

Questions to Consider:

- Should the Town of Ashland investigate buying and protecting strategically selected portions of the land in **Hopkinton and/or in Ashland** near the Ashland town wells to effectively manage and protect the vulnerable area surrounding our only source of public drinking water?
- Which portions of land near the Ashland town wells are most important to protect? How much land is worth protecting, given the high cost of buying land as well as the high cost of fixing water problems if they occur?
- If development must occur near the Ashland town wells, how can Ashland ensure that the development minimally affects our public drinking water supply?
- What exactly would Ashland be seeking, in terms of buffer areas, surface paving, fertilizer/pesticide use, road salting, storm water runoff or other issues?
- Is buying the 21.8 acre parcel for recreational playing fields a good value, compared to other possible strategies for creating additional playing fields in town?
- What are the most effective ways to communicate Ashland's concerns to Hopkinton at key steps in their process, to encourage them to make informed decisions that will not harm Ashland?
- How can you get involved and let your concerns be known as the process continues?

LAND
WATER

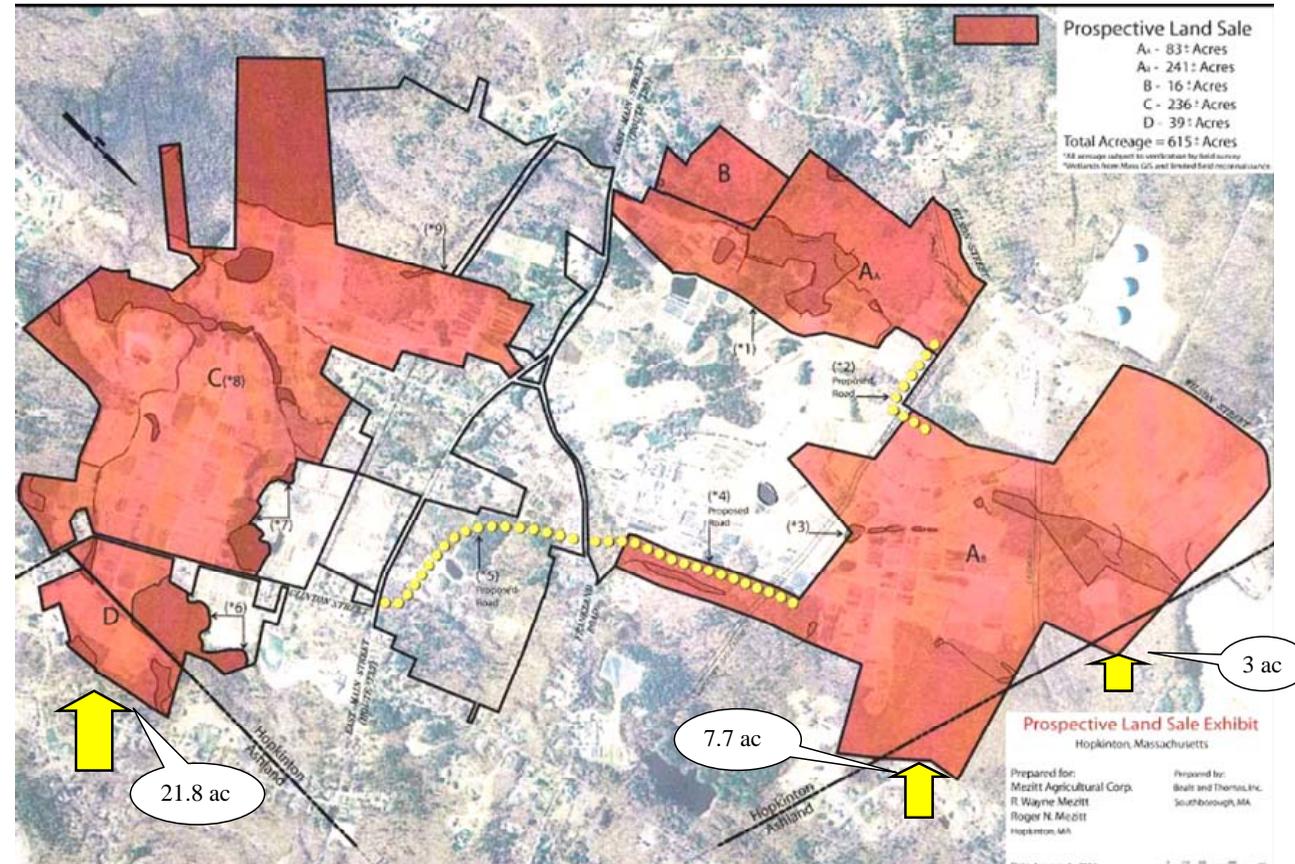
and
WESTON
NURSERIES

Prepared by

The Ashland Open Space Committee

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Land Location:



The owners of 615 acres of agricultural land in Ashland and Hopkinton known as **Weston Nurseries** are offering to sell it.

Some of this land is in the watershed of Ashland's only public drinking water source.

Most of the land lies in Hopkinton. However, parts of parcels A and D on the map lie in Ashland: some near Olive Street and some near the Ashland water treatment facility, adjacent to state-owned land and across from Hopkinton State Park. The acreage numbers indicated next to the arrows indicate the sizes of portions within Ashland's borders.

(Source: Ashland acreage numbers from Ashland's Assessor's Office. Map from

http://www.hopnews.com/weston_beals_map.htm.)

What Does It Mean For You?

Significance for Residents:

This summer's water ban is a wake-up call that we need to protect our water resources because they are scarce and precious.

As residents of Ashland, it's important for all of us to stay informed.

- Learn what this land sale could mean to you, your family and Ashland's drinking water.
- Let your views and concerns be known.
- Discuss this issue with your neighbors.
- Participate in opportunities for public input.

Significance for Public Drinking Water:

The land for sale includes a portion whose runoff feeds the source aquifer of drinking water in Ashland. Some of this land lies in Hopkinton and would thus be subject to Hopkinton's zoning, permitting, and other regulatory processes.

The Ashland Water Department wrote in its 2002, 2003 and 2004 Consumer Confidence Reports:

Hopkinton Reservoir is a water supply source that is fed by several tributaries and runoff from the surrounding area called the watershed, **this is an extremely vulnerable area**. The Ashland Water Department uses groundwater supplies from (5) wells located adjacent to the Hopkinton Reservoir. This source accounts for 100% of our total supply. Whatever activities are allowed in the watershed could adversely affect our water supply. **We, as concerned citizens, should work together to preserve land within the watershed**, and continue to protect our water source and the surrounding area from all types of pollution. [emphasis added]

Significance for Recreation:

A 21.8 acre parcel off Olive Street in Ashland would be appropriate for the creation of much-needed recreational playing fields

Hopkinton's Response:

Hopkinton is seriously considering buying the portion of the land within Hopkinton. The Hopkinton Land Use Study Committee studying this issue is seeking one or more potential partners so that the land is used in a way that is most advantageous to the Town of Hopkinton.

Ashland's Response:

Several Ashland residents have begun a dialogue with counterparts in Hopkinton. The Board of Selectmen submitted a letter of interest to the Hopkinton Land Use Study Committee, expressing Ashland's perspective and concerns. A newly formed Weston Nurseries Ad Hoc Committee will study the issue further, coordinate with Hopkinton as appropriate, and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Coordination is important because Hopkinton's decisions regarding the land within the watershed of Ashland's town wells might affect Ashland residents.

After all, water flow does not stop at town boundaries.

Preservation and Recreation Funding in a Tough Economy:

Recall the use of the dollar-for-dollar state match of our **Community Preservation Act** (CPA) funds to reduce the taxpayer burden for restoring Town Hall.

Similarly, Ashland should consider CPA funds as one potential source of funding to buy land for an open space buffer to protect our water resources and to create additional recreational playing fields.

Consider the cost of doing nothing if the result of the land sale were to negatively affect Ashland's drinking water. Correcting water problems and developing additional water supplies might be expensive outcomes if they occurred.