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Southborough MA 01772

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Southborough Select Board
17 Common St.
Southborough, MA 01772

To the Select Board,

I respectfully request your support for my reappointment to the Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC), on which I have served somewhere in vicinity of 25 years. Throughout that time, I have worked collaboratively with residents, organizations, boards, and town departments to advance land preservation and community priorities.

I have played a leading role in some of the most significant open space projects in Southborough's history, including the preservation of Chestnut Hill Farm in 2006. For that work, I was nominated by State Senator Pam Resor for the Unsung Heroine Award—the first woman nominated for the town—and was honored at the State House with citations from both the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives.

This morning, I spoke with Dave Ferris, owner of 118/120 Turnpike Road, regarding his experience working with me during the OSPC review of the proposed 40B development on his property. The project presented challenges because the proposed building site had previously been designated as land to be conveyed to the Town as open space. Through discussions among Mr. Ferris, his attorneys, and myself, we were able to reach a compromise that ultimately earned the Commission's support. Mr. Ferris stated that he "100% respects" me, views me as a strong advocate for land protection and the town's best interests, and appreciates that I approach issues with kindness, consideration, and professionalism. "A Class Act".

There have also been occasions when the OSPC and the Select Board have disagreed on the best path forward. Earlier today, former Select Board Chair John Rooney expressed his support for my reappointment and thanked me for my role in preserving the Golf Course while allowing construction of the Public Safety Building. Although the OSPC and Select Board disagreed for more than a year, shortly before Town Meeting the Select Board asked me if they could put the OSPC Amendment on the floor in place of the Select Board Article. That resulted in what many consider Southborough's "Grand Compromise."

I share these examples because they demonstrate my ability to work through difficult issues, find common ground, and earn respect from those with differing perspectives.

Over the past ~25 years, I have also been involved in numerous successful initiatives, including:

- Serving as President of the Southborough Citizens for Community Preservation Ballot Question Committee, which successfully led the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in 2003, which has provided funding for many important town projects.
- Serving for more than 15 years on the Community Preservation Committee as the OSPC representative, helping advance projects across all CPA categories, including affordable housing, historic preservation, recreation, and open space. Examples include the pickleball courts at Finn School, the South Union School playground, lighting at Mooney Field, Golf Course improvements and restoration of the Southborough Library. There are many more.
- Working for 15 years on the Town's acquisition of the 30.67-acre Halloran Property, culminating in 2018 Town Meeting purchase of the land.
- Serving on the committees that developed the 2009 and 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plans and initiating discussions for the upcoming required update.
- Overseeing numerous Eagle Scout, Boy Scout, and Girl Scout community projects.
- Representing Southborough as a founding member of the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord River Watershed Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (SUASCO CISMA), serving for many years on its Steering Committee alongside representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mass Audubon, DCR, Native Plant Trust, MassWildlife, and other conservation organizations.
- Participating in the Metrowest Conservation Alliance since its inception, providing opportunities to collaborate with regional experts, stay informed on best practices in conservation, and bringing valuable pro bono expertise to Southborough.
- Helping create the OSPC's Native Plant–Native Pollinator Initiative in 2017, a highly successful program that promotes biodiversity and addresses the significant decline of birds, butterflies, and other pollinator species.

I remain deeply committed to protecting Southborough's natural resources while working collaboratively to meet the needs of our community. I would be honored to continue serving on the Open Space Preservation Commission and respectfully ask for your support for my reappointment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Freddie Gillespie

Southborough Open Space Preservation Chair