	Andrew Valente	Adults	Informal pickup soccer games held at lunchtime for men and women working or living in the area. Quality of play is generally moderate to advanced. No dangerous play (such as slide tackles) are permitted. Self-officiated and friendly (no score is kept, no results maintained).	Generally around 40 total, rarely more than about 20 on a given day.	2 permits obtained (spring/early summer, later summer/fall)	Yes	Never	None					40		40	We have been in other towns before this and while the membership changes, the numbers have always been relatively similar.
Acton Boxboro Boys Youth Lacrosse	Mark Robertson	children	Youth lacrosse program for boys in Acton and Boxboro grades 3-8	185	Spring and in summer one field once per week	Would like additional	Would like more time on Leary	None	not sure	70	145		165		185	Growth approx. 200

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Acton Cemetery Commissioners' Report to the Morrison Farm Master Planning Committee

Woodlawn Cemetery was established in 1738 and now comprises 70.5 acres (see map #1). A recreation field was created on cemetery property in 1988 (also shown, with parking area, on map #1). From our best estimate of future burials, the cemetery will not need to use the field for burials for a minimum of 7 years.

In March 1951, additional land was purchased and approved for burial purposes except for a 4.48 acre parcel "C" abutting the now Morrison Farm (land of "Edward L. Forbes" on the plan), shown on map #2. The well for the house was located on this parcel and for that reason, burials were not approved at that time (subsequent records are not available to show any change in that regard). However, the house at 116 Concord Road is now on Town water and probably has been since mains were installed in the 1960's.

The Commissioners regard the 4.48 acre parcel as likely to be approved for burial purposes in accordance with the master plan (map #1).

The Cemetery Commissioners are concerned that the students from the Conway School of Design, who drew up an early study of the Morrison property chose, for reasons unknown, to suggest part of parcel "C" and its immediate environs to be made into a parking lot, something the Commissioners strongly oppose for aesthetic reasons and for its proximity to the historic Robbins Alarm Stone and cellar hole shown as Lot "B" (for which we are also responsible) on Map #2.

The Commissioners have an interest in the ongoing use of the Morrison barn, especially since it has not been possible to create a much needed storage facility with the funds voted in an article passed at Town Meeting.

In sum, the Commissioners share the interest and concern of any abutter.

Brewster Conant
Cemetery Commissioner
March 4, 2005

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued



INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

Acton Board of Health - Telephone 978-264-9634 - Fax 978-264-9630

August 13, 2003

TO: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
FROM: Doug Halley, Health Director
SUBJECT: Woodlawn Cemetery

A question has been raised regarding the status of Cemetery land adjacent to the Morrison property on Concord Road. Health Department records indicate that this land was approved to be purchased by Annual Town Meeting, March 12, 1951 (Article 41) (see attached). The vote authorized the Cemetery Commissioners to purchase for burial purposes two parcels of land of approximately 42 Acres, with Parcel 1 being the land in question.

Health Department records further indicate that Acton Board of Health authorized the Cemetery Commissioners to use the land for burial purposes pursuant to MGL Chapter 114, Section 34 on September 25, 1956 (confirmed at Special Town Meeting, October 1, 1956 (Article 22)). Excepted from this assignment was a roughly triangular piece of land abutting the Morrison Farm known as Parcel C. It is the Health Department's understanding that the reason for this exception was to protect the well being used at that time by the people than owning the Morrison property. The Engineering Department indicates that in the 1960's town water was extended down Concord Road and the Morrison House was connected to it. However, we have been unable to locate any documents that indicate that Parcel C was later assigned by the Board of Health for burial purposes.

The requirements for the Assignment of Cemeteries by the Board of Health are as follows:

New or Expanded Cemeteries

No land other than that already used or appropriated can be used, for burial unless by permission of the town (town meeting) or of the mayor and alderman of the city in which the land is located (M.G.L. c. 114 s. 34). No approval is to be given until the use is approved in writing by the board of health where the town is located, after giving public notice and holding a hearing.

The board of health must include in its records a description of such lands sufficient for their identification.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

No land is to be used for burial if it is so situated that surface water or ground drainage from the site can enter into any stream, pond, reservoir, well, filter gallery or other water used as a source of public water supply or any tributary of a source that is so used, or any aqueduct or other works used in connection with public water supplies, until a plan or description of the lands proposed for such use have been submitted to and approved in writing by DEP. (M.G.L. c. 114, s. 35).

Any person aggrieved by the action of a board of health in approving the purchase, taking or use of any lands for cemetery purposes may, within 60 days, appeal from the order of the board to DEP. DEP, after a hearing, may rescind the order or may modify and amend the order by approving a part of the lands proposed for use as a cemetery. (M.G.L. c. 114, s. 36).

Unfortunately the Assignment of Parcel C for burial purposes by the Board of Health can not be confirmed nor denied. The Health Department has minutes for the Board of Health dating back to 1974 but no later than that. The Town Clerk's Office indicates that they have no historical minutes for the Board of Health. We have asked the Cemetery Department to provide the documentation that they have and their documents mirror the documents on file within the Health Department. Barring the possibility of another department having the documentation the Board of Health must assume that burials can not be allowed on Parcel C until the process that was detailed above was completed.

Cc: David Abbt
Ed Ellis

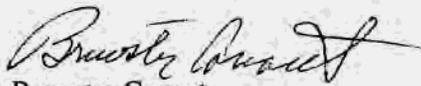
Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

ACTON CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS' REPORT TO THE MORRISON FARM MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Cemetery Commissioners at a meeting March 8, 2006 voted the following:

"Among the proposals for the Morrison Land is the establishment of a parking area along the wall of Section 14 connected to the present ballfield lot. Also proposed was some play area near the Robbins cellar hole on Cemetery land.

While we would necessarily withhold judgment until plans are set forth, we would prefer that those uses be accommodated on the 33 acre Morrison property, use of which the Morrison Committee is charged."



Brewster Conant
Cemetery Commissioner
March 26, 2006

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Request to Consider the Addition of a Disc Golf Course to the Acton Park System

The game of disc golf has grown explosively in recent years, and is now being enjoyed by people of all ages on over 1,500 courses worldwide with 1,200 in the US alone. It is my belief that the game has grown to the point where the Acton Park System and the community it serves can greatly benefit from the addition of a disc golf facility.

I respectfully propose that the members of the Acton Recreation Commission consider the addition of a disk golf course to a suitable town park.

This letter describes the game briefly and outlines a proposed course of action in determining suitability and feasibility for the Acton Park System. After reading the 'Brief Description of the Game', please review the four elements of my proposed course of action (1. Community Interest and Involvement, 2. Site Selection and Evaluation, 3. Financial Cost Estimate and Funding, and 4. Long Term Care and Maintenance Plan). After reviewing this material, please let me know if you feel I have missed an aspect which would ensure the most balanced outcome of a disc golf course proposal.

I look forward to discussing this proposal with the Recreation Commission. I also look forward to leading the community involvement in potential course development and operation.

Sincerely,

Craig L. Holbrook

A Brief Description of the Game

The concept of the game is easier to understand when the term 'Frisbee® golf' is used. However, Frisbee is a registered trademark and the game has been formally named 'disc golf' instead.

The game is similar to traditional ball golf. Players use special frisbees (golf discs) instead of balls and clubs, and throw them at an above-ground target instead of a hole in the ground. There are different types of golf discs used for different purposes, much like ball golfers use different clubs (putters, drivers, etc).

The object of the game is to throw a golf disc into the target for 'par' or better, i.e., in the fewest number of throws. The target is typically a steel basket over which chains hang, known as a Pole Hole®. The player begins by 'driving' from a designated concrete or mulched tee area and continues toward the target, throwing each consecutive shot from the spot where the previous throw has landed. Finally, a successful 'putt' sends the disc into the target, and the hole is completed. The combination of challenges to players, including distance, accuracy, wind, trees, shrubbery, water and terrain changes, offer plenty of action and excitement during the course of a game.



A complete, tournament-ready course of 18 holes typically utilizes 18 to 27 acres of land, depending on terrain and course design. Hole lengths typically run anywhere from 150 to 500

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

feet. Courses, either 9 or 18 hole, commonly co-exist with other recreational facilities, such as trail systems, activity fields, and open parkland. Disc golf is enjoyed all year long, and in many types of weather conditions, including snow.

Nationally, the growth of disc golf is exploding. The game's governing body, the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA), reports an annual 12% growth rate, a total of 7 to 10 million persons who have tried the game with approximately 500,000 regular players. The PDGA is on the Web at <http://www.pdga.com>.

“Who Might Play” and How the Game May Benefit the Acton Community.

You'll find men, women, and children of virtually all ages playing on disc golf courses. Over 50% of PDGA members are 31 – 40 years of age, possess a college degree, and earn over \$40,000 per year. Additionally, disc golfers tend to be environmentally conscious and are often seen picking up litter from the parkland and reporting vandalism and miscreant behavior.

Players are drawn by many of the same pleasures found in traditional ball golf: fresh air in a beautiful landscape, the camaraderie of friends, and the challenge and excitement of combining personal skill and speed to project an object toward a target. In addition to recreation that the players benefit from, the town and community can benefit also. Table 1. delineates benefits that communities commonly realize from the addition of a disc golf course.

The cited community benefits are realized because the game itself is easy to pick up. The rules are simple to grasp, allowing beginners to immediately have fun challenging themselves and their friends. A typical round of 18 holes takes approximately 60 to 90 minutes to play.

Perhaps the greatest factor behind disc golf's broad accessibility is its low cost. Players need nothing more than an \$8-\$10 frisbee, and since most courses are located in parks, there are little or no admission fees. This factor alone opens the game up to countless Massachusetts residents who cannot afford many of today's other popular recreation activities.

Bottom line: disc golf is fun for everyone regardless of age, gender or economic status.

Table 1. Community Benefits of Disc Golf

Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low cost of construction, maintenance, and play• Attracts players to the local community
Community Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides a low impact and safe means of exercise for all age groups and genders• Mental strategy is involved in negotiating obstacles
Recreational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction of mental fatigue
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aesthetic enhancement of park• Low resource impacts
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crime deterrent as the park is utilized by more people
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools may introduce the course into their curricula for physics, physical fitness, ecology, planning, and others.
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal and informal games and tournaments bring community members together• Families and friends can share time together

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Four Point Course of Action:

There appear to be four critical elements to moving the idea of a disc golf course forward in the Acton park system. After reading the following four elements, please let me know if you feel I have missed an aspect which would ensure the most balanced outcome of a disc golf course proposal.



1. Community Interest and Involvement – The first question that we must answer is that of Community Interest. A comprehensive study suggests, “if you build it they will play” (conducted by Jason Siniscalchi, doctoral candidate at West Virginia University_Link:

<http://www.pdga.com/documents/BenefitsOfDiscGolfSiniscalchi.pdf>).

This study found that the average weekly use of a disc golf course for towns with population of over 25,000 to be 450 players. In order to gauge community interest and support, I suggest a two pronged approach. First I will solicit interest from the community both for players and for persons interested in helping to establish the course. This can be done by using the town newsletter, the local newspaper, Acton Unlimited, and other electronic media. This unscientific survey will aim to gather names, phone numbers, and email addresses for those interested in playing and founding the course.

2. Site Selection and Evaluation – Source material suggests that 18 to 27 acres are required to build an 18-hole course. Upon

initial evaluation, it seems that the Morrison Property may be suitable for a course. A disc course located on the Morrison Property would co-exist with other recreation uses which may be approved. It is quite common for courses to be co-located with trail systems, open park lands, picnic and athletic facilities and even agricultural uses. As part of the site selection effort, I have recruited a local member of the Professional Disc Golf Association and local high-school track coach David James to review and walk the park layout, examine use constraints, and recommend a preliminary course layout if we agree that the property is suitable. Additionally, we will work with the recreation department and interested conservation groups to incorporate our disc golf into any master park planning documents.

3. Financial Cost Estimate and Funding – Perhaps the greatest attraction of disc golf is the low cost of the game. The costs to construct and maintain a course are, in many cases, cheaper than the construction of a single public tennis court. This element of the action plan will consist of a detailed cost analysis of the funds required to establish the course. Speaking with the recreation director, it is apparent that discretionary funding for the Recreation Department and the Town of Acton is limited in the coming year. For this reason, and to encourage and showcase the sense of community that a disc golf course can engender, this section will also describe alternate funding sources for the course. Many courses across the country have been funded by a park system or civic group. However, many others have been created with a mix of public funding and sponsorship from local area businesses. A few creative ideas for funding include hole sponsorship by local businesses in exchange for discrete advertising, county or state development funds, and private individual funding from a variety of sources.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

4. Long Term Care and Maintenance Plan – Any time a park department adds facilities to their environment, they must consider the long term maintenance commitment. With this in mind, our final report will contain a plan with recommended course maintenance activities. As mentioned previously, a great attraction of disc golf is the low cost of this maintenance. Most, if not all, lawn care, landscaping, and trash removal needs would be part of the normal city plan. Examples of additional activities include seasonal storage of pole-holes, occasional tree-trimming and periodic maintenance of tee boxes and signage.

Conclusions:

Thank you for your time and your service to the Acton Community. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you concerning the possibility of disc golf in Acton. As a disc golf player since university, I feel strongly that a course can be a welcome addition to this community.

I believe that this course of action will take approximately two to four months to complete. The items requiring the most time will include getting the word out to the community, soliciting support, patronage, and volunteerism, and working with the town to create a well coordinated plan.

Sincerely,

Craig L. Holbrook
Hm: (978) 635-0951
Cell: (617) 320-6961
1 Old Oregon Trail

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

October 20, 2005

TO: Morrison Farm Master Plan Committee

FR: Maya Spies, citizen & frequent walker of Morrison meadows and woodlands.

RE: Multi-Use Proposal for Morrison Farm Property

OVERVIEW

This Multi-Use Proposal provides a comprehensive framework which can be used to guide the decision-making process, regarding how the ~32 acre Morrison Farm property in east Acton is to be used by the community at large.

This proposal is also a sincere attempt to represent the views of many people in Acton who have grown to love this farm's unique qualities, either because of their historical connection with the place or because they have walked the property during the last eight (almost nine) years since it was purchased by the town, and they now know and appreciate its special characteristics.

I offer this proposal in the interests of ensuring that present and future citizens of Acton may enjoy an outdoor experience close to home that is rare and will become rarer as the years go by.

GOALS

This proposal is designed to achieve a number of broad goals:

- Satisfy the expectations of as many Acton citizens as possible.
- Provide discovery, learning and recreational opportunities to the community.
- Provide links to adjacent lands and neighborhoods.
- Protect wildlife and wildlife corridors.
- Preserve the farm's unique and irreplaceable aspects.
- Keep costs to a minimum in the short and long term.

APPROACH

A helpful way to approach how Morrison farm lands may best be used by the community, is to recognize which factors govern the issue. With any land-planning project, success depends on addressing the full spectrum of site-specific conditions that influence it, such as the following:

- A. Who wants to use the space.
- B. What do they want to use it for and what are their needs.
- C. What is the natural lay of the land and its neighboring environment.
- D. Why type of visual effect is desired now and long term.
- E. What are potential neighborhood impacts.
- F. What is the budget.

Regarding the Morrison property, at this point in time, many answers to these questions are readily at hand.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

SITE-SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

A. Who wants to use the Morrison place?

Here is a possible list:

Automobiles	Handicapped
Bench sitters	History buffs
Bicyclists	Horseback riders
Dog enthusiasts	Natural history enthusiasts
Energetic youth, supervised and not	Picnickers
Fishermen	Small children with parents
Gardeners and farmers-at-heart	Walkers
	Wild animals

B. What do they want to use it for, and what are their needs?

Some ideas might include:

Automobiles: ease of parking, sufficient number of parking spaces, pedestrian access from car.

Bench sitters: access to seating in shade, nice views; for parents when watching children.

Bicyclists: may stop to visit or pass through.

Dog enthusiasts: unfenced free running; safe fenced dog park; adequate space for field training.

Energetic youth: wide open space for unorg. play, org. sports, crafts, and learning opportunities.

Fishermen: points of access to waterways.

Gardeners and farmers-at-heart: plots to grow vegs/flowers, well maintained land, rural vistas.

Handicapped: smooth terrain, hand-holds, easy visual guides.

History buffs: access to historical sites and artifacts, learning opportunities.

Horseback riders: will usually pass through, may want trailer parking.

Natural history enthusiasts: self-discovery and learning opportunities.

Picnickers: open terrain with a view, access to picnic tables.

Small children with parents: easy access, safe place to play, enrichment.

Walkers: access to existing trails and other use areas from a variety of points.

Wild animals: freedom of movement, freedom from fear, readily available food and shelter.

C. What is the natural lay of the land and its neighboring environment?

A sketch is attached, showing the property and environs. Because of its relatively simple rectangular shape, and easily defined types of terrain, the Morrison property may be viewed as three parts of a whole, each offering specific attributes. I call these three parts, "The Woods", "The Meadow" and "The Front" (from top-to-bottom on the map).

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

The Woods

"The Woods" includes all the wooded land in the back of the property, bordered (from west to east) by wooded Cemetery land, a Private House Lot (clear cut), and extensive Nashoba Brook Marshlands. The private house lot currently cuts off historic access between Morrison farm and the Isaac Davis Trail network. The Morrison woods is generally flat, easily traversed, with a well-demarcated loop trail around its edge and vestiges of other trails and lumber truck tracks. In the southeastern side of the woods, an earthen berm extends into Nashoba Brook, where a bridge once stood. Classic rural vistas can be enjoyed from the woods, looking into the Meadow.

The Meadow

The part I refer to as "The Meadow" begins where the woods ends, and extends toward the front of the property, to a point where a trail breaks through the stone wall on the wooded Cemetery side (west). On the Meadow side of the stonewall a shallow trench has been dug, presumably to improve drainage off the field. This part of the Meadow is sheltered by a framework of trees and sky with a long grassy view, beautiful and surprisingly private, despite the fact that Rte. 2A can be seen (and sometimes heard) not too far distant in the east. The Meadow rises slightly across its expanse and then quickly dips downward, through wetlands, to the Marsh and Nashoba Brook, whose edge is mostly lined with trees and shrubs, providing habitat for a variety of wildlife. A lower "thumb" of the meadow is enclosed on three sides by waterways, Ice House Pond to the east and two trenches probably intended to facilitate drainage; these drainage streams are grown over by shrubs and small trees. Throughout the Meadow, tall grasses in summer are vestiges of a once healthy hay field, but it is currently under threat of native and non-native plant invasion. A few grassy trails through the Meadow have been delineated by walkers and horseback riders over the years.

Note: An active wildlife corridor exists throughout the Woods, the Meadow, and along all waterways, if observations by an experienced tracker are any indication (please see Wildlife Trails map, attached).

The Front

What I refer to as "The Front" of the property, extends from the line where the Meadow ends, and encompasses a high, broad, grassy plateau reaching all the way to the barn where some areas are fenced in. The Front also includes outbuildings, the barn, garage, and a house on Concord Road, and a large, paddock area by the road, enclosed by a tall wooden fence. The terrain in the paddock is distinguished by very tall pines and deep earthen excavations that make walking unsafe. To the east of the paddock, on the other side of the fence, the land slopes quickly into a small stream or wetlands. Behind the paddock, a high and wide grassy path, enclosed by tall fences, slopes quickly downward into a badly overgrown pasture below, framed-in by waterways and trees. This piece of land abuts the site where the foundation of the old Ice House lies (overgrown by trees), but is largely inaccessible from the historic site because of wet ground.

The Morrison house and barn and garage are in good shape, and are readily accessible to foot traffic via a sidewalk along the north side of Concord Road, which extends from Rte. 2A to Town Hall. Access by car is not so easy because there is currently little room for parking.

Along the sidewalk, several feet west of the Morrison property line, is the sunken foundation of the very old Robbins family house, designated with a historical marker. This foundation may also be viewed from a lovely, grassy field, which lies above the sidewalk (hidden by vegetation) and behind the Morrison garage, between the existing soccer field and the farm. This mowed grass area, partially enclosed by large, handsome shrubs, is owned by the Cemetery but, visually and historically, is an extension of the Morrison farm.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

D. Why type of visual effect is desired, now and long term?

At this point in time, everyone who is familiar with the Morrison property would probably agree that the highest visual priority is to maintain the farm's rural character and beautiful vistas into the future. But there may be a problem affecting this wish.

Because it is designated as Municipal Property, town leaders are permitted to use the building and land in any way they see fit (within regulatory parameters, of course), now and in the future. If citizens want to ensure that the rural character and beautiful vistas of the farm are not lost to the vagaries of time and circumstance, they should probably devise some way to conserve a part of the farm to Conservation Land. Another advantage to this approach is that long-term maintenance of any conserved part of the property would be by land stewards, a volunteer organization not likely to be as affected by the ebbs and flows of municipal budgets. In addition, laws affecting conservation lands are (I think) more lenient than laws affecting municipal property with public access.

E. What are potential neighborhood impacts?

The Morrison farm is located in a quiet residential neighborhood on a well-used town street. Nearby residents, and drivers who ride by in cars, are likely to prefer that their view of the farm from the road be unchanged as much as possible. If parking for cars is provided on the property, citizens are likely to agree that it should be designed in a low profile way and not locally disrupt picturesque views. Access to the property by large numbers of cars could cause excessive noise and pollution. Frequent use of the property by large numbers of people at the same time (more than 25 or 50?) might spoil the rural character of the place.

Currently, nearly all access is by foot, either from nearby neighborhoods or from cars using small nearby lots. The closest parking lots to Morrison Farm --- at the soccer field and House Pond, are likely to remain available for many years, and maybe the pond lot can be enlarged.

G. What is the budget?

To date, a general shortage of municipal funds has served to protect the Morrison property from intensive development. The foreseeable budget dedicated for Morrison use is little to nothing, which may also not be such a bad thing because it provides a longer window of opportunity to make wise decisions.

Otherwise, depending on the types of uses designated for the farm, independent source funding may become available, and efforts by community volunteers may provide the resources needed to garner funds for specific needs, once decided upon.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

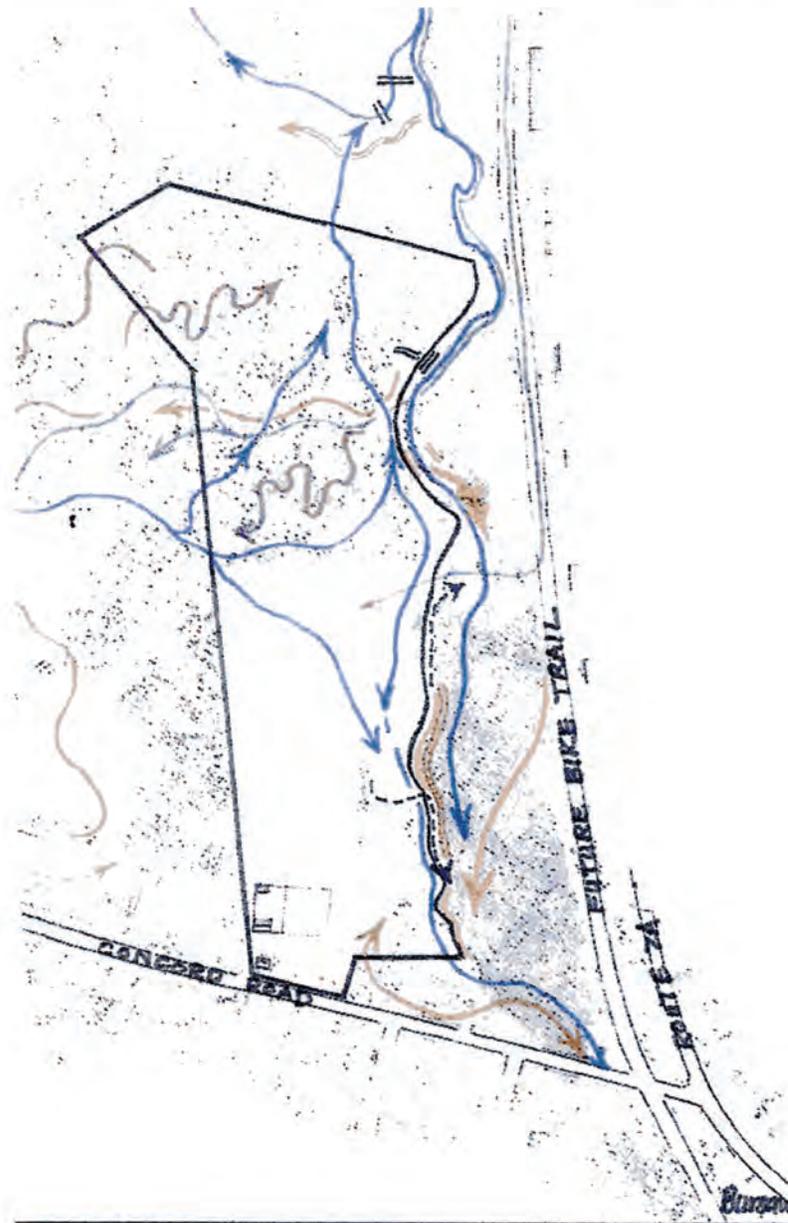
WILDLIFE TRAILS observed at Morrison Farm (from Gigi Hopkin's original)

Includes:

Red fox
Grey fox
Coyote

River Otter
Weasel or mink
Raccoon
Fisher

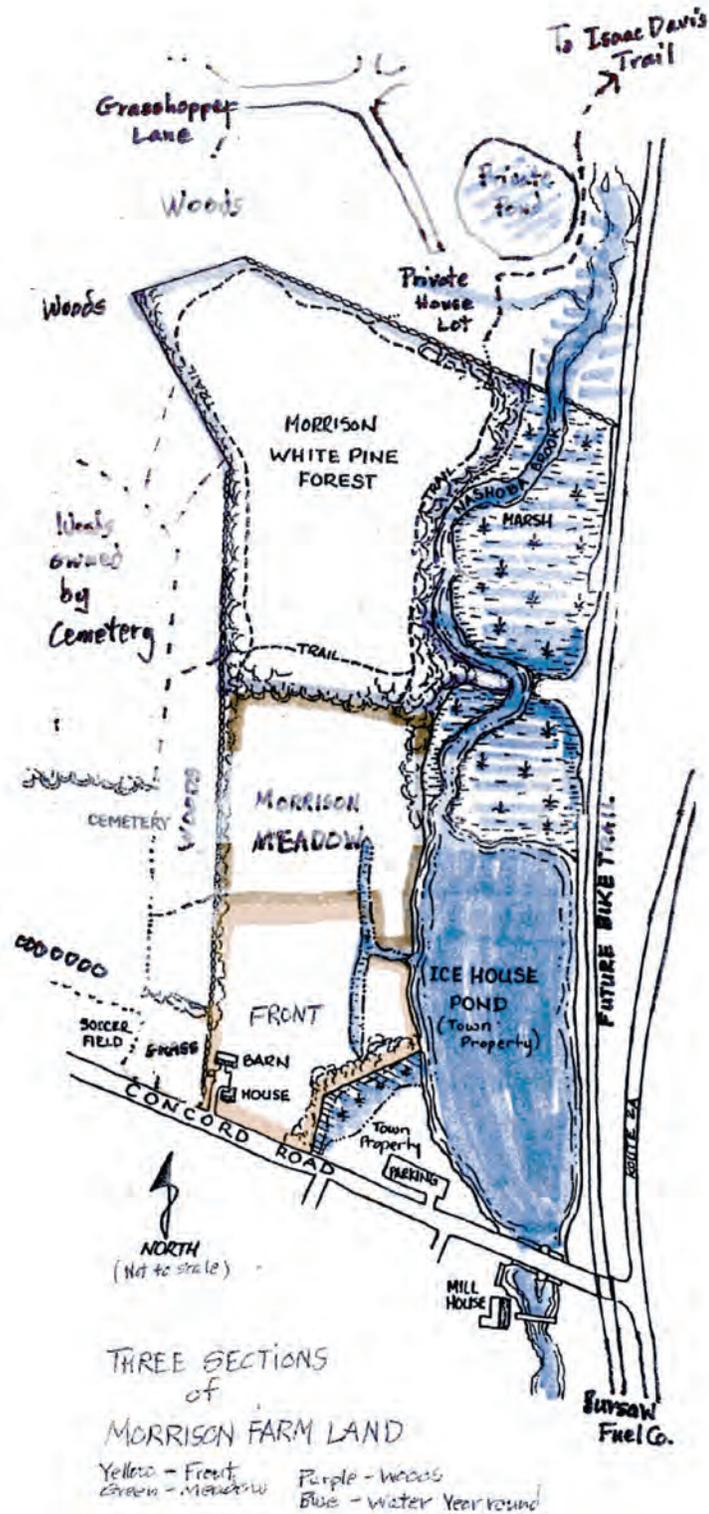
Beaver
Muskrat
Skunk



(Does not include the ubiquitous whitetail deer)

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

MAP of Morrison Farm and Environs (from Tom Tidman's original)



Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

By finding answers to the right questions, numerous details are revealed and these lead quite naturally to a list of truly relevant possibilities for planning the use of the Morrison farm land for a wide variety of citizens.

A picture is worth a thousand words, so I have attached a rough drawing of how a Multi-Use Plan might work. Different areas of the property are labeled with possible uses. Below I list some of these possibilities.

Use of the Woods

The access path to and from Isaac Davis Trail, now bisected by a private house lot, may be renegotiated with minimal impact on the new house owners, by rerouting the trail. When traveling south by horseback, toward the Morrison farm, a stream on private property must be crossed. At this point, after the stream is crossed, it appears to be possible to make the trail turn a sharp left around a large tree. Traveling east for, perhaps, one hundred feet, the path would then bend to the right, following the wetlands for several hundred more feet, where the northern stonewall boundary of the Morrison property is encountered; a new opening would have to be made through this wall, so the new trail can quickly intersect with the major Morrison woodland trail.

Access can be cleared along the old bridge abutment which extends into Nashoba Brook; currently it is so overgrown as to be nearly impassable. A viewing and fishing area can be established here. Because this area is such an active wildlife corridor, and the terrain is fragile and prone to flooding, it would probably be best not to try re-connecting this abutment to the other side of the brook (where the bicycle trail will pass by). Instead, create a viewing area on both sides of the brook — it is a beautiful place for quiet observation.

Designating the Morrison Woods as Conservation Land would put it under the governance of the Conservation Commission and its subcommittee, the Land Stewards, whose task is to maintain conservation lands. This would help take the burden of maintenance off the town's budget to a large extent, since the Land Stewards are volunteers.

In order to acquire the grassy area behind the garage in the Front of the property, which is currently Cemetery land, it may be possible to “swap” a piece of Morrison Woods with the Cemetery Commission, so this easily accessible grassy patch up Front can be made part of the Morrison Multi-use land.

Use of the Meadow

The Morrison Meadow is irreplaceable as it is, as a visual amenity and a wildlife haven. If a bulldozer were to carve away at this terrain, classic farm vistas and the local ecology would be lost; a pity since such areas are rare, particularly in Acton. Every effort should be made to ensure that this part of the property, like the Woods, is protected for the long term.

If a regulation playing field were to be installed in the Front section of the property behind the barn, stretching to the boundary line of the Meadow (see map), and that area was not quite long enough, it may be possible to relocate the Meadow boundary line by pushing it slightly back (not too far!), as well as relocating the trail that cuts through the stone wall from Cemetery land. The objective is to maintain the natural Meadow vistas and “experience” as much as possible.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

The Front of the property is the most appropriate place to encourage active recreational use. Not only is it easily accessible, via Concord Road and a sidewalk, it is close to East Acton Village, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, and an extensive residential neighborhood.

One of the problems with access is by car --- there is almost no parking on-site. It may be possible, with some clever engineering, to create a functional but low-profile parking circle (counterclockwise) in what is now the large paddock to the right of the house. Such a design would have to address the problem of nearby wetlands. And lots of fill would have to be brought in to level it. A number of tall pine trees would have to be cut down. In addition, an earth berm or some other natural-looking visual screen would have to be devised to reduce the visual impact of a parking lot; perhaps the lot can also be "sunken" a little bit. Pedestrian access to and from a parking lot would have to be easy for everyone, requiring ramps, as needed, in addition to steps. All of this will require professional expertise. Parking, if installed on the property, is likely to be the most expensive project.

Although the House is in good shape, using it for public recreational purposes is a problem, because retrofitting it for handicapped access is prohibitively expensive. It may be worth investigating passing the house into the custody of the Housing Authority, so it can be used or lived in without town leaders as landlord. Use of the House should be resolved quickly because unused buildings deteriorate quickly.

Although not a particularly sturdy structure (currently held together with a cable), the Barn is in good condition. Panels that serve to create horse stalls can be removed to open up the downstairs space for recreational use under cover, an asset for (say) a Natural History Camp program that could be offered by the Recreational Department. The huge back door of the barn can be opened so kids can race into the expansive grasslands behind. An old outdoor horse shelter/storage shed behind the barn is in bad shape and should be removed. A wall tacked into a "car port" attached to the west side of the barn can be removed to make the carport drive-through, a more versatile space for machinery and persons afoot.

The large, expansive grass field behind the barn is most easily and cheaply maintained as a mowed, fenced area available for many types of free play. The fence should be wooden (post and rail?) and low-profile (not high), and the lower half can have wire mesh attached to create an enclosed Dog Park. Mesh fencing would also serve to keep balls from being kicked outside the area, and to keep trash in. Various gates here and there would improve access from various other points on the property.

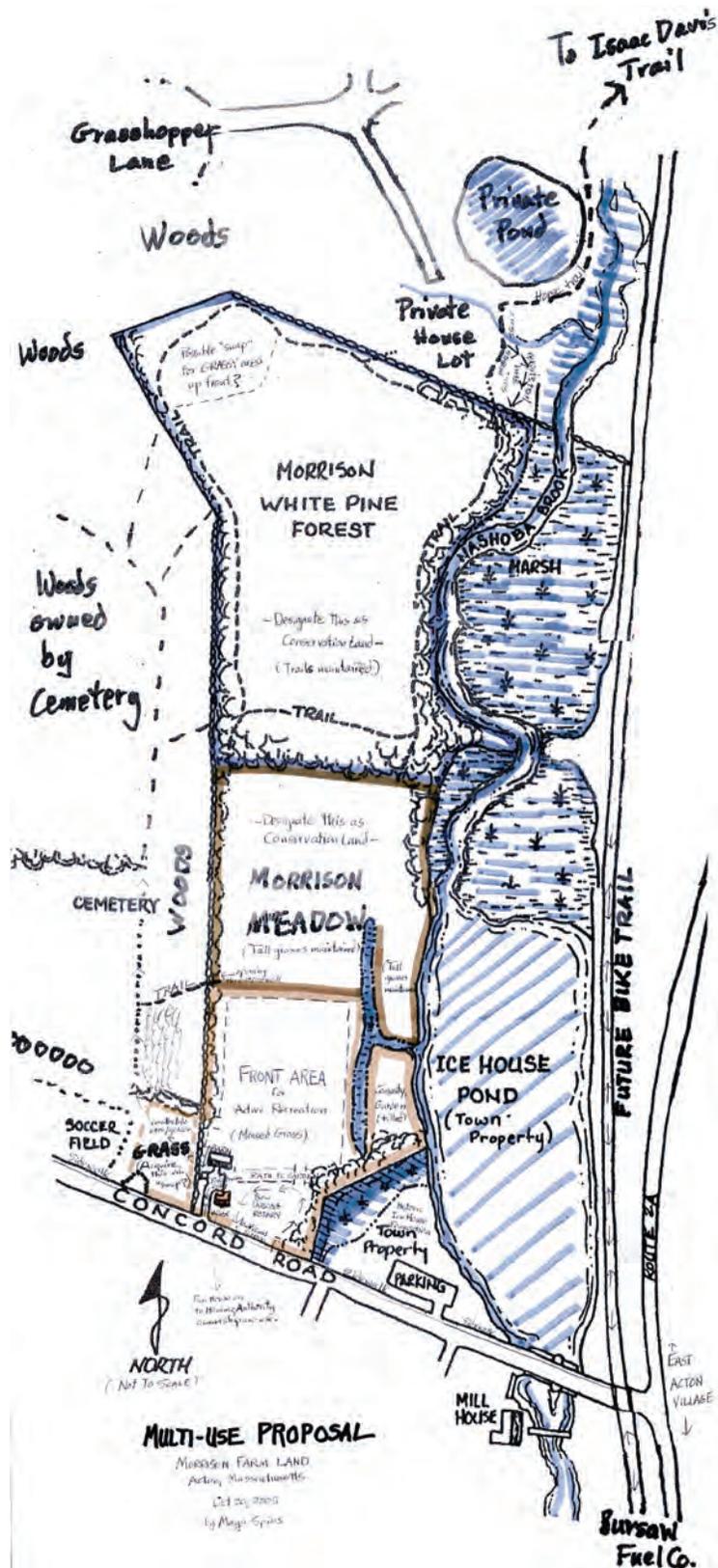
A Community Garden can be created in the lower pasture, accessible via a wide grassy path behind the new parking area. Water is readily accessible from Ice House Pond.

The grassy area behind the garage, owned by the Cemetery, is a natural extension to the farm and it is worth investigating whether it can be acquired for recreational use (not a parking lot). It is such a nice space to be in, it would be lovely to make it available to the children of Acton.

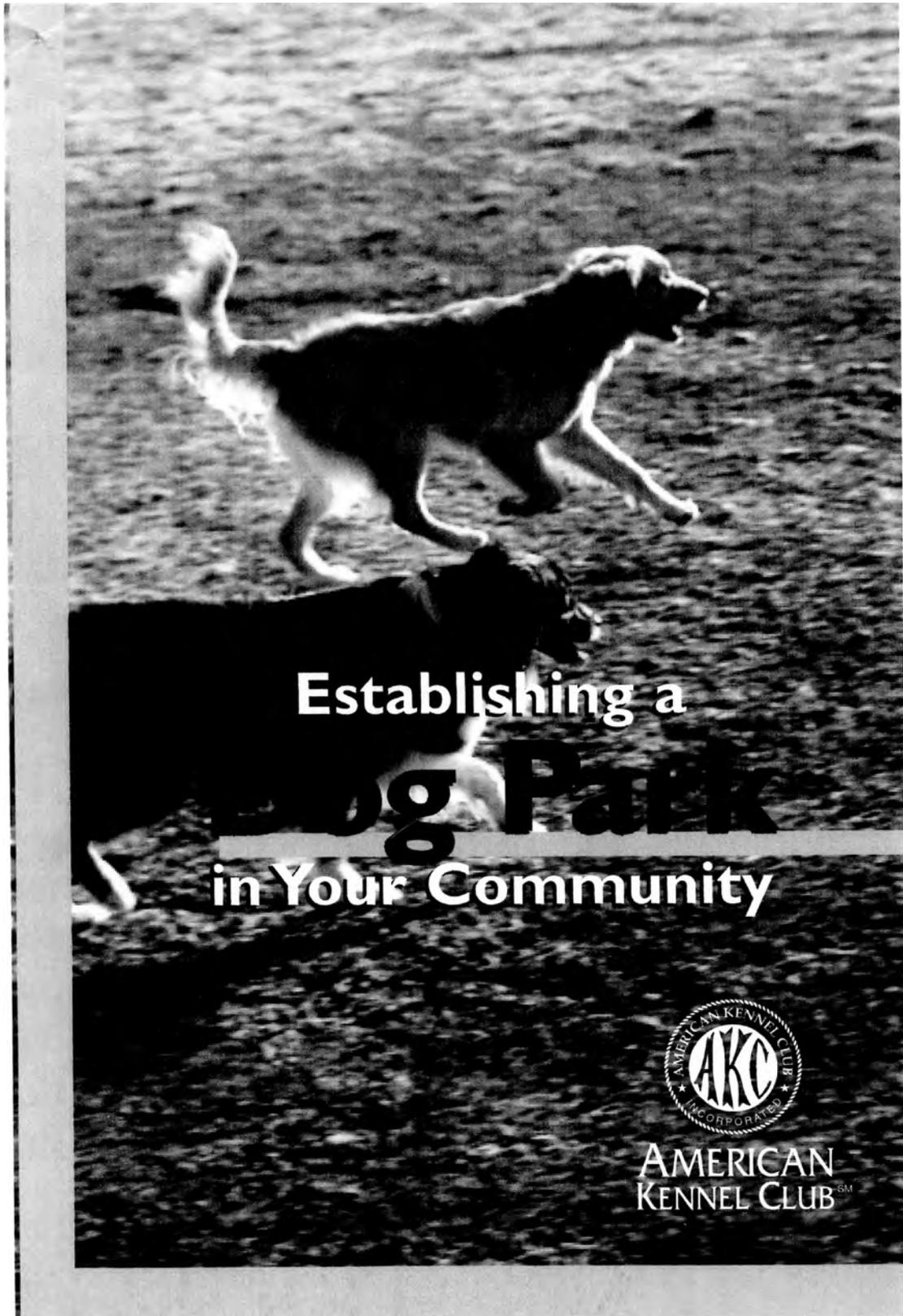
CONCLUSION

The Multi-Use Plan I have proposed is simply an idea of how best to serve the most citizens in Acton, while also cherishing the agricultural heritage of the town as well as an unusually nice piece of landscape. I trust the Morrison Committee will give due consideration to this approach.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued



Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued



What Is a Dog Park and How Does It Benefit the Community?

With cities becoming more and more crowded and leash laws becoming more restrictive, many concerned dog owners are looking to the creation of dog parks as a solution to their need for a place to spend quality time with their pets. But just what is a “dog park,” and what benefits can one bring to your city or town?

A dog park is a public park, typically fenced, where people and their dogs can play together. Similarly, a dog run is a smaller fenced area, created for the same use, that is often located within an existing park. As the names imply, these places offer dogs off-leash play areas where their owners can enjoy a park-like setting and the chance to socialize with other canines and their owners. Dog parks, which are sometimes managed by park users in conjunction with city or town officials, are being established all over the country and offer a wealth of benefits to dogs, dog owners and the community as a whole.



Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

More than just “room to roam,” the creation of a dog park . . .

Allows dogs to exercise and socialize safely. Puppies and adult dogs need room to run, and enclosed play areas permit them to do so while preventing them from endangering themselves and others (for example, by running into the path of an oncoming vehicle). In addition, dogs who are accustomed to playing with animals and people other than their owners are more likely to be well-socialized and react well toward strangers.

Promotes responsible dog ownership. Dog parks prevent off-leash animals from infringing on the rights of other community residents and park users such as joggers, small children, and those who may be fearful of dogs. Parks also make it easier for a city to enforce its leash laws, as resident dog owners with



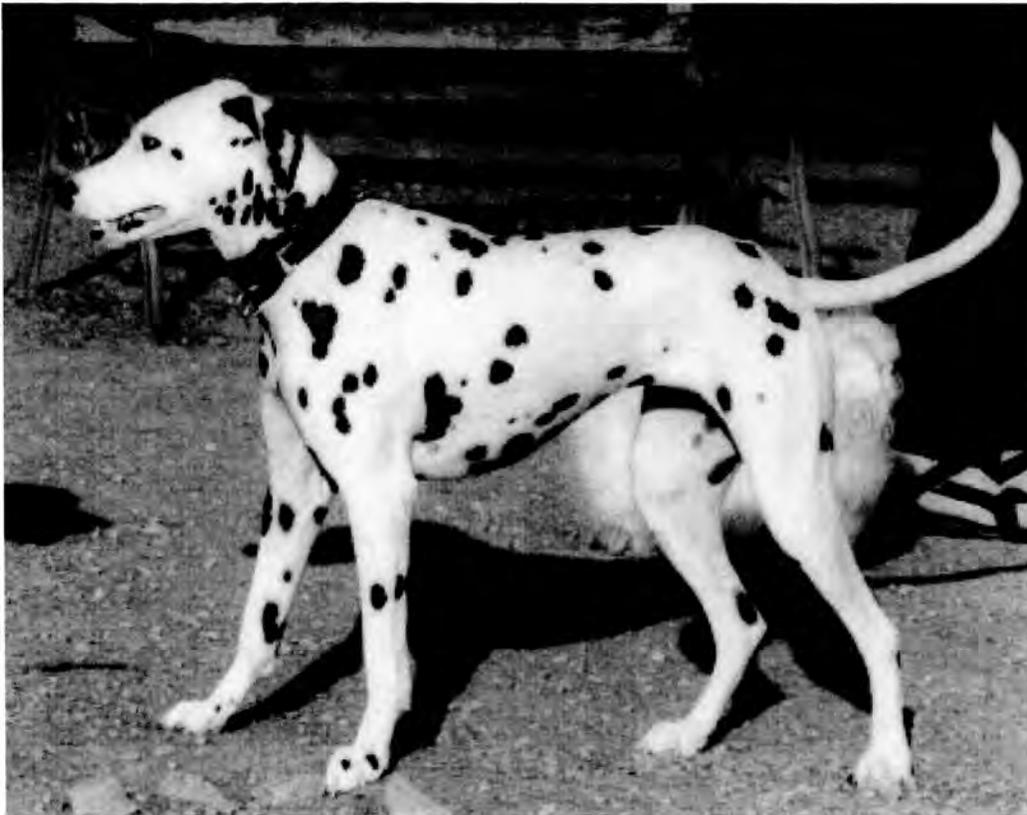
2 Establishing a Dog Park

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

park access have no reason to allow their canine companions off-leash when outside of the park.

Provides an outlet for dog owners to socialize. Dog parks are a great place for owners to meet other people with common interests. The love people share for their dogs reaches beyond economic and social barriers and helps foster a sense of community. Park users also benefit from the opportunity to ask questions of other owners and find solutions to problems they might be having with their pet.

Makes for a better community by promoting public health and safety. Well-exercised dogs are better neighbors who are less likely to create a nuisance, bark excessively and destroy property. Their presence in the park, along with their owners, also may help deter crime.



Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

A SAMPLING OF ANIMAL TRAILS PHOTOGRAPHED IN AND AROUND MORRISON LAND
Does not include the ubiquitous white-tail deer

Coyote		Raccoon		Beaver	
Red fox		Fisher		Muskrat	
Grey fox		River otter		Striped skunk	
		Weasel or mink		Opposum	



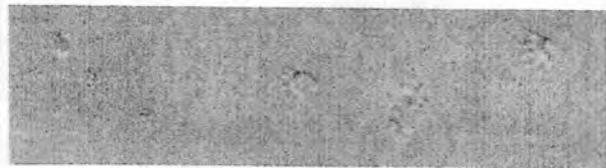
Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued



Opposum



Striped Skunk



Raccoon



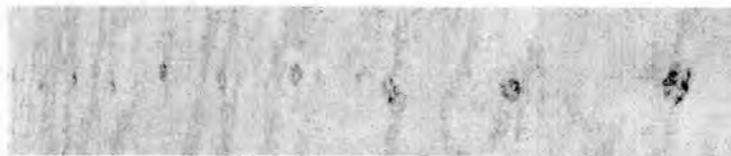
River Otter



Fisher



Gray Fox



Red Fox



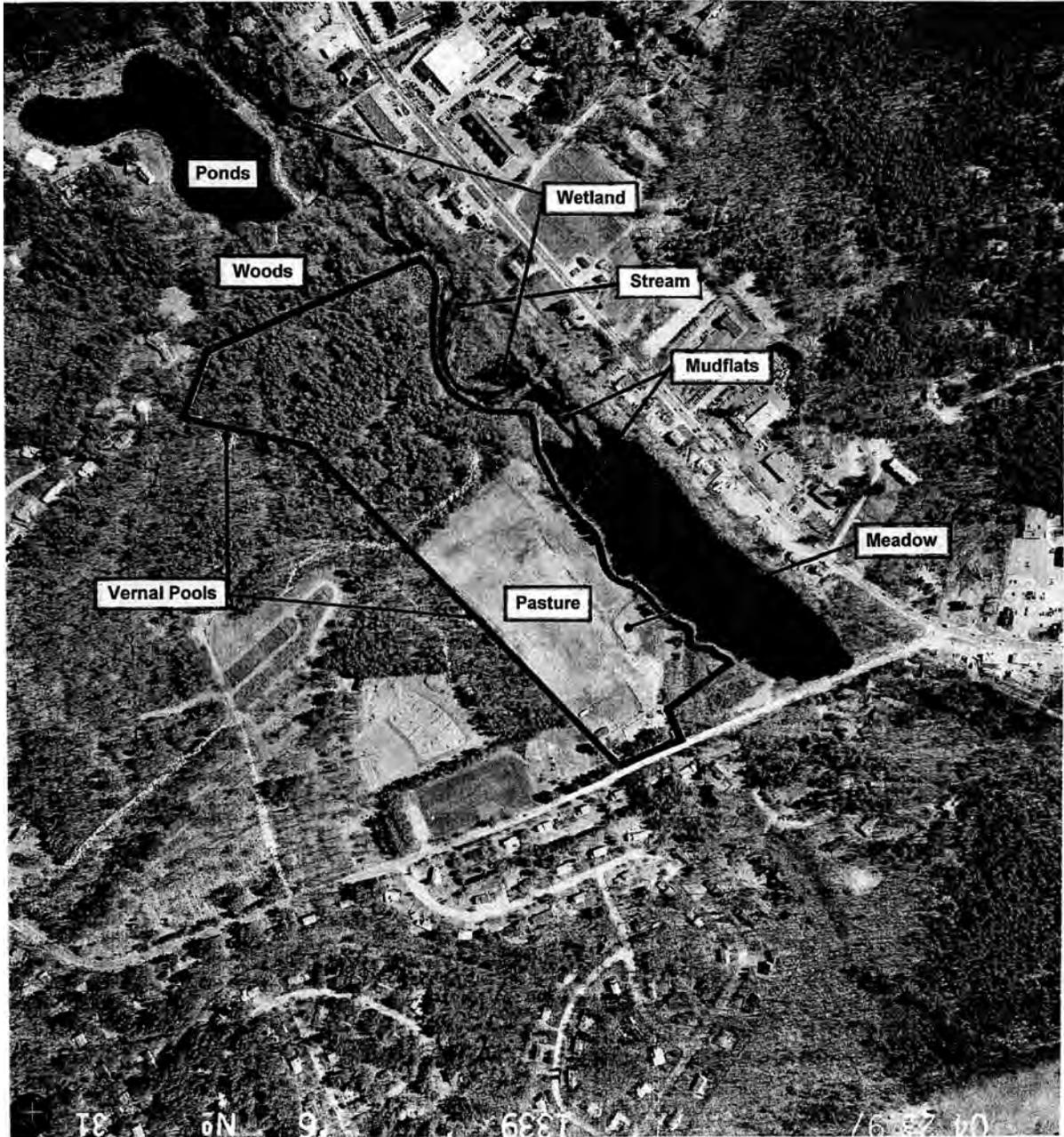
Eastern Coyote

TRACKS & TRAILS

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

THE VARIED HABITATS IN AND AROUND THE MORRISON LAND;

Pasture, meadow, ponds, mudflats, stream, wetland, two vernal pools and woods



Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued



THE ACTON BARN at Morrison Farm

Morrison Farm Re-Use Committee Meeting
November 10, 2005

The Acton Barn Background

- The Acton Barn Cooperative Nursery School has served Acton since 1970
- Originally founded by Acton residents Lees Stuntz, Gail Michael, Joe and Sandy Bayne, JoAnne Carpenter, Marion Maxwell, Jane Philbin and operated out of their homes.
- In 1972, the Acton Barn moved to a small house at 311 Central Street that was purchased through a promissory note signed by Jan and Mark Bramhall, Tom and Libby Barnett, and Stephen and Lees Stuntz.
- In 1992, the Barn moved its present location at 32 Nagog Park.
- 501-3C Non-Profit Corporation
- Typical operation hours are 9 AM to 3:15 PM, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and 9 AM to 2:30 PM on Thursday and Friday during the school calendar year
- See attached History and Mission

Our Proposal

- Our proposal is to enter into a lease agreement and improve the home located at Morrison Farm to relocate The Acton Barn program to the new facility
- Proposed improvements include:
 - Renovate and update the interior and exterior of the existing home
 - Construct an addition of about 1,500 s.f. onto the existing home
 - Required parking spaces for 10 vehicles (construct new or share parking with other programs proposed for the property)
 - Construct 2,500 s.f. of playground space for the school children

Benefits

- Our proposal includes renovation and maintenance of an existing town building thus eliminating a maintenance obligation for the town
- Some of the renovated and/or constructed space could be used by other programs proposed for the property
- The Acton Barn program is compatible with all other programs that are being proposed for the property

The Acton Barn Cooperative Nursery School
32 Nagog Park Acton, Massachusetts 01720 978-263-0486

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

History and Mission of The Acton Barn

The Acton Barn Cooperative, Inc. is a very special collaborative learning environment. Parents and children come together with an exceptional teaching staff in order to create a warm and supportive first school experience. The Barn is the kind of place that reaches out into the community in order to help others whenever possible. The program has been in operation since 1974. Since that time, the school has successfully grown and matured into a well-respected program, recognized by both state and national organizations.

The Barn is currently located in a specially built schoolhouse, in Acton, Massachusetts that first opened for the 1992-1993 school year. The building was developed with input from Barn families, professional staff, the architectural firm of Katherine McGuinness and Associates, renowned for their work in preschool educational spaces, the developer, Kirk Ware, and his architect Albert Fine.

The guiding design principle for the building was to provide "a warm, inviting educational environment for young children." One of the many special features is a floor to cathedral ceiling wooden climber with soft curves for exciting play or quiet moments. The open floor plan, including a kitchen work area for cooking projects, houses a broad spectrum of materials and supplies all of which foster the social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth of young children. An excellent array of play equipment is available in the fenced-in play yard such as a large sandbox, a playhouse, swings, and climbers.

Raw materials, with some prepared materials, are made available because they can be used in accordance with each child's intent and perception. The materials may include all manner of things from paper and scissors to string, boxes, bottles, magnets, paint, clay, water, sand, blocks, wood and snow. Places within the school are regularly transformed with card board, paint and creativity to reflect the current topic of study.

Dramatic play, art, music, woodworking, building, cooking, and a wide variety of manipulatives and games are available to the children on a daily basis. Science, language arts and math are also a part of the Barn's curriculum. In an informal manner, children are encouraged to develop what are generally considered to be "school readiness" skills.

The Barn was founded in the 1970's by several Acton area families. These families were committed to the value of family involvement in early education. To them, the parent cooperative, with a focus on learning through play was the ideal model for the program they wished to create.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Today the Barn remains a highly parent driven organization. Every family participates in the school's fundraising efforts, helps in the classroom on a regular basis, and shares responsibility for cleaning and maintaining the building. All of the families are welcomed and encouraged to attend monthly board meetings and one third actively participate on the general board.

Throughout its thirty-year history, the Barn has sought to employ teachers who were capable of working with young children and parents. In 1980, Harriet Kaufman became the first Director of the school. Harriet brought with her a clear statement of the importance of emergent curriculum, developmentally appropriate practice, and a respect and openness to difference in our school and community.

Harriet retired in 2000. She currently serves as the curriculum consultant for the school. Her input and ideas continue to shape the direction of the educational program.

Currently, Carol Pikcilingis serves in a dual role as Teacher and Director. Carol came to the Barn initially having worked as a pediatric nurse at Boston Children's Hospital, with a focus on psychosomatic illness in young children and family counseling. Carol has a degree in Human Development from Lesley University with a specialization in early intervention.

Joining the Barn as a classroom teacher in 1984, Carol took on increasing roles of responsibility and eventually became the Director in charge of day to day operations in 1989. Carol continues to place great emphasis on the importance of creative, developmentally appropriate practice and strives to create a warm, nurturing community for the children and families. Teachers, families and children work together towards this goal.

In addition to her responsibilities as Director, Carol is active in the professional community. Carol is involved in the Early Childhood council, Community Partnership for Children, Department of Education study groups for Early Childhood Guidelines and attendance at Institutes and conferences in the Boston area.

Nancy Tang serves as a teacher and the Assistant Director of the Barn. As Assistant-Director, Nancy supports Carol in the day-to-day activities required for a smooth running operation. Nancy came to the Barn in 1997, with a M.Ed. in elementary education from Boston College.

Nancy brings great experience from her work in a multicultural setting in Chinatown, Boston, where Nancy helped run a large after school program. Nancy then operated her own family day care for 10years. Nancy has a strong commitment to children and families, with an emphasis on the importance of acceptance of diversity in our communities. Nancy is representative of the entire staff in that she values the richness of the parent cooperative.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

In addition to Carol and Nancy, the Barn has an excellent staff of four experienced, and professionally trained, teachers. All staff members participate in monthly staff planning meetings, and are welcome to attend board meetings as well. Each year staff members attend workshops and training sessions to update themselves on new teaching methods and ideas.

There are fewer and fewer programs for young children in place that truly allow self-directed learning to occur. The Barn offers families the opportunity to actively participate in their child's first educational experience and to role model for their children the passion and interest they themselves have for learning. Research has repeatedly shown that parental involvement in the school environment is a strong predictor of success.

The Barn is also unique in its commitment to keeping the costs of the program as low as possible. This is done in order to offer families with diverse income levels an opportunity to feel welcomed into the community. The school also regularly sets aside part of its budget to provide scholarship money to families in need.

The educational program at the Barn is designed to foster the social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth of young children. "Learning through play" best summarizes the Barn's philosophy. No distinction is made between what is work and what is play. Dramatic play, art, music, woodworking, cooking and a wide variety of toys and games are available to the children on a daily basis. Materials are located where children can reach them without adult assistance. Children are encouraged to "learn by doing" and to become successful on their own terms by becoming involved in their own learning.

The Barn is also a strong partner with many other community groups and organizations. As the state of Massachusetts has turned its attention to setting curricular goals and guidelines for preschool that align with the statewide curricular frameworks, our parents and teachers have taken an active role in the process. When the first draft was put out for review, several parents took the time to read the draft and provide comments, and our teaching staff did the same. This year our staff put together and presented several workshops for other preschool educators on how to incorporate the history, social science and math standards into basic classroom activities including creative and developmentally appropriate ways to document these efforts.

Our Director has been actively involved with the Early Childhood Council, acting as the current Co-Chair, and past coordinator of the Week of the Young Child celebration, a community wide program for families from Acton, Boxborough and Littleton, that helps to promote early literacy and a greater understanding of the developmental and educational needs of young children. For the past three years the school has hosted events and parents

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

from the school have helped to lead and design these related activities within the community.

The school is always welcoming to student teachers in need of a place to do their teaching, Girl Scout groups looking for an audience, community outreach programs from local elementary schools looking for children to work with as "Book buddies" and even doctors from the University of Massachusetts medical program who are doing their family medicine rotation and in need of exposure to normal developmentally appropriate preschool behavior. As part of the cooperative model of the school, the Barn is an excellent partner with many other groups of children, educators and professionals.

The Barn has consistently earned high praise from those who come in contact with its programs and children. State and national level certification professionals have consistently given the school high marks. The Barn received NAEYC accreditation in 2002 and receives biannual recertification through rigorous Massachusetts Office for Child Care Service licensing, both utilizing self study, involved documentation of the program and intensive on site inspections.

Recently, the school earned recognition for its efforts to create an innovative policy and program to deal with the needs of children with anaphylactic food allergies. Steve Schulman, an Assistant Deputy at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, worked closely to assist the school in developing one of the first food allergy policies for preschoolers in the state. Both inclusive and open, it sought to address children with many levels of food allergy difficulties, while maintaining the important family involvement in our school's daily snack. We have been asked to share our work in this area with programs in other Massachusetts communities.

The Barn is currently involved in collaboration with University of Massachusetts Medical Center to provide onsite visitation for residents in their Family Practice group. This elective allows the doctors to gain a view of the broad range of typically developing children and to experience developmentally appropriate practice in an early childhood classroom.

At the Barn the staff and parents are able to draw on each other's unique strengths, making each year a richer educational experience. The willingness of the people involved with the school to then extend this learning to others within the larger community makes the school a special and important resource for more than the approximately sixty families who may attend the school at any point in time. This school is an important resource for the community and is in need of investment from others to protect it going forward into the future.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

In keeping with our financial goals, the Barn employs a variety of austerity measures in all aspects of our programs.

- Almost all of the raw materials utilized in the educational activities are donated by the community and members.
- Parents and community members are encouraged to recycle certain materials for reuse in educational activities.
- Barn members are responsible for most janitorial and cleaning activities.
- Spending is tightly controlled by the Director and the Board.
- Parents of children provide food and beverages for daily snack activities.
- Programs offered by the Barn must be at least revenue neutral and preferably be able to generate small amounts of surplus.
- Fundraising goals are very aggressive representing 15% of the total operating budget.

As a largely parent run organization, the Barn does all it can to control and minimize costs. However, there are several factors, including the pending implementation of statewide standards that increase the educational levels required for staff and the continuing escalation of our rental costs, that have led the leadership of the school to conclude that there is a need for more concentrated fundraising efforts to continue to keep the school one that is accessible to families of all income levels.

The school is hoping to take the steps necessary to purchase its current home within the next few years. We have already secured the backing of the USDA to guarantee our loan in this endeavor, as well as the support of Middlesex Savings Bank, who is willing to fund the loan. In addition to efforts to get a major capital campaign underway, we wish to protect our scholarship programs. We are hoping to find additional sources of revenue for both of these projects.

At the Acton Barn Cooperative Nursery School, parents and children come together with an exceptional teaching staff in order to create a warm supportive first school experience. Founded in the 1970's, the Barn has always been committed to the value of family involvement in early education.

The Barn places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of creative, developmentally appropriate practices, and strives to create a warm, nurturing community for children and families. The educational program at the Barn is designed to foster the social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth of young children. "Learning through play" best summarizes the Barn's philosophy.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

The Barn has consistently earned high praise from those who come in contact with its programs and children. State and national level certification professionals have consistently given the school high marks. The Barn is an excellent partner with many other groups of children, educators and professionals in surrounding communities.

The Barn is committed to keeping its programs accessible to families of diverse income levels. The Barn is seeking philanthropic investment in its programs in order to protect needs blind participation as it seeks to acquire its current facility. We very much appreciate interest in our program.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

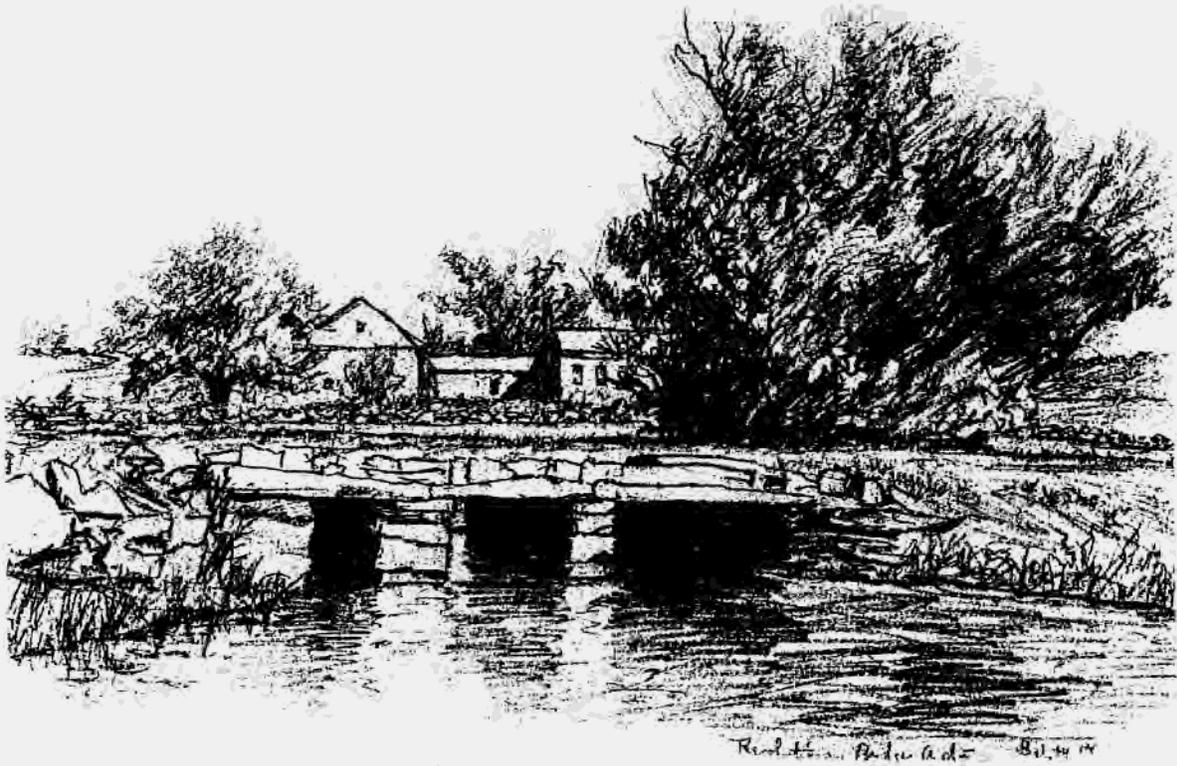
Morrison Farm Reuse Committee Bridge Presentation

It is unclear when the bridge crossing Nashoba Brook was first erected and for what use it served. However, Arthur Davis drew a picture of it in 1927 as shown on this page. It is described a Worden's Swimming Hole and the bridge sits to the north.



Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

Another example of a bridge in Acton. This bridge currently is on the Conant property and is part of the Isaac Davis Trail.



Revolution Era Bridge Acton

Anyone who walks the Isaac Davis Trail has walked over this bridge on the Conant property. The bridge and associated structures were abandoned in 1808 but line up perfectly with Strawberry Hill Road. The house with barn in the background is the site of Coach Estates at 53 & 55 Brook Street. The main portion of the house was moved to 160 Great Road several decades ago.

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued



Bridges and Golf Course Structures

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Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

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Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Links

[Aldrich Change Bridge Home Page](#)

[Aldrich Change Bridge Documentation & Restoration](#)

[Outdoors Newsletter Nov 2002](#)

In January 1997 after months of preparation, a dedicated group of volunteers made a dramatic rescue from a farm stream in Macedon, NY. The bridge they saved, the Aldrich Change Bridge, is the only surviving canal change bridge and the oldest cast and wrought-iron vehicular bridge in New York State, and possibly the United States. This unique historic artifact, built in 1858 and located in Rochester before being moved to the Macedon-Palmyra line in 1880, will be restored and installed near its original location on the Towpath Trail in Aqueduct Park. Visitors will be able to walk or bike up and over the bridge in just the same way the mules and horses did over 100 years ago, as they made their way from the south to the north side of the Canal.

Eric DeLony, Chief of the Historic American Engineering Record of the National Park Service will be documenting the bridge for a record in the Library of Congress. At a visit to view the bridge he said, "This is the most important ongoing bridge restoration project in the country."

Project Coordinator: Jay Harding

Project Timeline: Spring 2003

Project Budget: \$210,000 (HUD)

PROJECT UPDATE:

From Bert Olton (11-5-02)

We have finished the assembly of the old Erie Canal Aldrich Change Bridge. It now sits on the ground approximately 70 feet west of where it will be placed, hopefully next spring or summer. Several members of our committee are now working on acquiring the last of the stones

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

needed to complete the abutments for the bridge. We've spoken with crane services about lifting the bridge and swinging it over to the abutments. Our next steps are to get the abutments finished, set the bridge in place, re paint it, build the ramps and pond.



Courtesy Beth Hoad

Prior to collapse

The bridge in its location on Creek Road, Macedon

Appendix 2: Proposals from town boards, continued

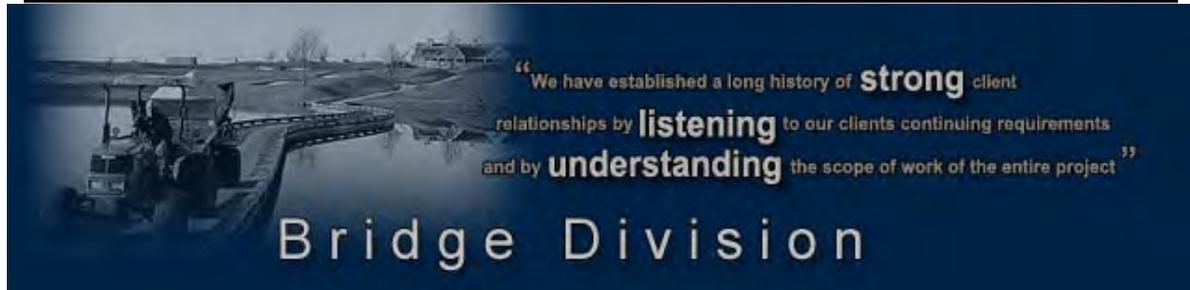


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PORTFOLIO

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The DFI Team now expands to include a Bridge Division to handle sales and construction of heavy timber bridges and structures on the national scene. The return of Dan Hughes to the DFI Team has provided us with a great opportunity to provide a highly specialized product with a strong focus on Customer Care. Heavy Timber Structures and Bridges that are designed and erected by our Teams of Craftsmen will meet all of your needs for utility while complimenting the grace and beauty of the surrounding environment.

Appendix 3: The Morrison Community Organic Farm (MCOF)

General Background:

The Morrison Farm Property has been in agricultural use since the original 1669 Thomas Wheeler Grant. The Land Stewardship Committee recommends that this remarkable 337-year history be respected, kept intact, and brought forward by developing the south portion of the property into a Community Organic Farm.

The property takes its present name from John and Elizabeth Morrison, who purchased the property in 1954 from Edward L. Forbes. For the next 35 years, Elizabeth (Betty) Morrison ran a small riding stable on the property, teaching local children horsemanship and a love of animals.

The property, 32 acres of pasture, woodlands, and wetlands, is one of the last remaining vestiges of Acton's rural past. Maintaining a significant portion of the property as a Community Organic Farm will preserve for current and future generations a sense of Acton's agricultural past, qualities of Acton that are rapidly disappearing. Moreover, a Community Organic Farm will use this beautiful remnant of Acton's history in a way that honors that heritage and offers all Acton residents activities that have lifelong appeal and can provide a focal point for intergenerational community involvement.

The recommendations presented below are based in large part on the experiences of the Natick Community Organic Farm, a very successful farm that has been in operation for more than 25 years. Several other similar farms were visited and consulted as well (see Models section below).

Farm Mission:

The mission of the MCOF will be to maintain open space through sustainable organic agriculture and foster an awareness of where our food comes from. This mission will be accomplished through the following goals:

- Provide fresh, organically-grown produce to the community.
- Offer hands-on, real-world learning experiences for Acton residents of all ages.
- Provide recreational activities involving farm-based traditions.
- Foster a conservation ethic and active citizenship.
- Foster an appreciation of the natural world.

Farm Goals:

The MCOF will provide for Acton residents of all ages hands-on educational experiences, exercise, and the satisfaction of seeing the fruits of their own labor. Moreover, the experience of working on a farm, besides bringing personal contentment, promotes a deeper understanding of the impact humans have on the natural world and a greater respect for all living things.

The MCOF will practice sustainable organic agriculture. This means agricultural practices will adhere to the principles of nature itself; they will protect and add value to the farm, its soils and water, rather than depleting or contaminating them while producing food in the form of crops and livestock. 'Organically Grown,' now a legal term, prohibits the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides because it includes consideration of long-term ecological outcomes. Coincidentally, this mindset perfectly parallels the Land Stewardship Committee's guiding philosophy in caring for the town's conservation lands.

Appendix 3: The MCOF, continued

Farm Development:

If approved, the MCOF will develop in phases over the next 2-3 years. We envision the farm's growth as a slow and deliberative process, dictated by the wishes and needs of both Acton's families and its school system. Such a community farm would provide activities for every age group, a farm garden with produce stand during the summer, and community garden plots, as well as children's gardens. Self-picking activities would be provided by berry patches (blueberry, blackberry, and raspberry; perhaps strawberry); and by a cutting- flower garden.

According to staff at the Natick Community Organic Farm, animals are the key to success. Livestock, gradually assimilated into the farm's programs, would eventually include rabbits, laying hens, turkeys, milking goats, and sheep. Young people's farm classes would include the care and enjoyment of these animals.

The open hayfield, lower meadow, pond-edge, and woodland all provide perfect habitats for nature and art classes for all ages. The schools, adults, and farm programs and personnel would work in concert to develop appropriate areas for study. These programs would be gradually implemented as volunteers and liaisons are established.

An LSCOM-maintained trail system through the entire 32 acres would provide year-round access for passive recreation. Seasonally, the farm would sponsor appropriate festivals: strawberry fest, Easter egg hunt, birthing time, pumpkin harvest, and barbecuing are only a few of the possibilities.

Building Uses:

Barn: We envision a restored barn, opened up internally, and glassed around long portions of the north and east walls, both for the views and for solar heat. Horse stalls and other partitions would be removed. Wide, sliding glass doors on both the south and north faces would promote a feeling architecturally of an integrated indoor/outdoor interface. A generous deck, with stone ramp, abutting portions of the building's north and east walls would provide areas for barbecuing, outdoor classes, picnicking, and many other informal activities through summer and fall. The view would be sweeping. The loft would remain for storage purposes. A small workshop and storage area for small tools and supplies would be provided either within the barn proper or in some portion of the attached carport, structurally reinforced and walled in.

Farm uses would include a farm office, and farm classrooms for indoor art and nature studies.

The opened-up first floor area would provide a venue for other community activities representative of an earlier, rural time; many communities are experiencing a resurgence of interest in square dancing and round dancing, quilting parties, folk singing, potluck suppers with evening speaker, etc. The space could also be rented out for more 'modern' activities, such as conferences, corporate retreats, and, of course, weddings, birthdays, Eagle Scout Courts of Honor, and coming-of-age celebrations.

House: The house needs to be brought up to code, and the kitchen and bathroom modernized to make a comfortable home for a caretaker, with family if needed. The caretaker would, for minimal or no rent, care for the livestock and tend gardens when regular farm programs were not in session; perform routine, minor maintenance of the buildings; and direct the land's best use. The caretaker(s) could either be a family seeking a farm life, or one or more graduate students studying agricultural programs.

Appendix 3: The MCOF, continued

Garage: The garage would be used for the storage of large farm machinery.

Shed: The three-sided shed nearest the meadow would need renovation, but would provide shelter for sheep and goats in severe weather.

Chicken coop: The present chicken house would be moved to the area between the barn and animal shed and would provide nesting boxes for the hens.

Rabbit hutches: A few already exist; others could be built by the High School shop manager.

Paddocks: The forward (south) paddock would be used for expansion animal pasture in future. The rear (north) paddock is the preferred location for the farm's children's vegetable gardens. Community garden plots would be located beyond the north paddock fence.

Greenhouse: Eventually, a greenhouse will be needed. It should be located to take advantage of a southern exposure.

Other Farm Areas:

Hen yard and livestock pasture: The area between the north side of the barn and the open-sided shed would provide a hen yard, places for rabbit hutches, and an enclosure for goats and sheep. If the livestock were pastured in the south paddock, the cut-flower garden could be located in this area as well. There is both sun and water available, as well as easy access to the gardens from the grassy track that leads through this area to the main open hayfield.

Community garden plots: These would be located beyond the north paddock's north fence. This area has been tested for soil suitability. It has plenty of sun. Outside water already on the property could be brought further up.

Children's garden: The north paddock would contain the children's garden and possibly the cutting garden. This arrangement would allow the educational activities to be centralized around the barn, the paddocks, and the various sheds.

Berry patches: Berry bushes could be grown anywhere beyond the shed and the north fence of the north paddock, as well as along the east wall of the same paddock. These areas are suitable soil- and sun-wise, and the shrubby plants would provide some wind break and predatory animal protection for the more tender plants within the paddock area.

Other Farm Uses:

Other farm uses that would encourage community involvement could include pony rides for children carried out by the equestrians; Fall harvest festival; Easter egg hunt; winter solstice observation; Fourth of July barbecue and folk music gathering; meteor shower viewing; sugaring off gathering; annual Scottish Games event, sponsored locally, and on and on.

Parking:

Parking has been the single most challenging issue that the MFRC has considered. Not wanting to pave over any portion of the 32-acre parcel, an expansion of the present Ice House Pond parking area is favored. Further pocket parking spaces and expansion, and use of the cemetery soccer field, as discussed in the main recommendations document are favored.

Appendix 3: The MCOF, continued

It should be noted that there is sufficient space for lined parking on the grassy area along the west fence of the north paddock between the track that leads to the open hayfield and the area reserved for the livestock pasture. This grassy area would be used for temporary parking for dropping-off and picking-up for people and supplies related to the gardens. There is space for a turn-around area.

These parking spaces are consistent with the amount of parking space currently needed by the Natick Community Organic Farm.

Volunteers:

An important premise for all of these recommendations is that a great deal of the work would be provided, at least initially, and most likely for time to come, by volunteers. Such organizations as the Boy and Girl Scouts, the 4-H clubs, other interest groups, and, as the school programs come on line, the children and supervising adults, would all contribute to the effort. The Northeast Correctional Center could be engaged to provide heavy equipment as well as labor for the heavier tasks. Prisoners could be scheduled to work when children are not present.

With appropriate publicity, many materials needed to operate the programs could be donated. As an example, items such as used egg crates could be donated for packaging of the hen's eggs. The list is long.

Models:

Consultations with the heads of several community organic farms in the Middlesex county area indicate that having a clear mission, starting small, establishing achievable goals, and engaging the schools, community organizations, and residents are all essential for the farm to be successful. Just as important is having a dedicated, knowledgeable, and personable caretaker who is committed to sustainable organic agriculture and to working with and educating people of all ages. The LSCOM is committed to heeding this advice and will work with the community to create programs that fit the interests, talents, and skills of Acton residents.

Area farms that we have consulted, used as models for this proposal, and that have eagerly offered assistance to help us get started are the Natick Community Organic Farm, Concord's Gaining Ground, Lincoln's Codman Farm, and Weston's Land's Sake. Other nearby resources include Audubon's Drumlin Farm.

Phases:

All the farms that we consulted stressed starting small. Building up livestock, types of produce, farm programs, and school interfaced programs, as well as programs for adults, should be carried out gradually over time, allowing one effort to mature before initiating another. Accordingly, we suggest below four phases that would lead to a modest, early implementation of the farm concept. The guidelines below show a breakout of a possible fully functional farm 15 or 20 years out.

Please note that these guidelines are organized according to separate components of the farm implementation, and do not therefore correlate exactly with the timeline included in the main recommendations. To some extent one or more of these activities could be taking place concurrently.

Appendix 3: The MCOF, continued

Phase 1: Reclaim the land and establish gardens

- restore and replenish the pastures
- establish community garden plots
- establish the main farm garden (vegetables, berries, and flowers for cutting)

Phase 2: Community involvement

- establish relationships with community organizations (e.g., Acton Garden Club, Acton Historical Society, Acton Lion's Club, etc.)
- establish working relationships with Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and 4-H Clubs, etc.
- raise funds for Phase 3

Phase 3: Restore/refurbish buildings

- refurbish the farmhouse for caretaker occupancy
- refurbish housing for chickens, rabbits, and goats
- redesign and renovate the barn for farm and community activities
- build a greenhouse

Phase 4: Caretaker and educational programs

- hire a caretaker
- develop educational programs with the Acton schools and with Acton Community Education
- begin raising animals

Example of Hands-on Learning: The Vegetable Garden

- plan the garden: what to grow, where to plant, when to plant, how big?
Draw a plot plan.
- soil test for pH, etc., and plan for adjustments if needed
- determine the sunny areas versus areas with shade
- order seeds (from where, how many), plant the seeds indoors, and care for them
- transplant seedlings, making sure they get enough sun, and caring for them
- establish a compost system
- plant the garden—spacing, how deep, mulch, supports
- keep garden weed-free, well-watered, and nourished
- Harvest—when, how, storage

Appendix 4: Stockman Report

Notes from Meeting with Ed Stockman, NOFA Representative
Morrison Farm, July 17, 2006

There is tremendous potential for a productive farm as well as a broad spectrum of educational programs on the Morrison Farm property. It is central to a dense population, which means it has superb marketing potential. Also, it is close to Drumlin Farm, which is a distribution center for Mass NOFA's bulk-order organic materials orders in the spring.

Supermarket food prices will exactly parallel our steadily increasing fuel costs. These increased costs result from transportation charges, as well as costs associated with operating large-scale farm-equipment and production. Small farms, like the Morrison Farm, will become critical as it becomes more important to grow produce locally. Conventional agriculture is the largest polluter in the U.S. and is responsible for 30% of pollution world-wide. Organic farming does not pollute.

There are different definitions of 'organic' within the context of farming. The USDA's definition is less stringent than many people engaged in small-scale organic agriculture would like (including many members of NOFA, which had stricter standards before the USDA set national organic standards in the 1990s). The Morrison Farm enterprise should decide on its definition and then make sure that anyone it hires to oversee the farm, or who has garden plots there, agrees with this definition.

Regarding the farm's produce garden, the size of the back paddock* is perfect as is. Ed feels that a successful farm starts small and expands only as required. An experienced farmer can usually get \$20,000 from an acre by doing a succession of plantings.

Ed also offered that organic milk actually makes money, whereas conventionally-produced milk does not. One of the attendees, Ann Chang, observed that young mothers are now buying organic milk exclusively for their babies in an effort to avoid growth hormones and antibiotics.

Ed tested soils with an auger in both the open hayfield and within the back paddock. Most samples were classified as 'Hinckley' soils, which are excellent for farming with appropriate irrigation as needed. Hinckley soils tend to become droughty during dry spells. Therefore, it is critical to have access to enough water. In a dip toward the back of the open hayfield, the soils were more silty, but the samples returned to Hinckley as the testing neared the woodlands.

In meeting the field rotation requirement, the 'resting' field could be used for pasturing livestock. A certain portion of the open hayfield would need to be used to produce hay for the animals. If a square-baler is used, older children in the farm programs could move and stack the bales (round bales require a fork-lift for moving).

To prepare the field for planting, it would need to be brush hogged (or rototilled, in the case of the back paddock) and planted with a cover crop of oats and red or white clover. If the field is planted after Oct. 1, winter rye could be used. However, winter rye is more difficult to rototill under when it comes time for spring planting. If this treatment is done during the fall of 2006 and farming cannot commence in the spring of 2007, the field can be treated again in the fall of 2007.

As a necessary first step, the baseline soil pH must be determined. UMass Amherst provides an appropriate soil-testing service. Ed recommended taking soil samples from 5 equidistant spots in the back paddock area from the top 8-10" of soil, mixing these samples in a bucket, and sending a pound of the mixed soil to the testing service. This procedure should be repeated for the areas where we intend to grow blueberries, as this crop requires very acidic conditions.

Appendix 4: Stockman Report, continued

Other observations of Ed's: The area is great bird habitat.

Soon the federal government will be providing credits for alternative energy uses, like solar. The farm could provide demonstrations and displays of alternative energy uses, which would generate educational benefit for the town. When the greenhouse is built, it should be solar-powered.

The mature pine woodlands provides another possible component for the farm. A modest forestry/timbering project could be implemented there, including demonstrations of low-impact oxen or horse-team log-removal. This pine forest is unusual in the quality of the trees, and both saw logs and possibly some veneers could be harvested before the trees begin to decline. The New England Forestry Foundation headquarters is located in Littleton, where information can be gathered.

In regard to the barn, judging from the barn's roofline, the building is in good condition. Stockman said he would have no real concerns about its structural integrity.

In regard to the back paddock fencing, it is attractive, defines the crop garden area nicely, and enhances the farm-ey look of the property. However, it would somewhat limit a tractor's ability to rototill into the corners and to brush hog fence line invasives.

It would be a real draw to borrow 2-3 beef steers from the prison, 4H, or some other source, and have them grazing in the front paddock until it is time to rototill the grass under. We might not want to do this until we had an overseer living in the house. But Concord's Sudbury Field cattle are untended.

Bottom Lines: Mr. Stockman was very encouraging and enthusiastic about the farming potential for this property. He also felt that it would be well suited for the planned educational programs. The proposed nature classes and other farm and gardening programs are unusual and exciting.

When informed of the requirement for a recreational field, he responded that it would be a misuse of this property to put either a parking area or a recreational field on it. It takes a great deal of work to reclaim from forest and stones an acre of land in New England and to make it into good farmland. Within the next 10 years it is likely that an already brewing agricultural crisis produced by climate change and energy issues will have grown so that all available farmland will need to be used for growing crops.

He said quite unequivocally that if a recreational field is required as part of the plan, it would be a much better use of the existing resources to take a portion of the pine woodlands for that purpose, running the access to it down the margin of the Morrison Farm property, than to put a playing field on the current high-grade agricultural land.

Note for future consideration: Beth Mullen (who attended the evaluation), a student from Acton who will be beginning her senior year at Sterling College in Vermont in the fall of 2007, would like to have the development of the community organic farm at Morrison Farm as her senior project. She observed that the Morrison Property is ideally situated for networking with the experienced and like-minded folks who run the cluster of already established farms in surrounding towns.