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Open Space, Natural Resources & Trails Committee (OSNRTC)
Jonathan Sherwood, Chair
Richard Hucksam, Vice-Chair

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 26, 2026

TO: Clerk, Amesbury Zoning Board of Appeals

SUBJECT: Comments for 27 Kimball Road ZBA application

At their duly posted meeting on March 25, 2026, the OSNRTC discussed the ZBA application for the proposed 40B residential development at 27 Kimball Road. IAs presented to the Committee, the developer is seeking a waiver of local wetland resource zoning regulations. The ZBA requested comment from OSNRTC regarding 'open space impact.'

The OSNRTC was established in 2016 as an advisory board to the City in order "to implement the Open Space and Recreation Plan of the City of Amesbury by maintaining and updating the Plan itself and by supporting the City in the implementation of the action plans contained therein." The [City's 2020-2027 OSR Plan](#) establishes priorities for the preservation and conservation of open space, as well as the establishment of and maintenance of assets for passive and active recreation. The Committee includes appointed members from the public, the City Council, the Planning Board, and the Conservation Commission.

Comments focus on the following objective from the City's 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan:

- Objective: 1.2: Integrate natural resource preservation and enhancement with other community development activities to ensure continued delivery of ecosystem services

Regarding the proposed project at 27 Kimball Road (Parcel ID 73-19, 9.4 acres), OSNRTC notes the following:

- The parcel does provide ecological services to the community, as assessed in technical maps developed by and provided to the City by Essex Country Greenbelt Association, as part of developing our OSR Plan.
- The parcel is indicated as a 'Priority' parcel on the OSR's **Natural Resiliency** map (Appendix D). Natural resiliency is defined as a parcel's "ability to preserve biodiversity into the future accounting for the impacts of climate change. Rankings are: No Priority, Priority, High Priority, Critical Priority.



- The parcel is indicated as a 'Priority' parcel on the OSR's **Habitat Prioritization** map (Appendix D). Habitat Prioritization assess the parcel's "ability to preserve critical habitat lands." Rankings are: No Priority, Priority, High Priority, Critical Priority.



- As proposed (fully building on most of the parcel, including infill of wet areas), the ecological value of the parcel would largely be negated and would have a negative impact of the parcel's contributions to local habitat and natural resiliency.
- From a recreational perspective, the project does not appear to have any accommodations for passive recreation for residents in this densely structured project, such as a walking path. (We acknowledge that unfortunately there are no sidewalk amenities on Kimball Road in either direction to connect with, as well, creating an isolated residential area.)
- The projects design minimizes opportunities to restructure the existing unit count in ways that create more shared open space.

Respectfully submitted,
/jbs/

Jonathan Sherwood
Chair, OSNRTC