

April 11, 2024

#### Access and Conservation Advisory Work Group.

Background: The Management Plan for the Barre City Cow Pasture (2017-2027) recognizes there is only one designated entrance to the Cow Pasture, and that a large number of visitors access the property through trails on private abutting lands and City owned paper streets. In addition to public access, these properties provide important habitat diversity and resources to the wildlife that depend on the Cow Pasture. Surrounding undeveloped land also provides flood resiliency to the City of Barre and protects the stream corridor that flows through the Cow Pasture property.

The management plan states the Cow Pasture Committee will “investigate opportunities to conserve existing trails on abutting lands that provide access...and provide exceptional recreational, aesthetic and/or ecological value.” While none of the abutting properties are currently posted, change in ownership will threaten future public access. Given the severe housing shortage in Barre City, the potential for development of abutting properties, paper streets and city owned lots is much greater now than at any time since the creation of the Cow Pasture Conservation Area.

#### Objectives:

1) Develop a prioritized list of public and private non-motorized corridors, city owned properties and access points to the Barre City Cow Pasture Conservation Area.

Public corridors and city owned properties include paper streets, adjoining city owned lots, and existing paths, roads and trails on city owned property that access the Cow Pasture.

Private corridors include paths and trails and abutting lots on private property that (have historically) allowed access to the Cow Pasture.

2) Develop a tiered strategy for the protection of public and private lands. Including: adding city owned land to the Cow Pasture, placing trail or conservation easements on private abutting lands, purchasing private abutting lands, etc..

3) Educate the public on land ownership status and the need for access protection, through signs, social media post, etc.

4) Identify funding opportunities for land and easement acquisition and develop an internal process to apply for funding when a project has been identified.

The Advisory Work Group will meet on an as needed basis. The group will provide updates to the Cow Pasture Stewardship Committee at the Committee’s scheduled meetings and consult with the Committee regarding action items. While consensus making is important to the Cow Pasture Committee, it is recognized some decisions are time sensitive and do not lend themselves to consensus decision making. Therefore, permission is granted to the Advisory Work Group to make decisions that clearly align with the Committee’s mission statement, the Cow Pasture Management Plan and Advisory Work Group’s objectives. Any decisions that may exceed the focus of the Advisory Work Group or overlap with other advisory work groups or committee matters should be approved by the local leader.