



Community Preservation Act Committee

Date: Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Time: 6:00pm-8:30pm

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

Please register in advance for this meeting

town-arlington-ma-us.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIpccuhrzorHNHMF3kJZ0FgrIkDIBHsjjHH

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Agenda

1. Review and approval of minutes
2. FY24 Applicant Presentations

6:10-6:20p	Hills Hill Mountain Biking Trails	Arlington Rec Dept.
6:30-6:40p	Menotomy Rocks Park Picnic and Playground	Arlington Rec Dept.
6:50-7:00p	Invasive Vegetation Removal	Arlington Conservation Commission
7:10-7:20p	Mill Brook Preservation (Buffer and Beautify)	Arlington Conservation Commission
7:30-7:40p	21 Pond Lane Feasibility Study	Dept of Planning and Community Development
7:50-8:00p	No Name Brook Preservation	Open Space Committee
8:10-8:20p	Orchard Signage (Find Your Way to the Orchard!)	Open Space Committee

3. Other business



Arlington Open Space Committee

January 30, 2023

Community Preservation Act Committee
c/o Julie Wayman, Town of Arlington
730 Massachusetts Ave
Arlington, MA 02476

jwayman@town.arlington.ma.us

jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us

RE: Hill's Hill Mountain Biking CPA Application

Dear Community Preservation Act Committee.

Hill's Hill has the potential to support the important recreation and open space preservation goals spelled out in the Town of Arlington 2022-2029 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The parcel is one of the few undeveloped wooded lots left in Arlington. It therefore represents an opportunity to invest in protecting a scarce woodland environment. Indeed, CPA funding could help speed habitat recovery and counter the spread of invasive species. Habitat protection is becoming ever more important as climate change, species loss, and development pressures increasingly impact the town.

The Hill's Hill project also highlights recognized needs for new forms of recreational facilities in Arlington through the development of carefully designed mountain biking trails. The feasibility study cited in the CPA application found that Hill's Hill is the preferred site for this type of activity.

In order to ensure the balance of key preservation and recreation goals, the Open Space Committee recommends that habitat preservation goals be incorporated as an integral part of future project specifications.

Thank you for your consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Co-chair
Wendy Richter, Co-chair
Open Space Committee

Cc: David Morgan, DPCD

From: [PETER HOWARD](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Cc: tankmadel@yahoo.com
Subject: (Archive Copy) Bike trails on Hills Hill
Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 10:30:56 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Jim,

I respect Beth Melofchik. I don't think she goes off half cocked. Please resist funding this assault on a tiny wooded parcel in our densely built up town

Pete Howard

From: [MBR](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - No Preservation Funds for Habitat Destruction
Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 12:45:49 PM

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To the Arlington Community Preservation Act Committee,

I am writing to express my grave concerns regarding the mountain bike park that's being proposed for Hill's Hill. We are living through an era of manmade climate crisis, and one of the most effective solutions has been found to be reforestation - the planting of huge numbers of new trees. A project like this that will that further deforestation is clearly not a good idea.

Furthermore, there are already more applications for CPA funding than there are CPA funds available. Back around 2014 the Town held a referendum on whether or not to tax ourselves an additional 1.5%, in order to qualify for over \$1 million in CPA funding annually. The tax increase was sold to the voters as providing additional funding to *preserve* Arlington's historic sites, our parks, and what little forested space is left in this town that's been considered "completely built out" since the 1970s. Specifically cited in the campaign (see <https://www.communitypreservation.org/home/news/arlington-cpa-campaign>) were that the funds would be used for:

- "renovating the Old Schwamb Mill, the nation's oldest continually operating mill site, and the historic Jason Russell house, both of which have deferred maintenance"
- "acquiring the Mugar property, an important area for wildlife habitat and flood storage"

No mention was made that the funds might one day be used for a project that, instead of preserving forested land, will inevitably cut down mature trees. If I had known that CPA funding would be used for that, I'd most certainly have voted against it. And I'm quite sure that the majority of those who voted for it back then would have done the same!

Using CPA funding to promote deforestation is a betrayal of the voters who believed that the examples given in order to convince us to vote to participate in the CPA were made in good faith. Such a betrayal will make a significant percentage of Arlington voters disinclined to ever again vote to tax ourselves at a higher rate for something that's being promoted as a good cause.

Sincerely,

Mark Rosenthal
62 Walnut St.
Arlington

From: [Barbara E.Schwartz](mailto:Barbara.E.Schwartz)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) mountain bike park
Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 3:59:02 PM

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Dear CPA Committee:

I am asking you don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections. This application has major issues including:

1. Expense- \$400,000 is very high for a project while Town budgets are challenged and CPA applications exceed the available funds.
2. Destructive - Application drawings show a transformation of precious woods to a recreation bike park. No habitat protections are in the proposal at all.
3. Divisive - Nearly half the letters during community feedback opposed the bike park without major adjustments to protect the woods. Yet no protections were included in the document.

Let's ensure "Preservation" is a critical element in all CPA projects. There are very few woodlands like Hill's Hill left in town. Before funding this, we need agreement on how to balance recreation and preservation goals at Hill's Hill.

Thank you,

Barbara E Schwartz
Arlington Resident

Barbara E Schwartz, LMHC
Psychotherapist and Clinical Supervisor
58 Medford St.
Arlington, MA 02474
beslmhc@verizon.net
(617) 549 2048

From: [Andy Oram](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Eco-Track solution for Hill's Hill.
Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 6:32:23 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

I am writing to strongly support the Eco-Track solution for Hill's Hill. That proposal accommodates both the trails and the pump track while minimizing damage to a sensitive environment. The pump track would actually be more convenient in the Eco-Track solution.

Furthermore, I find the \$400,000 request excessive. Arlington can build the trails and pump track much more cheaply and ecologically while using most of the CPA money for projects that benefit a much wider range of Arlington's citizens.

Andrew Oram
38 High Haith Road
Arlington, Mass. 02476-7826
781-641-1261

From: [Mike Kong](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - No Preservation Funds for Habitat Destruction
Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 8:09:57 PM

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Dear CPA Committee:

Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections. This application has major flaws including:

1. Expensive - \$400,000 is very high for a project while Town budgets are challenged and CPA applications exceed the available funds.
2. Destructive - Application drawings show a transformation of precious woods to a recreation bike park. No habitat protections are in the proposal at all.
3. Divisive - Nearly half the letters during community feedback opposed the bike park without major adjustments to protect the woods. Yet no protections were included in the document.

Let's ensure "Preservation" is a critical element in all CPA projects. There are very few woodlands like Hill's Hill left in town. Before funding this, we need agreement on how to balance recreation and preservation goals at Hill's Hill.

Thank you, Christine Bulawa and Mike Kong
Home owners in Arlington for over 30 years

From: [David S. Lee](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill
Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 8:38:48 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

I would like to encourage you to approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill.

I am a close neighbor to Hills hill and noticed the how the trails that the local kids built during lockdown brought together a diverse group of kids from all around Arlington.

The close proximity to the rec center, ball fields, playground and the bike path make Hills hill the perfect location for a bike park for family use.

Thank you,
Dave

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

From: [Elaine Crowder](#)
To: [James Feeney](#); [Clarissa Rowe](#)
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - Fund completion of the feasibility study - urge compromise
Date: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 10:34:27 PM
Attachments: [c66a7ce5.png](#)

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Dear Jim Feeney, Clarissa Rowe and the CPA Committee,

I'm writing to urge the CPA Committee to pause its decision on awarding \$400,000 for design and construction of a mountain biking park at Hill's Hill. Instead I urge funding the completion of a full feasibility study that considers all aspects of this undeveloped open space -- habitat and ecosystem as well as recreation -- that borders the Hill's Hill youth soccer field. It's the responsible thing to do when proposals re-purpose existing natural open spaces.

Resources such as the Sports for Nature [Frameworks](#) and a report examining [nature-responsible ways of building new sport venues](#) might be considered in pursuing a **compromise eco-track** that pairs trails AND open space preservation. It's an innovative approach that could be a first in the region (see more information at end).

The Sports for Nature Framework includes four points.

https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/-s4n-framework-en-15dec-no-embargo_final.pdf

1. **Protect nature and avoid damage to natural habitats and species;**
2. Restore and regenerate nature wherever possible;
3. Understand and reduce risks to nature in your supply chains; and
4. Educate and inspire positive action for nature across and beyond sport.

Funding additional study would allow:

- the inclusion of ecological principles from the start, alongside recreation goals
- assessment of Hill's Hill assets in need of preservation ... and ecological impacts of a build
 - this would establish a **biodiversity baseline** and assist in designing trails for preservation
- safety evaluation of the current unauthorized trails and the creation of a plan to lightly rebuild them with an emphasis on safety and cost reduction
- survey of similar trails and pump tracks in surrounding communities to gather lessons learned and gain a realistic assessment of maintenance issues, so they can be planned for with maintenance funds identified
- time for marshaling PRC's considerable connections with the mountain biking community and expertise in adult/youth education to mount a proactive education campaign:

Respect nature - respect the park - ride to chill - but please don't build

The public has not yet seen a description of the project that would answer critical questions, so public buy-in would be served by producing a more fleshed out description of intentions (see the list of questions that follows).

The CPA Committee has received much correspondence on both sides of this question. I propose there might be a fundamental point of common ground:

We all want to see the woodlands at Hill's Hill **remain healthy enough to persist into the future as a legacy for our children and grandchildren.** - for trail riding as well as a biodiverse habitat.

The Lessons Learned from one [study](#) led with "*need for compromise for nature conservation and recreation to exist alongside.*" I urge the eco-track compromise as outlined above with the pump track moved off the hill and out of the woods.

Let's give time for a solution to arise that is sensitive to the needs of Arlington's open space habitats as well as its youth.

Sincerely,
Elaine Crowder
TMM Precinct 19

== List of Questions to Be Clarified - with Personal Commentary ==

- How exactly will trails be built? Is the vision to build for thrills in the woods- with jumps, rollers hard banking turns? Or will the trails snake through the woods following elevation lines, as recommended by.

This is important because the most damage to a habitat from cycling occurs with braking/skidding and cutting switchbacks. (*Mountain Biking: A [Review](#)*)

I submit that a thrills-style track is properly reserved for a pump track sited off the hill and out of woods. A thrills-style build would create more wear and tear and require more maintenance.

Since I've already experienced how long current Arlington maintenance schedules took to fill an extremely dangerous 3 ft deep hole dug at Hill's Hill by unauthorized trail builders (3.5 weeks), I favor the latter more gentle design. It creates a place for bikers to chill and would require less maintenance.

- Will heavy equipment be used? Research says that the greatest effects on habitat occur when a new facility is first built. (*Mountain Biking: A [Review](#)*) Therefore ...

I favor less habitat destroying methods and a less intensive build.

- Why does the current feasibility study place the most habitat-destroying element in the most ecologically sensitive location--a woodlands-renewing meadow at the top of a hill where destabilization promotes erosion? The point of a pump track is to ride the circuit repeatedly without pedaling - so by definition it needs to be on average flat.

I favor removing the pump track from the top of Hill's Hill and siting it in a more open, less habitat-destroying location. The meadow habitat at the top of Hill's Hill shows signs of healthy renewal that I would hate to see arrested by the proposed project. (see Hill's Hill [Self-Guided Tour](#))

- Why are the proposed costs so high when other communities have built for less?
 - e.g., A pump track was built in Gorham Maine for \$13,500 in 2019 (plus in-kind contributions of heavy equipment and donation of dirt) - <https://www.gorhamtimes.com/gorhams-pump-track-opens-to-bikers/>
- How will maintenance be assured?

CPA does not fund maintenance, but maintenance is critical. A survey of builders and near-by parks documents damage incurred when wet tracks are ridden. One builder warns that volunteer maintenance promises rarely materialize, or they may not be immediately responsive to dangerous conditions. He urges that a maintenance plan with funding be in hand from the outset.

===== **More Information** =====

- **Hill's Hill Self-Guided Tour:** <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IP6oeNotSk-RbiwX2e67IxsJ319qhnxX/view?usp=sharing> shares a sampling of the high-value native species visible in and surrounding the meadow habitat. Native oak, hickory, big-tooth aspen, blueberry and blackberry patches with along with the insects and animals depending on them are what's at risk if measures aren't taken to protect them.
- **Designing specific trails to reduce the impact of mountain biking on habitat and wildlife in the Minett region of Luxembourg,** Jan Herr, Europarc Federation - <https://www.europarc.org/case-studies/designing-specific-trails-to-reduce-the-impact-of-mountain-biking-on-habitat-and-wildlife-in-the-minett-region-of-luxembourg/>

[luxembourg/](#)

- Need for compromise for nature conservation and recreation to exist alongside.
- MTB-trails need to be challenging and attractive. [Note: the pump track would provide that challenge]
- Designating MTB-trails and advertising them alone is not enough to ensure that other areas stay quiet. Advertisement needs to better convey the message that **riding outside the official trails is forbidden**.
- Sensitive areas or trails that have to remain quiet need to be physically closed off.

- ***Mountain Biking: A Review of the Ecological Effects*** 2010
<https://www.lib.washington.edu/msd/norestriction/b67566091.pdf>

This report notes that relatively few new environmental impacts result if existing walking trails are re-purposed for biking at low speeds following existing elevation lines. However vegetation removal increases as soil compaction increases with repeated riding and especially jump landings. "...careful planning, maintenance (e.g., construction of water bars, berming or banking corners, ensuring proper drainage, avoiding steep slopes or loose erodible soils) and designation of trails to specific uses (and seasonal trail closures) may help mitigate against some of the more serious effects of mountain bike recreation to soils (Marion & Wimpey 2007, Goeft & Alder 2001). In discussions of best practices, researchers mentioned that cycling technique also influences the level of impact on soils, with braking/skidding and cutting switchbacks creating the most damage (Callahan 2008, Morlock et al. 2006, Marion & Wimpey 2007).

- ***"Mitigating biodiversity impacts of new sports venues" (2019)*** (<https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/48345>) talks about [nature-responsible ways of building](#) new sport venues.

The Report observes: "Wherever a new sports venue is built, or the refurbishment of an existing venue is undertaken, it is likely that biodiversity will be affected by that development, ... Sports organisations, public authorities and financial institutions as well as those involved in the actual construction and decommissioning of venues all have a role to play in managing the range of impacts that sport venues may have on biodiversity."

(<https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2019-004-En.pdf>)

- **Cycling Trails through a natural area create "edge effects" that can separate populations of plants and animals. This should be considered in the design.**

For example - placing bike trails on the perimeter would preserve continuity in the center of Hill's Hill woods and meadow.

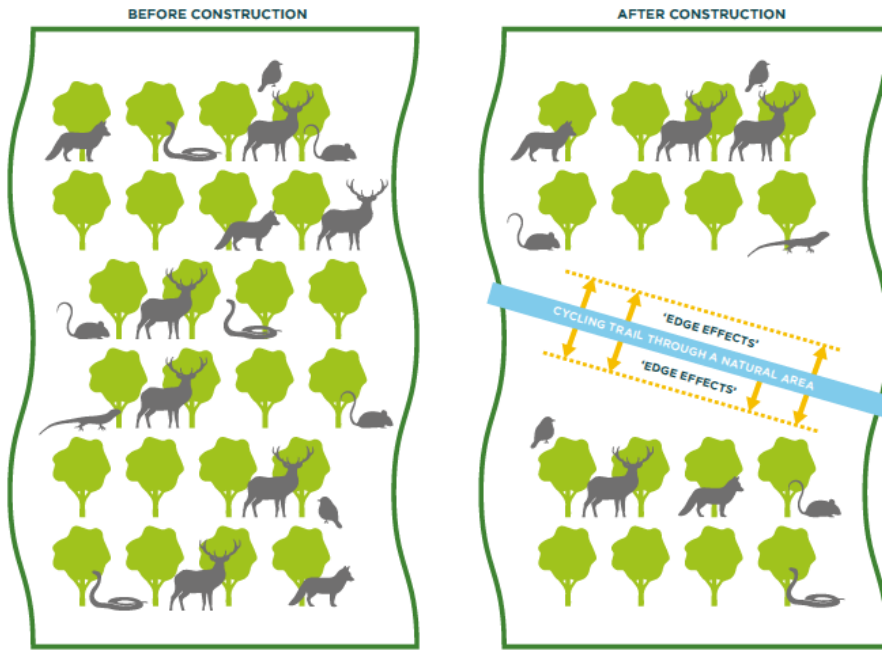


Figure 3: Edge effects

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===

Elaine Crowder, Ph. D.
TMM Pct. 19

From: [Peggy Gardiner](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) bike park
Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 12:44:04 PM

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12:35 PM (6 minutes ago)

Dear Mr. Feeney,

I am writing because I am concerned about the proposed mountain bike park at Hill's Hill. Though I do not live in the immediate area, I am concerned with how little wooded park land we have in Arlington. I live on Menotomy Rocks Park and though people are well intentioned, and think they are doing the right thing by walking their dogs off leash early in the morning, the park is suffering from over use and adverse climate issues.

I think the same thing is happening to Hill's Hill. We need to provide more trees and care for the park land. At least there should be an audit to see what is the situation here and what is the best path forward. I am sure that there can be a compromise made between those who want a challenging bike course and those who want to preserve our park's natural habitat, encourage animals and birds to use this land and provide a cool, resting place for friends and neighbors.

Regards,
Peggy
Pauline Gardiner;
11 Menotomy Rocks Dr.
Peggy.gardiner@gmail.com

From: [Ficken, Jessica](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - No Preservation Funds for Habitat Destruction
Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 4:03:19 PM

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Dear CPA Committee:

I am an Arlington resident and I oppose the plan to place a pump track at Hill's Hill. Protecting the small amount of space that is left for wildlife and biodiversity in our town is far more important.

Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections. This application has major flaws including:

1. Expensive - \$400,000 is very high for a project while Town budgets are challenged and CPA applications exceed the available funds.
2. Destructive - Application drawings show a transformation of precious woods to a recreation bike park. No habitat protections are in the proposal at all.
3. Divisive - Nearly half the letters during community feedback opposed the bike park without major adjustments to protect the woods. Yet no protections were included in the document.

Let's ensure "Preservation" is a critical element in all CPA projects. There are very few woodlands like Hill's Hill left in town. Before funding this, we need agreement on how to balance recreation and preservation goals at Hill's Hill.

Thank you,

Jessica

From: [Jessica Sullivan](mailto:jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hills Hill- mountain bike trails
Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 4:34:20 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hello,

I am writing concerning the proposed mountain bike trails and pump track at Hills Hill. I am opposed to the removing or disturbing any of Arlington's limited wooded areas. Arlington has, at this point, such a dearth of forested areas and open spaces to house wildlife that I do not believe that whatever benefit would come of a mountain bike track would outweigh the benefits of retaining forested area. Certainly the construction of a pump track in the middle of the woods would have a negative impact on the flora and fauna inhabiting the area. I urge the Committee to think of the natural habitat that exists at Hills Hill and the damage that the proposed project would inflict, particularly the pump track. The proposed project would also have a negative impact on those partial to enjoying the forest for what it naturally has to offer- wildlife habitats, native plants, and a connection to our natural world.

Thank you,

Jessica

From: [Asia Kepka](#)
To: JFeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill Application
Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 5:17:18 PM
Attachments: [Hill's Hill .pdf](#)

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Hello Jim,

Please find the attached letter regarding Hill's Hill proposal.

Thank you ,

Sincerely

Asia Kepka
17 Silk St

From: karen.klgwoman@town.arlington.ma.us
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - No Preservation Funds for Habitat Destruction
Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 5:25:21 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections. This application has major flaws including:

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Let's ensure "Preservation" is a critical element in all CPA projects. There are very few woodlands like Hill's Hill left in town. Before funding this, we need agreement on how to balance recreation and preservation goals at Hill's Hill.

Thank you,
Karen L. Grossman
781-646-5990

From: [Laura Kiesel](#)
To: [Jim Feeney](#)
Subject: (Archive Copy) input on hill's hill
Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 7:36:26 PM

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Hello Jim,

I hope you're doing well. I heard you are the point of contact for CPAC as they collect public comments on Hill's Hill, so I am forwarding my public comment below:

As an Arlington resident and natural resource scientist/conservation biologist by degree and training, I have serious concerns about the proposal to build a recreational bike park inside the Hill's Hill Woods.

As I am sure the folks on CPAC know, we have less than a decade to avert catastrophic climate change and we have already incurred quite an unacceptable amount of global warming that will wreak ecological devastation due to our collective inability to prioritize the preservation of forests and wetlands over development and recreation (of which we already have plenty of options).

Arlington is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as a town in proximity to major waterways that makes much of it a flood zone, and due to its susceptibility to microbursts. The microburst of 2012 (the second such one in only a couple of years) occurred shortly after I first moved to town. It not only caused extensive damage to my own apartment that took months to fix, but destroyed over 100 trees in Arlington. Over a decade later and as far as I know, Arlington has not only fallen short of replacing all of those lost trees as it promised to do (I actually covered this event as a journalist at the time), but has continued to get rid of existing tree cover, mostly in the name of progress and development.

Our town experienced another microburst this past summer, in 2022, and I am guessing we lost more trees at that time as well. Furthermore, this past summer, the Boston metro area experienced record droughts. This had huge effects on our wildlife, including frogs, turtles, herons, and waterfowl. Many of our reptiles and amphibians offer irreplaceable pest control. If we continue to lose them at the current rate, we will experience even huger upticks in ticks and mosquitoes and with that, insect-borne diseases like Lyme and Zika.

Climate scientists and other experts have been very clear that other than cutting down our use of fossil fuels, one of the most critical needs to averting catastrophic climate change is to maintain existing trees whenever possible and expand our tree canopy.

As a nature enthusiast and avid birder/wildlife watcher & photographer, I am also concerned as to the impact of this proposed project on the animals that call Hill's Hill home or temporary respite. We are already facing a mass extinction (the only in our world's known history to be caused by a single species--us). Bird species are particularly profoundly impacted and at great risk (and we rely on birds and other wildlife for our own survival as a species). Mountain biking is known to cause plant and soil erosion (causing carbon to leak, further adding to global warming), and is disruptive to wildlife (often causing them to flee or interrupting and in

some cases altogether their breeding or birthing of offspring), more so as compared to quieter outdoor activities like hiking and birding. Birds and other wildlife in urban and ex-urban ecosystems like Arlington rely on micro-habitats like Hill's Hill to survive. Eradicating these habitats will increase pressures on wildlife and threaten their longevity here.

This area of Massachusetts provides precious resources and habitats for both resident and migrating birds. Habitat fragmentation and development, along with climate change, is one of the most prominent threats to bird species, as well as other wildlife.

I also want to clarify: wildlife tourism offers way more revenue to the town's businesses than any mountain biking opportunities could ever do. Our resident owls and eagles have drawn people from all over the state and even other parts of New England and the Northeast. Hill's Hill is currently habitat to hawks and barred owls and many songbirds, which may be compromised or harmed by this development. Here is an op-ed (by a former colleague of mine) on the threats mountain biking poses to wild lands and wildlife:

<https://www.thewildlifeneeds.com/2019/06/18/impacts-of-mountain-biking/>

While walking and wildlife watching are more widely accessible activities available to people of all ages, abilities, and socio-economic statuses, the mountain bike project in its current iteration offers a premium avenue of recreation usually enjoyed primarily by people of *great privilege*--white, younger (though not usually little/small children) and often able-bodied. Not to mention, it is a hobby that tends to draw more affluent people--while likely being inaccessible to many people with disabilities and lower income people. This is also problematic.

I am aware that there are other alternatives for building the mountain bike trail that would in most cases minimize or even completely eliminate many of the environmental threats or concerns those of us opposing the current project site--but for some reason this compromise has not been entertained at all (building the track in a field rather than through one of Arlington last remaining forested lands).

I know it's tempting to take grant money and to cater to the demographics pushing for this project, but we need to have a reckoning with what we're really facing with climate change and start making difficult choices if we really do want to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem. And since there are other viable alternative sites for this project, it seems like this doesn't even have to be a difficult choice because no one is really giving up anything if they get the mountain bike project somewhere else. But we are giving up on one of our last undeveloped green spaces/forested lands, and with it, diminishing our wildlife and natural resources, if the project moves forward as it is currently being proposed--which seems contrary to CPAC's mission.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Kiesel

From: [Mary Fusoni](mailto:Mary.Fusoni@town.arlington.ma.us)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill project
Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 8:38:19 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

I'm pretty darn busy these days with taking care of an ill relative and preparing for my own upcoming surgery. But I'm still taking a minute to send this pre-written letter because I feel strongly that the Mountain Bike project proposed for Hill's Hill is wrong for our town and for the environment in so many ways. In a more leisurely time I would redraft in my own words; on this day, please know that I wholeheartedly endorse all the words below.

Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections. This application has major flaws including:

1. Expensive - \$400,000 is very high for a project while Town budgets are challenged and CPA applications exceed the available funds.
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Let's ensure "Preservation" is a critical element in all CPA projects. There are very few woodlands like Hill's Hill left in town. Before funding this, we need agreement on how to balance recreation and preservation goals at Hill's Hill.

Thank you,
Mary Fusoni
94 Grandview Road

From: [Jessica Sullivan](#)
To: [Jim Feeney](#)
Subject: (Archive Copy) Re: Hills Hill- mountain bike trails
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 8:33:15 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Thank you!

On Friday, January 27, 2023 at 08:18:58 AM EST, Jim Feeney <jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us> wrote:

Good morning Jessica,

Thank you for writing regarding this project. Your correspondence will be provided to the Committee in advance of their next meeting.

Best,

Jim

James Feeney
Deputy Town Manager
Town of Arlington
Arlington, MA 02476
(781) 316-3010

Arlington values equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are committed to building a community where everyone is heard, respected, and protected.

From: Jessica Sullivan <jessullivan@yahoo.com>
To: "jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us" <jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: Thu, 26 Jan 2023 21:34:15 +0000 (UTC)
Subject: Hills Hill- mountain bike trails

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Hello,

I am writing concerning the proposed mountain bike trails and pump track at Hills Hill. I am opposed to the removing or disturbing any of Arlington's limited wooded areas. Arlington has, at this point, such a dearth of forested areas and open spaces to house wildlife that I do not believe that whatever benefit would come of a mountain bike track would outweigh the benefits of retaining forested area. Certainly the construction of a pump track in the middle of the woods would have a negative impact on the flora and fauna inhabiting the area. I urge the Committee to think of the natural habitat that exists at Hills Hill and the damage that the proposed project would inflict, particularly the pump track. The proposed project would also have a negative impact on those partial to enjoying the forest for what it naturally has to offer- wildlife habitats, native plants, and a connection to our natural world.

Thank you,

Jessica

From: [Nancy Chew](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Cc: [Atwood Cheung](#)
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill application - please reject
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 11:12:01 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Jim,

I am writing to ask that you **reject** the current proposal to build a mountain bike park at Hill's Hill in Arlington.

In a time of heightened climate crisis, this proposal seems completely incongruent with an urgent call to action to save/preserve our natural habitats.

Earmarking \$400,000 to erect a man-made structure in the woods for mountain biking is not only environmentally irresponsible but fiscally lavish in a time of tightening municipal budgets. Surely as an environmentally progressive community, we have higher priorities?

I am hoping that CPAC acts on the 'Preservation' part of their mission and rejects this proposal.

Thank you for considering our input,

NANCY CHEW and ATWOOD CHEUNG
86 Mount Vernon Street
Homeowner since 2005
nancychew@verizon.net
617 851 5837

From: [David Harvey](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill Mountain Bike Park
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 12:16:25 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hello Mr. Feeney,

I am writing to urge you to oppose the proposed mountain bike park in Hill's Hill. I have lived in Arlington more than 10 years and value the scarce woodlands and undeveloped areas. Prior to living in Arlington, I lived in Groton, MA, and as an elected member of the Conservation Commission there I witnessed first hand how mountain bikes, dirt bikes, and horses can damage pedestrian trails in woodlands and start highly destructive erosion. Mountain biking and similar activities also disturb what little wildlife remains. Please preserve the woods at Hill's Hill for pedestrian use only.

Thank you,

David Harvey
106 Newport Street
Arlington, MA 02476
781-316-2066
dharveyme@gmail.com

From: [Erik](#)
To: [Jim Feeneey](#)
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill Mountain Bike Trail
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 12:47:37 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hello Jim,

I'm writing to oppose the construction of a mountain bike park in the woodlands of Hill's Hill. I hope you will consider those voices of opposition and reject the proposal.

1. A mountain bike park would prefer the needs of a few over the needs of many: our need for natural greenspaces, primarily, and the ecological and health benefits they confer.
2. A mountain bike park which uses CPA funds leverages those CPA funds which could be used for affordable housing for an activity which is not readily available to people with certain disabilities.

- The CPA is supposed to be earmarked for at least 10% for affordable housing, and Arlington falls far short of it.
- This is during a time of an affordable housing crisis, in which the 10% minimum itself could be reasonably questioned.
- Yet, the current proposal earmarks funds for something which does not help make housing affordable and might, in fact, increase property values as an amenity, while catering to those who can afford mountain bike equipment/gear.

3. There are alternatives which do not disrupt our natural greenspaces and the ecosystems they support, and I urge you to consider those alternatives. The current proposal is not mandatory to meet the needs of the few who would utilize mountain biking infrastructure.

We are facing unprecedented issues maintaining our wildlife stock from rodenticides, and this would further burden our wildlife ecosystem, which itself draws a wider section of the population to Arlington for tourism than mountain biking.

Please reject the current proposal for the mountain bike park at Hill's Hill and consider less intrusive alternatives.

Thanks,

Erik Pohl
81 Everett St, Arlington, MA

From: [Aaron Dell](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Comment on the proposed bicycle infrastructure at Hill's Hill
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 1:25:20 PM

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Dear all,

I am writing to ask that the CPA Committee not approve funding for the proposed bicycle infrastructure at Hill's Hill without also requiring that habitat conservation be a priority from the design phase through to construction. I am not opposed to cycling for recreation or otherwise; however, this fragment of urban green space is literally priceless, benefiting the health and well-being of Arlington's residents in ways that cannot be quantified and providing a home for other creatures, such as the barred owl Barry, who have a right to exist.

During a recent visit to Hill's Hill, I observed bicycle tracks in the snow and reflected that the children of our community have already told us where and how they would like to cycle on the hill. Recognizing and maintaining the trails that are already being used by cyclists would not require the expensive and destructive additional step of building a "pump track" in the middle of the hill. The hill's benefits to the community in its current form, such as providing a place for nature education and meditation (not to mention various ecological functions) need to be weighed alongside any perceived benefits of a "pump track."

Sincerely,
Aaron Dell
26B Brattle St

From: [R Kim](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 1:42:13 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

Let's please create more green space, NOT less. We recently moved from Cambridge and it seems to us that Cambridge has more green space than Arlington. That really surprised us. We should spend the money to preserve and expand our green space. Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections.

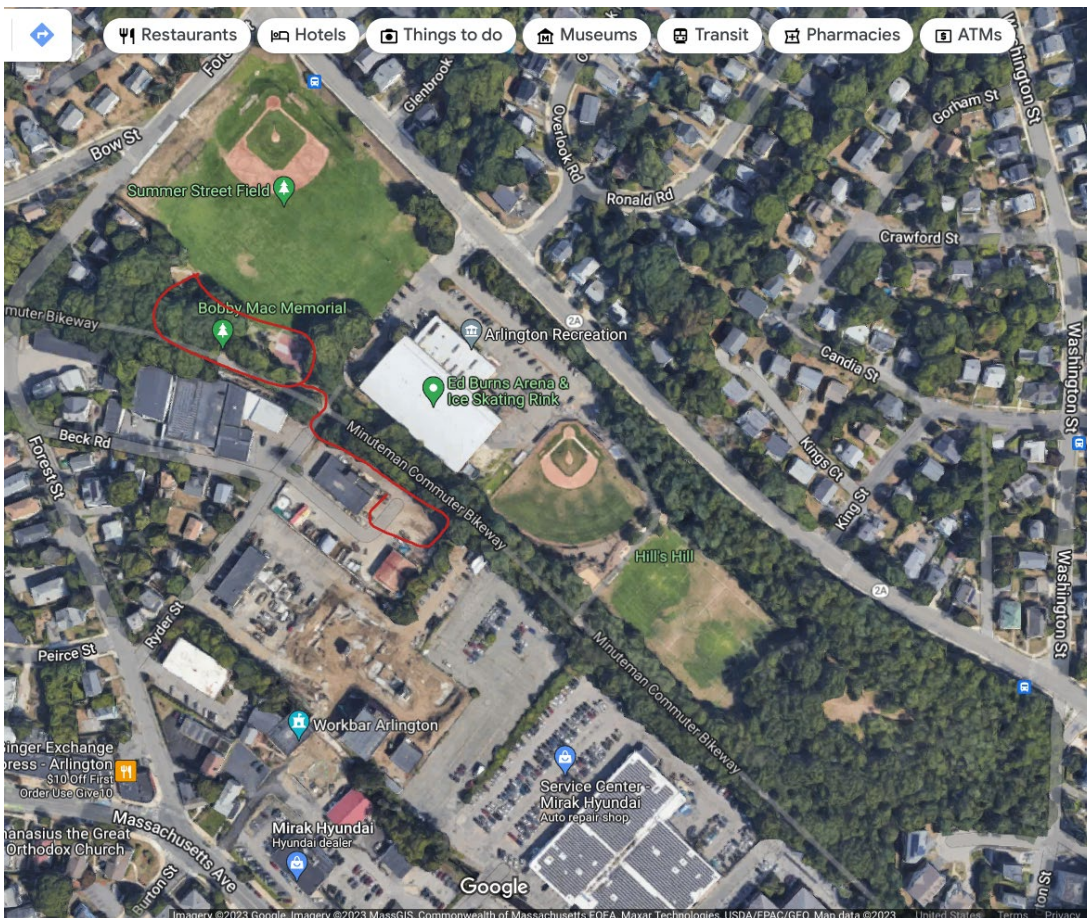
Thank you,

Robert Kim

From: [Gina Sonder](#)
To: clarissa.rowe@comcast.net; sdoctrowarltm@gmail.com; dswanson922@gmail.com
Cc: [Jim Feeney](#)
Subject: (Archive Copy) Fwd: Attn: Community Preservation Act Committee
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 4:22:33 PM
Attachments: [Screenshot 2023-01-24 4.57.41 PM.png](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Clarissa Rowe, Chair of the CPA Cttee
Sue Doctrow, Co-chair
David Swanson, Co-chair



Perhaps Hills Hill is a small area of green space with tree cover in the larger scheme of things, but Arlington is a very dense town with a limited amount of wooded area on Town property. If the majority of the Arlington tax-paying residents are clamoring for a mountain bike track, please consider siting it adjacent to the bike path. I have marked two areas on the aerial view, above.

- 1.) Part of the current Ryder Street DPW Recycling Center paved area which I believe is a temporary location during construction of the new DPW; never-the-less, it is just used as part of a "drive-thru" Saturday recycling event once a month;
- 2.) Part of the former playground - a Bobby Mac Memorial Pump Track.

Last Friday, I sent a letter to Jim Feeney, to include as a comment on the current proposal.

Despite the fact that Arlington/Winchester/Stoneham have just been given a 40K grant to study sustainable landscaping guidelines on private property, this does not help the Town manage its open spaces in the immediate future. Please see my reasons for opposing the funding of a Pump-Track in Arlington using CPA funds at this time.

Sincerely,
Gina Sonder

----- Forwarded message -----

To: The Community Preservation Act Committee;

Preservation is the name of this committee, yet the Hills Hill Pump-Track project is, in part, Destruction of natural habitat - a scarce resource in Arlington.

- I am opposed to using CPA funds to build this project.
- I am opposed to siting this bicycle track in the middle of the woods.
- I am opposed to building unnecessarily on undisturbed undeveloped natural lands.

Use the \$400K to preserve or restore public property to make it more resilient and sustainable as the climate crisis becomes an ever larger factor in our lives.

If the public must have a Pump-Track, put it adjacent to the bike path where the land is not a wildlife habitat.

The Town of Arlington has declared that we are in a Climate Emergency* and every one of our projects should go towards mitigation of the effects of extreme weather. This, per the declaration, should be our focus for all Town projects.

I hope that the CPA Committee understands the gravity of the situation we face and takes appropriate steps now and in the coming years to fund proposals which promote a just and equitable transition as we navigate ways to be a more resilient community.

Sincerely,
Gina Sonder
Emergency Arlington

***June 2nd, 2021 Arlington became the twenty-third Massachusetts municipality to declare a climate emergency!**

cc: Arlington Town Manager

From: **Gina Sonder** <gina.sonder@gm.slc.edu>

Date: Fri, Jan 20, 2023 at 5:52 PM

Subject: Attn: Community Preservation Act Committee

To: <jfeeny@town.arlington.ma.us>

Cc: <spooler@town.arlington.ma.us>

--

"The human race is challenged more than ever before to demonstrate our mastery - not over nature but of ourselves."

- Rachel Carson, biologist, writer, conservationist (1907-1964)

Please note: messages sent via e-mail do not remain confidential.

From: [Bill Moyer](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) In Support of the Pump Track
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 5:09:46 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

I am writing to express my strong and unequivocal support of the Hills Hill mountain bike park.

I believe this is an excellent use of this space to enable additional recreation options for the town.

I also believe a properly constructed park is a much better, safer, and more environmentally friendly option than individuals building a makeshift park themselves.

Please continue with the current plan and provide our kids a safe place to enjoy themselves.

Bill Moyer
49 Hillsdale Rd, Arlington, MA 02476

From: sbkline@rcn.com
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) NO to the project at Hill's Hill
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 5:31:50 PM

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To the Committee--

The proposal to build the "Pump Track" project at Hill's Hill is tremendously concerning to us, as long-time Arlington residents.

Putting an 8,000 square foot course in the middle of the woods would decimate this vital environment.

We should certainly not fund this project without habitat protections.

While some essential town budgets are challenged, funds should not be allocated for this. How can we allocate Community Preservation Act funding on a project that harms the environment? That makes no sense.

People in Arlington are angry about this proposal. It's expensive and destructive.

Sincerely,

Susan Kline and Steve Shulman
Hopkins Road

From: [SUSAN LLOYD MCGARRY](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - No Preservation Funds for Habitat Destruction
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 5:32:10 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill. This application has major flaws including expense, destruction of the environment, and ruining the enjoyment of a public Arlington natural site for many others.

\$400,000 is very high for a project while Town budgets are challenged and CPA applications exceed the available funds, especially when this will serve a very small minority of the town.

Please do not find this.
Thank you,
Susan Lloyd McGarry

I am concerned with people making their own tracks at Hill's Hill, Menotomy Rocks, and other town sites, but this is not the solution.
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Maida Kaderian](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hills Hill concern
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 8:37:38 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Mr. Feeney,
Please do not build Hills Hill. I would like to see few and precious natural spaces preserved in Arlington.
Maida Kaderian
144 Brattle St
Arlington MA

From: [Steven Peterson](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - No Preservation Funds for Habitat Destruction
Date: Friday, January 27, 2023 8:56:03 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections. The project has serious flaws. Creating a bike track at high cost for a few Arlington residents should not come at the cost of destroying natural habitat available to all residents. A project of this type should be placed somewhere that has already been developed, if it is found to be appropriate for public funding at all. If the project must move forward, other areas of the park are more appropriate for such a project and are less used than the woods. Let's ensure "Preservation" is a critical element in all CPA projects. There are very few woodlands like Hill's Hill left in town. Before funding this, we need agreement on how to balance recreation and preservation goals at Hill's Hill.

Thank you,

Steven Peterson
29 Pleasant View Road

Sent from my iPad

From: [Gretchen Landwehr](mailto:jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill Project - opposed
Date: Saturday, January 28, 2023 11:45:36 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections. This application has major flaws including:

1. Expensive - \$400,000 is very high for a project while Town budgets are challenged and CPA applications exceed the available funds.
2. Destructive - Application drawings show a transformation of precious woods to a recreation bike park. No habitat protections are in the proposal at all.
3. Divisive - Nearly half the letters during community feedback opposed the bike park without major adjustments to protect the woods. Yet no protections were included in the document.

Let's ensure "Preservation" is a critical element in all CPA projects. There are very few woodlands like Hill's Hill left in town. Before funding this, we need agreement on how to balance recreation and preservation goals at Hill's Hill.

Thank you for your consideration,
Gretchen Landwehr

From: Peter Southwick
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - No Preservation Funds for Habitat Destruction
Date: Saturday, January 28, 2023 1:59:23 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections. This application has major flaws including:

1. Expensive - \$400,000 is very high for a project while Town budgets are challenged and CPA applications exceed the available funds. This is not a good use of taxpayer funds.
2. Destructive - Application drawings show a transformation of precious woods to a recreation bike park. No habitat protections are in the proposal at all. For quite a few years, Hill's Hill has been a site at which people feel free to litter, party, drink alcohol, and set off fireworks which have started fires. This project would ensure that misuse of the land would continue into the future.
3. Divisive - Nearly half the letters during community feedback opposed the bike park without major adjustments to protect the woods. Yet no protections were included in the document.

Let's ensure "Preservation" is a critical element in all CPA projects. There are very few woodlands like Hill's Hill left in town. Before funding this, we need agreement on how to balance recreation and preservation goals at Hill's Hill.

Thank you,

Peter Southwick
18 King Street
Arlington MA

From: [Diane Krause](#)
To: [Jim Feeney](#)
Subject: (Archive Copy) PRC application for Hill's Hill
Date: Sunday, January 29, 2023 5:37:00 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hi Jim & CPA Committee,

I'm opposed to the PRC application as it stands, and urge the CPA Committee to pause their application because there are too many unanswered questions. We need an environmental assessment and a design plan before funds should be approved.

This project will change open space to active recreation use. There has been no environmental study of the impact this will have on the existing open space. The PRC has been unresponsive when asked if a study could be done.

There is no provision for **maintenance**. CPA funds can't be used for maintenance. Arlington mountain bikers have stated that they will do the maintenance and that not a lot is involved. Google search disputes this, advising there can be issues with water and weeds. At a recent CPA meeting discussing a volunteer who has maintained the benches at Menotomy Rocks Park, PRC member Jen Rothenberg stated that the PRC can't rely on members of the public to maintain PRC properties. Does this also apply to the project at Hill's Hill?

Cost: In doing a google search, there are much lower build costs for a pump track: in Acton/Harvard the cost was \$10,000, a track in NH was in the low-teens. One builder suggests an abandoned parking lot or tennis court being ideal locations for a pump track, having stable bases. It seems locating the pump track in the meadow may be why the costs of this project is so high—\$50,000 for design and \$350,000 for pump track, trails and 2 skill zones. Considering the area is so small, 3.1 acres according to feasibility study, there probably isn't a lot of cost for the trails. So why so high? PRC went to only one builder for a cost estimate.

No survey of nearby tracks to understand choices and learn about maintenance issues.

PRC Commissioner Josh Fenollosa wrote a letter attached to the PRC application that states opponents are "change resistant" or that we don't want to allow kids to play in the woods because we say they will harm the woods. Opponents of the existing PRC plan are being labeled hysterical, over-reacting and anti-kid. **Adults and kids are allowed to ride bikes now on all trails in Arlington that the PRC manages.** I personally want kids to be in nature. I also want them educated about the damage their illegal trails are doing. I believe people on both sides of this issue care for nature. The difference seems to be in how much we use the limited open spaces we have here in Arlington. **There needs to be a distinction between mountain bike trails in the woods and a pump track or skill zone which can be placed anywhere.** The latter are often in flat, open spaces, like in Wakefield, where a pump track is behind a baseball field. Hill's Hill is small, it doesn't have the space for extensive trails that will serve mountain bikers, non-riders and a pump track. That is why a large group of us advocate **moving the pump track** out of meadow/woods. There are areas next to the bike path that are appropriate and will even provide shade for the pump track and skill zones.

I ask the CPA Committee to consider where letters of support are coming from, and to consider those from Arlington residents are more relevant to this issue than from mountain bikers who live in other towns.

We want the PRC to move the pump track out of the meadow/woods. Building it around mature trees and removing young trees will result in an unhealthy tree canopy in 20 years. We still don't know exactly what is planned, but the PRC obviously told the contractor to put the pump track in the meadow, regardless, apparently, of the cost.

Thank you for considering my views.

Diane Krause
High Haith Rd.

From: [Carey Theil](#)
To: [Jim Feeneey](#)
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 10:33:42 AM

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Jim,

I wanted to go on the record in saying that I hope the proposed mountain bike park at Hill's Hill doesn't move forward.

I hope you are doing well!

Sincerely,
Carey

--

Carey M. Theil
Executive Director
[GREY2K USA Worldwide](#)

P.O. Box F
Arlington, MA 02476
[781-488-3526](#)
[617-501-6276](#) (cell)
[781-488-3529](#) (fax)
facebook.com/grey2kusa
twitter: @GREY2KUSA



Formed in February of 2001, GREY2K USA is the largest greyhound protection organization in the world. As a non-profit 501(c)4 organization based in the United States, we work to pass stronger greyhound protection laws and to end the cruelty of dog racing. We also promote the rescue and adoption of greyhounds across the globe.

From: [Sarah](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Save Hill's Hill Woods
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 11:30:47 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Mr. Feeney:

Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections. This application has major flaws including:

1. **Expensive** - \$400,000 is very high for a project while Town budgets are challenged and CPA applications exceed the available funds.
2. **Destructive** - Application drawings show a transformation of precious woods to a recreation bike park. No habitat protections are in the proposal at all.
3. **Divisive** - Nearly half the letters during community feedback opposed the bike park without major adjustments to protect the woods. Yet no protections were included in the document.
4. **Disruptive** to adjoining quiet neighborhoods as there is potential for significant out of town traffic.

*And, finally **why not let kids do kid things without adults having to get involved and "make it better."***

Let's ensure "Preservation" is a critical element in all CPA projects. There are very few woodlands like Hill's Hill left in town. Before funding this, we need agreement on how to balance recreation and preservation goals at Hill's Hill.

Thank you,

Sarah and Austin Jackson
160 Westminster Ave

From: [Rebecca Peterson](mailto:Rebecca.Peterson@town.arlington.ma.us)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Save Hill's Hill !! Don't Destroy Green Space!
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 11:55:50 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

Please do NOT approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill. This project is very expensive at the very time Arlington is talking about an override - it's not necessary!

Destroying woods and animal habitats so that people can ride mountain bikes is absurd. Many riders will not even be Arlington residents - do we want to subsidize their entertainment to the detriment of our own green space?

The flaws abound in this project - high cost, no protection for animals habitats, and many MANY residents being opposed.

Hill's Hill needs to be preserved. Please stop destroying woodland.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Peterson

31 Florence Ave.

From: [Eric Segal](#)
To: [Jim Feeney](#)
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hills Hill
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 12:34:34 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hi Jim,

I'm writing about the proposed mountain bike park. I am not so concerned about saving the woods, but that does seem like a lot of money for something that not that many people will use, and will require maintenance every year.

I'd really rather see the money go into affordable housing, or something outdoors that more people will use.

Eric Segal
84 Milton St, Arlington, Ma 02474

From: [Casey Bishop](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - No Preservation Funds for Habitat Destruction
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 12:48:12 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee,

I am writing to you as a member of your community asking you to reconsider the proposals in the Community Preservation Act. Please **do not** approve funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without including strong, written habitat protections.

Hill's Hill is a cherished oasis in our community. Not only does it serve as a natural habitat for the wildlife of Arlington, but it is one of the few places in our city that offers such a necessary sanctuary from the surrounding built environment. As it currently stands, there are no habitat protections in the proposal. It would be utterly devastating to approve this funding without clear protections for this beloved space we share with our wild neighbors.

Most of the letters during community feedback opposed the construction of a bike park without significant adjustments to protect Hill's Hill. Fellow residents of Arlington have therefore made it clear that we require the preservation of Hill's Hill included in the Community Preservation Act.

Thank you for choosing to save Hill's Hill and include habitat protections in the Community Preservation Act.

Sincerely,
Casey Bishop

From: [Marcia Boston](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - No Preservation Funds for Habitat Destruction
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 12:49:12 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

Please don't approve Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill without strong, written habitat protections. This application has major flaws including:

1. Expensive - \$400,000 is very high for a project while Town budgets are challenged and CPA applications exceed the available funds.
2. Destructive - Application drawings show a transformation of precious woods to a recreation bike park. No habitat protections are in the proposal at all.
3. Divisive - Nearly half the letters during community feedback opposed the bike park without major adjustments to protect the woods. Yet no protections were included in the document.

Let's ensure "Preservation" is a critical element in all CPA projects. There are very few woodlands like Hill's Hill left in town. Before funding this, we need agreement on how to balance recreation and preservation goals at Hill's Hill.

Thank you,
Marcia Boston

From: [Naomi Bailis](mailto:Naomi.Bailis@town.arlington.ma.us)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Regarding the MTB @ Hill's Hill
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 12:58:04 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Mr.Feeney.

We are writing to you to express objections and large concerns and to/about the PRC proposal to build dirt bike trails and a pump track at Hill's Hill. I live at 10 Summer Hill Circle, my family and I would be the most direct abutters to the proposed project. While my family does not completely object to the bike trails, we strenuously object to the construction of a pump track in the meadow of Hill's Hill. Besides the destruction of the meadow, this will certainly entail a considerable noise pollution and overcrowding issue for us and all of Summer Hill Circle, both during construction and after construction.

PRC's application requests \$400,000.00, but does not specify how this money would be used. No design options for the MTB have been developed; there is only a single feasibility study, from Powderhorn Trail Company, chosen by PRC to conduct that study.

Trails have already been constructed in the woods, despite PRC prohibitions against trail-building. The MTB would further develop those trails, add a skills area along the bike path, and construct a pump track in the meadow at the top of the hill. And since there is currently no access to that meadow, a road would need to be cut for the machinery needed to build the pump track.

There is a compromise position, which would allow the use of the trails in the woods, and also preserve the meadow: simply reposition the pump track at the bottom of the hill beside the soccer field. This spot already has good access both for building the track, and in the event of future need for emergency services; and it would likely be much less expensive to build here because the area is level and without the exposed ledge found in the meadow. My family could potentially support such a compromise. Here is a link to the Eco Track Solution
<https://savehillshill.com/eco-track-solution>

Hill's Hill is one of Arlington's very few remaining unimproved, wild public lands. These areas amount to about 170 acres, or less than 5% of our 3,517 total acres. The top of Hill's Hill is a rejuvenating meadow, with diverse and interdependent species of trees and plants, as well as habitat for many creatures. It provides habitat, passive recreation, and cooling space in a heat island area.

Proponents say there are no recreation options for our middle-school aged kids. In fact, we have the McClennan skateboard park; a rock climbing structure at Wellington

Park; the Minuteman bike path to Bedford; basketball courts at many sites in town; Spy Pond canoe and kayak rentals; fields available for informal games; skating at Ed Burns arena; swimming at the Reservoir; the Boys & Girls Club; and many excellent soccer, lacrosse, baseball, hockey and other team sport opportunities the Recreation Department provides for town tweens and teens. Plus, over 40 parks and playgrounds, many currently undergoing restoration; new athletic facilities coming to the new HS; the recently renovated Community Center, home to new activities; two libraries; Arlington Continuing Education programs; etc. By any measure, recreation is well established here!

Furthermore, Hill's Hill is a small area, how much damage will be done by building there? There will likely be a lot of bikers from other communities, leading to heavy use. The MTB requires sacrificing open space/woodland to build a sports facility. What PRC is planning is different from any other Park & Rec projects CPAC has approved. They're changing the current use of a woodland/open space. Their proposal is single use, i.e., mountain biking. What about walkers using the area to get to sports fields/rink, birders, dog walkers, etc.? How will this area be shared, as supporters have claimed it can be? The Bike Path is level, paved, with long sight lines and there are still accidents. How will hilly, roughly surfaced, twisting paths with jumps, high speeds, and blind corners be used by riders and walkers, never mind dog walkers?

Have conflicting uses been discussed with Powderhorn, and will they be considered in the design proposal? To get design options you have to tell the designer your criteria/parameters Why not share these? The current estimate of \$400,000 will likely be closer to \$500,000 by the time construction begins. CPAC funds are taxpayer dollars, and \$400,000 is a big ask.

There is no current plan or budget for on-going maintenance or longer-term repairs. Where is the study identifying need, likely user numbers, etc.? CPAC is being asked to award a very large sum for a completely formless idea. A study could identify many things:

- How many Arlington residents do we expect to regularly use the park?

- How many non-Arlington residents?

- What provision will be made for abutters of the park to control possible noise, after-hours use, and parking issues?

- What happens if the volunteer maintenance falls short?

- What happens if use is so heavy that trails are damaged?

- What is the budget for repair (as opposed to regular maintenance)?

- MTB is considered a high-risk sport. What happens if someone is seriously injured, with the limited access to the proposed area?

A good alternative to the proposed pump track site exists, at the bottom of the hill.

- Bottom of hill is much easier for machinery to access—no tree clearing needed

- Much better access for emergency services, if ever needed

- No exposed rock, which Powderhorn has cited as a negative to the hilltop site

- Likely quite a bit less expensive to create pump track there, because of

the above factors

Would provide a sound/activity buffer for **Washington St/Summer Hill Circle residents**, some of whom have expressed concerns

The pump track's construction will be irreversible. Environmental impact is not just as simply remediated as "we'll only cut a few trees and replant." This is an ecosystem, not just individual trees. All our wild areas are under pressure to accommodate additional and multiple uses. We must protect them from encroachment, no matter how well-intentioned. In addition to habitat, they provide areas of cooling and peace in our ever **hotter, noisier, and more crowded world**. Hill's Hill is used by walkers, runners, dog walkers, photographers, people who just want to step into the woods for a few minutes of peace. The site is used and loved as is!

— Over 80% of respondents to the 2022-2029 draft Open Space survey feel the town has a good variety of playing fields and playgrounds.

— Less than 20% feel the town does a good job prioritizing investment and protection of open spaces.

— 60% want more urban tree canopy.

— 60% want more unstructured recreation park space.

Lastly...

- the 2020 Envision survey found that the top four priorities for parks and open space are:

plant more street trees

invest in green infrastructure

invest in native plants

create/conservate more open space

The bottom four priorities:

build more park amenities and play structures

maintain playing fields

improve wayfinding

other

Please do not move forward with this project as described in the feasibility study this past summer.

Thank you for your consideration.

Naomi Bailis , Jennifer Hruska, Pablo Hruska and Jade Hruska
10 Summer Hill Circle

From: [Sherry Reisner](mailto:Sherry_Reisner@town.arlington.ma.us)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) Hill's Hill - No to Preservation Funds for a Pump Track
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 1:55:36 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear CPA Committee:

I'm fairly certain you are getting plenty of emails opposing the use of Community Preservation Act funding for the proposed Mountain Bike Park at Hill's Hill. I'm in agreement with arguments that say the proposal is:

- Harmful to precious wooded space in Arlington. Even if the proposal had habitat protections, why cut into a much-needed, scarce resource — undeveloped wooded land — at a time of climate change and shrinking wildlife habitats? Please consider other locations. The pump track proposal may favor a shady wooded location knowing that our summers are likely to have more blazing hot days. Point made. Protect *all* of the woods.
- Costly. \$400K is a big chunk of change for a project that serves a niche population.

I'd like to add one more objection to the location of the pump track at Hill's Hill that came to mind after watching the YouTube video. If Arlington is to build a pump track, it should be placed in a location that maximizes accessibility by ambulances!

Seriously.

Children and teens are likely to be the main users. How long will a child have to lie on the ground with a compound fracture or head injury waiting for first responders to make their way to Hill's Hill? Even the narrator says that pump tracks aren't forgiving. So let's forego the current pump track plan and come up with a better location that protects this natural habitat, preserves Arlingtons "lungs," and considers the potential emergency medical needs of pump track enthusiasts.

Best regards,
Sherry Reisner
67 Churchill Avenue

From: [Alice Bennett](#)
To: jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: (Archive Copy) CPAC Funding RQ
Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 2:06:40 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

I have several concerns regarding an exceedingly large funding request that will be forthcoming in the near future. This potential request is funding for a Mt. Biking course/trail at Hill's Hills. This lovely, small natural space is a bird watcher's paradise, dog walker area for neighbors with native plants and trees. I question how they could share this space with a mountain bike trail and pump track.

There is no apparent concrete written design layout with materials, environmental impact study, or feasibility study to my knowledge.

This seems to benefit only a small portion of fit individuals of a certain age. I feel this must have a more in-depth study with concrete written plans in place prior to moving forward.

Respectfully

Alice Bennett (Arlington tax paying resident)