



MANCHESTER ESSEX
CONSERVATION TRUST

Permanently preserving natural beauty,
wildlife habitat and open space resources

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IT'S BACK....

Just when you thought it was safe....

MECT was denied intervener status last week, which was no surprise given the predilection of the state Housing Appeals Committee



Defending Shingle Place Hill

This week brought us one step **closer** to participating in the continued defense of Shingle Place Hill.

About a year ago, the Manchester community was applauding the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) decision to DENY the comprehensive permit for a 40B development at Shingle Place Hill - something hugely inappropriate for many reasons, but especially because it would abut the Wilderness Conservation Area on School Street, and subject conservation resources to environmental ruin.

Since then, the issue has been out of the limelight and slowly moving through an appeal process. After the ZBA's denial of the permit, the developer appealed the decision to the state Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). The Town of Manchester filed motions to support the ZBA's decision, and MECT filed **two motions** to participate in the proceedings as an "intervener". The second intervener motion was filed by a "Ten Persons Group" (TPG) in accordance with HAC rules, and the citizen group includes MECT trustees and other concerned community members.

Why were two motions to intervene filed by MECT?

- Because of our commitment to support the town's decision
- Our robust contingency plan

MECT was denied intervener status last week, which was no surprise given the predilection of the HAC, **but** the Ten Person's Group intervener status was approved. The HAC has also ruled that MECT may assist the TPG in its advocacy.

The importance of this ruling in favor of the TPG cannot be understated, it is the first time that HAC has granted intervention to a group seeking to protect the environment. This sets a precedent for future appeals, underscoring the importance and impact of MECT's land defense activities.

Under the new Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) created this spring under the Healey-Driscoll administration, the HAC's mission is to provide an *impartial* forum to resolve conflicts arising from the siting of new affordable housing. Perhaps the new cabinet-level secretariat of the EOHLC can ease the tensions between the state's housing needs and the federal and state goals to protect our environment by protecting the wetlands and woodlands at the community level. Can we dare hope?

What happens next? A closed pre-hearing conference is scheduled for Aug 15, 2023. Both the TPG and MECT are allowed to attend in a limited capacity. We anticipate learning the schedule for an HAC site visit and the date of the first public meeting in the appeal process (expected to take place here in Manchester-by-the-Sea).

MECT will be there to support the town and the Ten Persons Group every step of the way, and the Housing Appeals Committee appeal process is just the next part of this journey. In the meantime, we continue to support the community's efforts to find more appropriate and truly affordable solutions for the local need for housing.

Now that you are caught up, please know this fight is far from over, and MECT will continue to both defend our environment and assist the town in defending the ZBA's wise and thoughtful decision.

The Manchester Essex Conservation Trust is commemorating 60 years of conservation efforts in the towns of Manchester and Essex. Since our founding in 1963, MECT has grown and evolved alongside the growth and development of the two towns. We are grateful for the continuous and expanding support from these communities, as our mission remains the same - to permanently safeguard, defend and oversee open spaces for the enduring welfare of the community while fostering a deeper connection between people and the natural environment that shapes the region's distinctive identity.

You can donate by credit card today without having a PayPal account or simply mail a check. We hope you will help us conserve paper by joining or renewing your membership now, either by Paypal, credit card or check.

[Click here to fortify our mission to continue to SAVE OUR WOODS](#)

When you hike or bike through the local woodlands, the conserved land and the unprotected land look the same. [Help us keep it that way](#) by getting it under permanent conservation protection.

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