



Negotiations Moving on Madison Landing

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By Marianne Sullivan, Source Senior Staff Writer

As late as Monday afternoon, sources said, “conversations” were underway between the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Leyland Alliance. The subject is Leyland’s interest in a possible sale of the former Griswold Airport site.

Representatives from TPL and the Board of Selectmen met in a 90-minute closed door session Aug. 5. The topic was the status of negotiations between TPL and Leyland. TPL is acting as the intermediary in discussions with the developer and with the town.

Would Leyland be open to discussing a possible sale of the 42 acres it owns that was once the Griswold Airport? Sources said TPL and Leyland have been talking off and on for months. Recently the discussions grew more serious.

Leyland Alliance has proposed the development of Madison Landing, a 127-unit active adult condominium community, on the site. Since the developers first appeared before the Planning and Zoning Commission six years ago, the development has been controversial. The property sits adjacent to Hammonasset State Park, the Hammonasset River, and the tidal marshes of Long Island Sound. TPL is a national, nonprofit, land conservation organization that helps structure, negotiate, and complete land transactions for conservation. Alicia Betty, a Madison resident and project manager at TPL, opened talks with Leyland months ago at the request of town officials. The hope was that TPL could broker a deal that would permit purchase of the former airport site for conservation rather than development.

Leyland purchased the property for approximately \$4 million. Neither TPL nor town officials are prepared to say what dollar figure Leyland may have put on any possible sale. According to reports, TPL shared a likely purchase price with the selectmen during the Aug. 5 executive session.

Even if the developer and TPL reach a final agreement, any town purchase will require action by the boards of selectmen and finance, a public hearing, a town meeting, and likely a referendum vote.