

A Citizen's Proposal for the Reclamation and Establishment of a **Signature Park** for the Town of Essex at Northern Conomo Point

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Picture by Marinas.com

Presentation Goals

- Propose that all of the land on Northern Conomo Point be retained by the Town of Essex so that future generations may have full access to one of the most beautiful spots in New England.
- Propose a **land use plan** and strategy that **guarantees** the TOWN will create a **Signature Park** in a responsible and palatable way.



What is a Signature Park?

Parks helps to define towns and generate substantial civic, economic, and fiscal value.

- Provides a CIVIC IDENTITY
- Produces PUBLIC ENJOYMENT
- Increases REAL ESTATE value
- generates TOURISM/Economic Activity



<http://www.cityparksalliance.org/storage/documents/HRA - Signature Park Survey Findings 11-4-11 2.pdf>

A Signature Park also...

- Is the social, recreational and events hub of one's Town.
- **Provides for family time , enjoyment of nature and personal recharge.**
- Corresponds to a town's historical and cultural identity – In the case of Essex, its maritime heritage.
- **Has a defined space apart from private ownership providing a sense of individual and community ownership.**

The underutilization of Centennial Grove has often been used as a reason why Essex doesn't need a park.

- The Grove has suitable open space but does not provide sufficient access to the water.
- In the summer, the Lake itself is not always the most inviting place to swim- lily pads and all.
- People move to Cape Ann to be near the ocean – not its lakes.



So what does Essex have for open space and waterfront access?






Northern Conomo Point is the Town's most valuable piece of property.

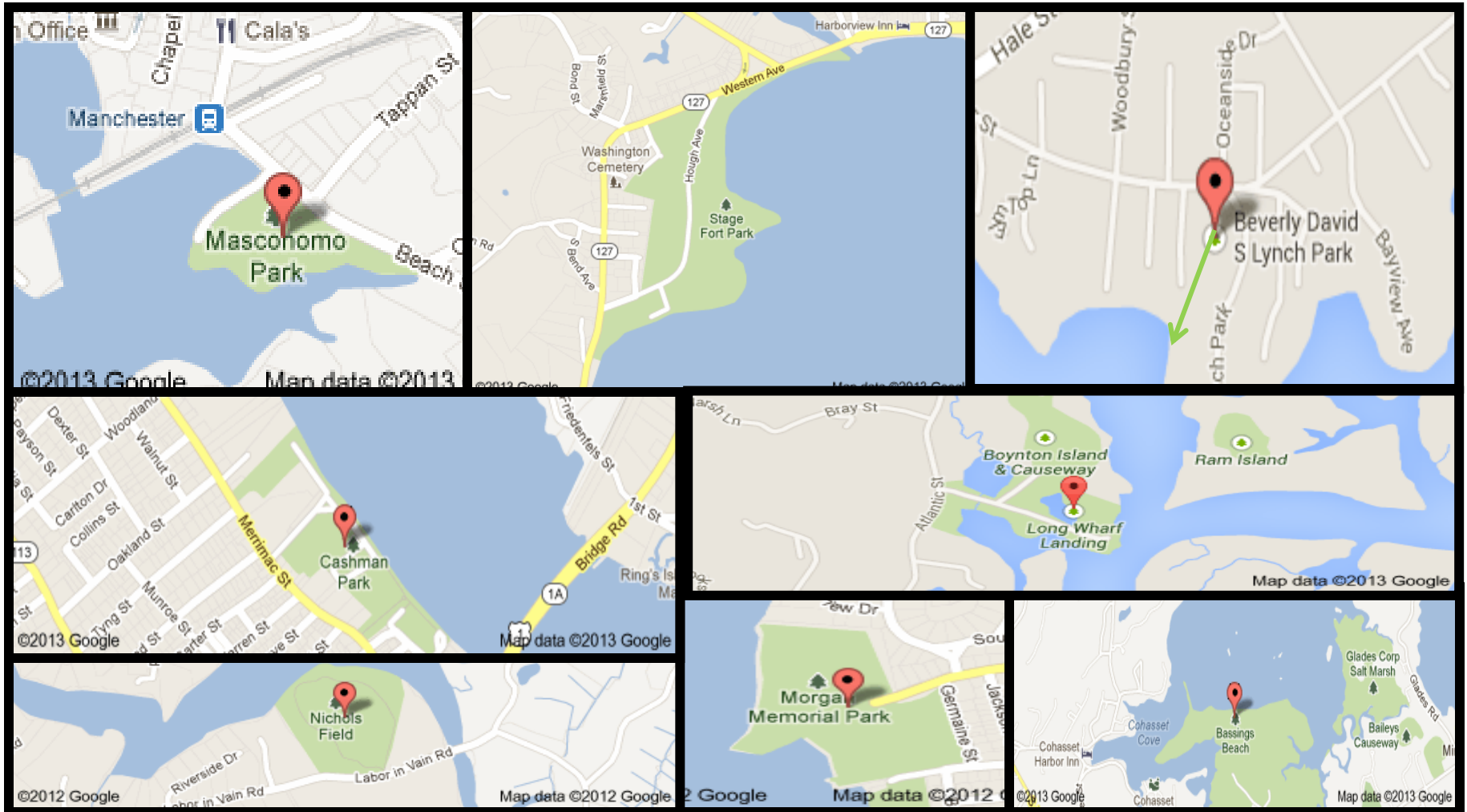
Arguably one of the most scenic spots in New England

Public access to a place that would combine the current waterfront access with ample opportunities for social and recreational activities.

A space that will easily rival Manchester's Tucks Point and Gloucester's Stage Fort Park in both beauty and utility!

 [Return to What We Offer](#)

If you don't think open space on waterfront property has value, then, ask yourself, why every town along the New England Coast has at least one if not multiple parks.



Pine and Cashman Park in Newburyport



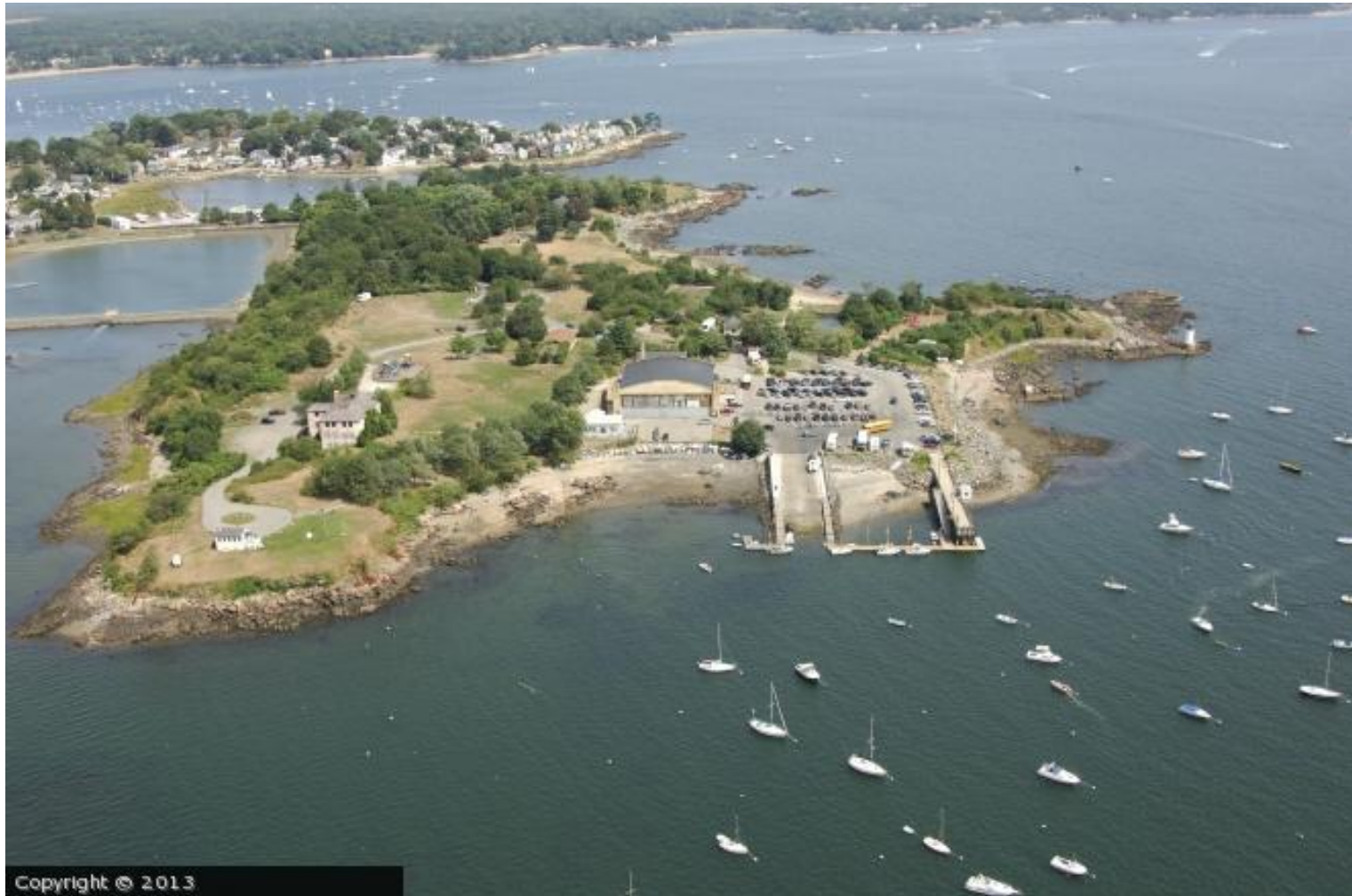
Marblehead's, Fort Sewall Park



Nichols Field, Ipswich



Winter Park, Salem

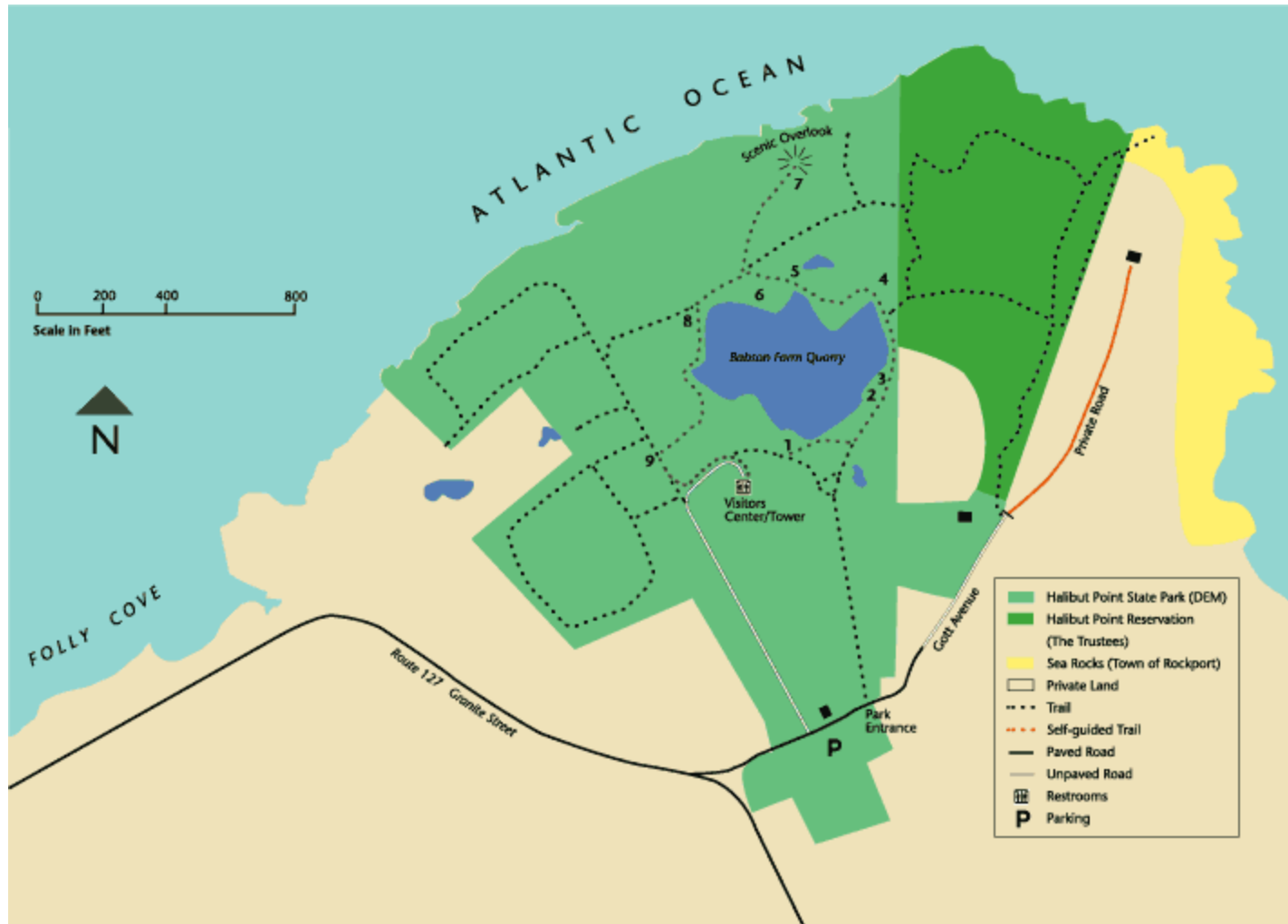


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Stage Fort Park, Gloucester – amongst several places combining acres of open space and access to the water.



Halibut Point State Park, Rockport



Manchester's Masconomo Park, Tucks Point, Singing Beach....



Lynch Park, Beverly

- David S. Lynch park on YELP
 - <http://www.yelp.com/biz/lynch-park-beverly>
 - This gorgeous 16-acre oceanfront park has plenty of open spaces for sports such as volleyball, badminton, and children's soccer...
 - Access is free to Beverly residents, yet another wonderful perk of living in Beverly.
 - One of the best places for me to be on a sunny summer afternoon is on a hill in Lynch Park underneath the shade trees. I couldn't say enough about this lovely place; well done, Beverly!
 - A great place to bring kids and hang out for the day. Nice big open field, plenty of benches, two beaches, a playground, a concession stand and a beautiful rose garden make up this beautiful facility. I've always loved to ride my bike down there and hang out with friends
 - Two beaches provide endless enjoyment - be sure to check the tide schedule!



What we already have at Conomo
Point and what we could have!

We have waterfront access...



We could have space for a variety of Community uses



Spontaneous



Planned



Educational

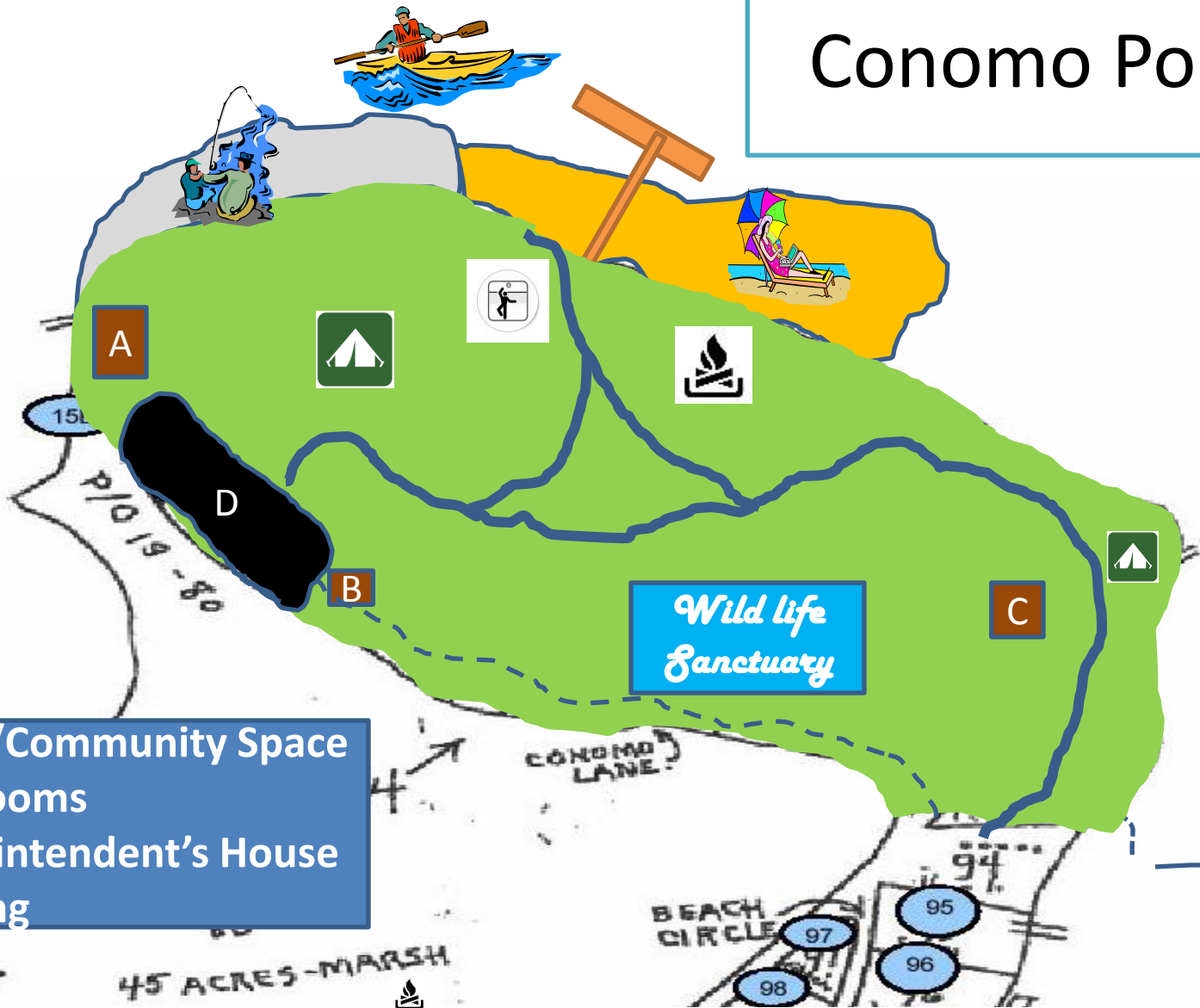


Environmental (We owe it to the River)



So what might a Signature Park on
Conomo Point look like?

Conomo Point



- A- Boat /Community Space
- B- Restrooms
- C- Superintendent's House
- D- Parking

How can we get from here to there in a responsible and palatable way?





The Current Plan

- Continue leasing all properties on the point.
- **Make improvements to waterfront access.**
- Reassess needs for open space in 15-20 years based on observed usage.
- **Sell large portion of prime waterfront property to cash in on land.**





A Confluence of Issues and Needs



100-Year
Leases



MANCHESTER ESSEX
ESSEX ELEMENTARY



Do we really have the right to sell any more land at Conomo Point?

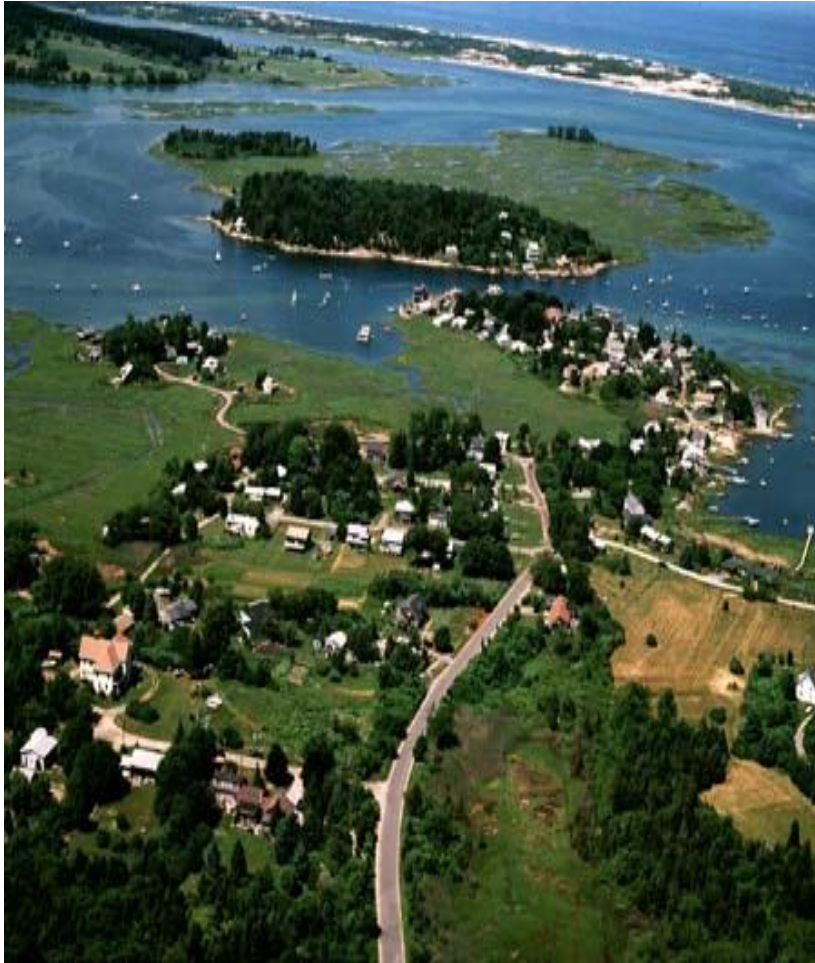
We are ignoring our responsibility to future generations by not guarding the town's most valuable resource.



To me, selling CPN, any of it, would be like selling Yellowstone Park to rebuild the Whitehouse!



We need an approach that...



- is fiscally responsible to both current and future generations of Essex residents.

- allows current lessees to feel a part of the creation of something spectacular and permanent for the Town of Essex.**

- will add to the beauty and environmental integrity of the Essex River.

We could do that with Life Leases

- Assign life leases to current lessees.
- **Decide now on a final year for all leases to end – 30, 40 or even 50 years from now!**
- **When a lessee passes away or decides to leave Conomo Point the house is removed to create open space.**
- **Change the Town Bylaws to prevent future sales or transfers of leases or land.**

Advantages to the lessees



- Current lessees, live out their lives enjoying the community with their children and in some cases grandchildren.
- Avoids the unfair and painful process of selecting houses to remove - even for limited open space.

Advantages to the town



- Will allow the town to heal from a divisive issue that has plagued town meetings for decades. Why continue this for another 20 years?
- Sets in motion the creation of a beautiful park that over time will be a financial asset.
- Improves the Quality of Life in Essex by providing a spectacular place for social and recreational opportunities and spiritual recharge.

Fiscal Advantages



- Will provide the same revenue stream for the next 20 years and more. After that, decreases at first slowly and later exponentially.
- Studies have shown that creating public open space increases land values significantly.
- Dictates even smarter and more responsible planning as well as more active participation by town residents in making choices.
- In 40 years, new construction, remodeling and an increased population will provide a broader base of tax revenues making CPN a smaller piece of the pie.

Disadvantages



- Those of us today who would like to see the point as all open space will not be around.
- Current lessees' children and grandchildren will not have the same degree of access as lessees do today.
- Town will not have \$8-10 million from estimated sales of land to pay down debt related to improved space for fire and police, Elementary School, town hall and other costs .

In Conclusion

- While the \$8-12 million in cash is a huge amount of money that we could certainly use to offset current and near future expenses, the loss of this precious piece of property will most surely be regretted by ourselves , our children and future generations.
- Lets make a decision to reclaim all of Northern Conomo Point for open space. This will force us to be even more responsible and smarter planners in facing today's big challenges.

Thank you!

Conomo Point 2050



Miscellaneous Slides

September 12, 2013

Letter: 'Life leases' can provide Conomo solution

Gloucester Daily Times

To the editor:

Regardless of whether the town or the lessees own the houses at Conomo Point, one thing remains the same: No final decision has been made as to the future of this spectacular place.

...One possible solution that has not been publicly discussed is that of life leases.

A life lease, a legal term used in real estate, is exactly what it says. Current lessees and their spouses would be allowed to live out their lives on the Point. Once the lessee decided to leave or passed away, the house would be removed to create open space.

For the complete article go to –

<http://www.gloucestertimes.com/letters/x86521903/Letter-Life-leases-can-provide-Conomo-solution>

Some Other Considerations Regarding the Bylaws

- How to identify the lessee and spouse who would be the recipient of the lease.
- Decide on a reasonable end time for all remaining leases such as by 2050.
- Include a house removal clause once the lessee passes away or decides to leave the property. A house removal fund could be set up to remove the houses as they become available.
- Redefine the responsibilities of the Selectmen and various committees in relation to the implementation of life leases so as to guarantee no future sales. We have no idea who will be in charge in 10, 20 or more years.
- Require any future changes related to selling of land on CP to be done as a **referendum**.
- The Town might have to entertain a grace period for the sale of leases for those lessees who do not want to continue under the new bylaws and lease agreements.

Manchester's Smallest Park (same scale)

Tuck's Point



Conomo Point



Glen Cove Park New York, NY

