

Good morning Senator Slossberg, Representative Stallone and members of the GAE Committee. My name is Tom Bowen; I am a resident of Newington and the Chairman of Newington's Open Space Committee.

The Town Of Newington requests the State of Connecticut to convey to the Town of Newington approximately 40 acres of the westerly ridgeline of the Cedar Crest Hospital, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, at 36 Russell Road, Newington.

Cedar Mountain, which Newington's residents consider the main link to our past, is characterized by steep slopes and irregular topography, with the majority of the terrain in excess of 16% grades and at the northwest side of the property with slopes exceeding 40% grades. As you may know, slopes in excess of 15% may not be developed, thus most of this land would probably need to be left as open space regardless of its disposition.

The entire Cedar Crest property is approximately 70 acres and this request does not contemplate any conveyance or interference with the buildings and properties supporting the buildings already located on this site.

The purpose of this conveyance, quite simply, is to preserve the Cedar Mountain trap rock ridgeline as dedicated public open space. The preservation of the Cedar Mountain's steep slopes is consistent with the Newington Plan of Conservation and Development and the Regional and State Plans of Conservation and Development which recommend the protection of Connecticut's trap rock ridges.

As you are already aware Newington is located between 2 major cities, Hartford and New Britain and thus struggles to maintain its suburban feel. It currently is the fourth most densely populated town in the Hartford Metropolitan Area, only behind Hartford, New Britain and Manchester.

Newington currently has only 11% of its land mass dedicated to open space which is well less than the State's stated goal of 25%.

This 40 acres parcel is part of approximately 194 acres which Newington is attempting to preserve as Open Space. The rest of it is privately held and will be

difficult for a Town with limited resources to attain. This parcel would indicate to other land owners the commitment of not only the Town but of the State to preserving open space.

Cedar Mountain has been part of the resident's history for as long as the Town has existed. Its trails are filled with hikers, young and old, eager to enjoy the quiet of the woods and the vistas of the entire valley. Its peaceful, quiet solitude is an escape from the hectic pace of everyday living and must be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

So please, partner with the residents of Newington and help us protect this land for current and future generations by conveying this parcel to Newington as dedicated open space.