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November 25, 2009

SEARCH



Letters

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Last Chance

Published 10/15/2009 12:00 AM

Updated 10/15/2009 03:00 PM

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Madison voters will have an opportunity in an early December referendum to express their convictions about protecting the Griswold Airport land as open space. Both candidates for first selectman election have said that this referendum should be held and both have said they support the town's purchase of the land for open space. This is a bipartisan issue. Let's make our discussion civil, respectful, and factually accurate.

Preserving the airport land as open space will protect the 402 acres of tidal wetlands of Hammonasset Park, will protect the Hammonasset River from pollution, and ultimately help protect Long Island Sound from further degradation.

Much of the debate will center on the price. Like it or not, we must accept the fact that the price has gone up based on decisions made by our town and the Department of Environmental Protection. After many months of negotiations, Alicia Betty, the Trust for Public Land attorney who has conducted these type of negotiations for 11 years, has reached the best achievable price of \$9.7 million. Many of Madison's and our neighboring towns' citizens have already offered significant personal pledges to help reduce the size of the town's bond to purchase the land. Negotiations are taking place for both state and federal supporting funds. In less than two weeks, TPL will have appraisals from independent appraisers that tell us the actual value of this land in this market. They are likely to be higher than the negotiated price.

We are pleased that the town (and Stop Griswold Over Development) supports ball fields on the upland near Route 1. The many environmental organizations that are supporters agree that ball fields are compatible here with open space.

Preserving this land is absolutely essential for maintaining the unique character of our town. This is our last chance.

William B. McCullough

Madison

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