



MANCHESTER ESSEX CONSERVATION TRUST

Preserving natural beauty, wildlife, and resources at the gateway to Cape Ann

MECT Takes Position to Oppose Shingle Place Hill 40B Development

Shingle Place Hill 40B Development Plan - MECT Update December 21, 2020

This bulletin is to update members and friends of MECT about the proposed development project for Shingle Place Hill and our response to the threat it represents.

What is our position?

- On December 3rd, the MECT board voted unanimously to oppose the Strategic Land Ventures, LLC 40B housing project.
- Foremost, we are defending the conservation values of the "crown jewels" of Cedar Swamp, Cathedral Pines, and the Wilderness Conservation Area. This includes The Trustees of Reservations and the Town's own conservation land as well as MECT property.
- We see direct and irreparable harm due to the project's destruction of habitat, degradation of wetland and river resources, introduction of noise and light pollution, and far-ranging visual impact, among other concerns.

What has MECT done to date?

- MECT has stated its concerns to Town officials on the significant risks the project poses to the environment, including downstream water resources and municipal drinking water.
- On October 7, MECT documented the proposal's shortcomings in a six-page [letter](#) sent to town officials and subsequently summarized these issues in our [earlier bulletin](#).
- We made detailed comments on the project's proximity to an environmentally critical area, the impact of blasting on groundwater, the lack of plans for storm water run-off, the failure to include critical information on the hydrology of the site, and the destruction of habitat.

What is MECT's plan moving forward?

- Our goal, under a 'friendly 40B', was to eliminate or significantly mitigate the aforementioned threats, however, in absence of any constructive response from the developer, we now find ourselves with no viable option other than outright opposition.
- We have engaged experienced legal and technical consultants to deepen our understanding of critical issues and further inform MECT supporters, town citizens, and officials.
- Our mission continues a legacy of work by Manchester citizens to conserve this land dating back to the 1870s. MECT has spent the past 57 years piecing together a 1,500-acre quilt of now-protected land and we will fight to ensure that trust is upheld.

What can you do?

- If you haven't done so yet, please make sure to take the [Citizen's Survey](#) by December 31st to share your opinions.
- Use your own voice to make your personal perspectives known to [Manchester's Board of Selectmen](#) and other town officials.
- [Support MECT](#) in its investigation and legal activities. To note, MECT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
- Keep abreast of this rapidly evolving project and meetings through the Town's [40B project website](#), MECT's "[What's Happening](#)" page, [MECT's Facebook page](#), MBTS official [town social media](#), and the Cricket.
- A citizens' initiative has formed to oppose the Shingle Place Hill development and seek alternatives that better meet spirit and intent of 40B in creating affordable housing for the Town. Should you wish to learn more about that effort, visit their website at <http://www.citizensbythesea.com> and [Citizens by the Sea Facebook page](#).