August 23, 2023

MEMO

TO: Hopkinton Planning Board

FROM: Dijit Taylor, Hopkinton Open Space Committee

TOPIC: Proposed 2023 Zoning Amendments

Thank you for offering the Open Space Committee an opportunity to review and comment on the zoning amendments proposed by the Economic Development Committee for town meeting 2024. We highly commend this new initiative to seek input from all the town groups with an interest in land use issues.

The Open Space Committee was created at town meeting in 2003 to advise the Selectboard about ...."the purchase of land or other property interests therein, for the protection of the natural heritage and rural character in the best interests of the Town".... The committee works from a set of selection criteria when evaluating what parcels to recommend for acquisition. To date. the OSC has assisted with the conservation of close to 1000 acres of land, some with town funds and some with money raised from other sources.

The Open Space Committee spent much of its August 16, 2023 meeting reviewing these zoning proposals. Anna Wells, Steven Whitley and Andrea Folsom attended the part of our meeting that addressed these proposals, with Anna helpfully responding to a wide range of questions and comments from the members of the Open Space Committee present at the meeting.

Overall, we are in agreement with the EDC that there is a need for more and different housing options for Hopkinton. We emphasize that the need for workforce or affordable housing is much greater than the need for market rate housing. We strongly feel that denser residential development should be focused as close as possible to the two existing villages centers, where residents can benefit from the advantages of a walkable community. This has the added benefit of leaving presently undeveloped land available for future conservation if its characteristics and future circumstances warrant.

In general, the OSC puts high priority on land that abuts water bodies or has important agricultural soils. The new natural resource inventory commissioned by the Conservation Commission highlights these, and other valuable, natural resources. We encourage you to take advantage of this new information and increase your awareness of these key resource areas.

Specific to the EDC's proposed overlay districts, we strongly agree with the Conservation Commission that parcels 228-046, 220-008, 228-009, and much of 220—23-002 should be excluded from the overlay district. Parcel 228-046 is a long-time