

Town of Concord
Estabrook Woods Access Study Committee
Public Hearing
October 24, 2016

The following is the introduction that was given (with some minor contemporaneous changes by the speakers) at the October 24, 2016 public hearing on Estabrook Woods. The PowerPoint slides that correspond to the text are also posted. The meeting was recorded by CCTV and also broadcast live that evening. Once available from CCTV, a link to that recording will also be provided on this webpage.

SLIDE 1 - title page with photo

Good evening. I am Sally Schnitzer, 1155 Lowell Road, co-chair of the Estabrook Woods Access Study Committee. Thank you so much for taking the time to join us this evening. You are all important partners in the stewardship of the Estabrook Woods. I would especially like to welcome representatives of the Town of Carlisle, Harvard University, the Trustees of Reservations, generous landowners, and others.

Tonight's public hearing is being recorded by CCTV. It is being broadcast live this evening and may be rebroadcast in the future on the public access channel.

SLIDE 2 – email addresses

The purpose of tonight's hearing is to present our preliminary recommendations to you and then to welcome your feedback. Our primary job tonight is to listen. There is a handout at the back of the room with all of our preliminary recommendations as well as the email address where you can send additional comments. The recommendations are also posted on our committee's webpage.

SLIDE 3 – overview of committee process

After tonight's hearing, our committee will determine if there should be changes in our recommendations before taking a final vote and submitting them by December 1 to the Board of Selectmen. The Select Board is responsible for final decisions on actions that might be taken.

Why this Committee was created

First, a few words about why this committee was created in the first place. As most of you know, the Estabrook Woods is a large area of forest in the Towns of Concord and

Carlisle made up of a mosaic of different ownerships, protected and stewarded over many decades through the collaboration of private and institutional landowners, conservationists, public entities, and citizens. For decades the Woods have been enjoyed by recreational visitors, studied by researchers, and appreciated as a rare, largely undisturbed natural area – a beloved respite from the concerns and busy pace of modern life.

Over the past few years, landowners on Estabrook Road have observed a significant increase in visitors accessing the Woods at this entry point. Starting in 2014 through spring of 2016 an increased number of complaints were filed with the Town over parking problems, conflicts between homeowners and visitors to the Woods, conflicts involving dogs, and other related issues. There were times when parking on the narrow road led to unsafe conditions.

In response, the Concord Select Board created our committee -- and also put temporary parking limitations on most of Estabrook Road. These limitations will remain in effect until 60 days after our committee gives its report to the Select Board.

Committee's Charge

The purpose of our committee is “to consider how to address the increased pressure for adequate and safe parking at trail heads, to review other impacts from increased visitor use, and to make recommendations to the Select Board for immediate and longer term natural area recreation management plans. The committee should evaluate whether existing facilities are being utilized effectively and how best to address the growing demand for access to the woods.”

Some important things to know about our committee: We were established to be a temporary and short-lived committee. With our first meeting in late April and our report due in December, we have worked hard during the last six months to understand the Woods and the issues at hand and to work toward consensus. After our report is given, we will be disbanded. We are a study committee – we ourselves do not have the authority to take action. And finally – we were purposefully appointed to represent very different points of view. We have learned a lot from one another, but even now, we see this situation from different lenses, as probably many of you do, as well.

SLIDE 4 – Committee members

There are nine Concord residents on our Committee, including abutters to access points to the Woods, representatives of the Natural Resources Commission, the Conservation Restriction Committee, the Concord Land Trust, the Town Trails Committee, and several at large members who have demonstrated an interest in the Woods. We are also very grateful for the thoughtful and knowledgeable participation of Nick d'Arbeloff of Carlisle, appointed to work with our committee by Carlisle's Board of Selectmen. Our members are:

- Jeff Adams of the Natural Resources Commission,
- Kathy Angell
- Nick d'Arbeloff of Carlisle,
- Justin King,
- Lisa Pohl,
- Bonnie Pohlig,
- Neil Rasmussen,
- Polly Reeve, co-chair
- myself, Co-chair
- Peter Siebert

Committee Process

SLIDE 5 – overview of committee process (duplicate of earlier)

The Committee began with a process of gathering and reviewing information about the Woods and the current concerns of abutters and visitors.

We studied the history of land protection and landownership, and identified and described access points in both towns. We inventoried current parking spaces around the Woods, with the help of the Concord Public Works and Natural Resources divisions. Members also visited other conservation lands in Concord and in nearby communities to assess parking, rules and regulations, and usage.

We used a number of approaches to spread the word about our committee and solicit comments, including a public hearing at the Town House in June, a guest commentary in the Concord Journal and the Carlisle Mosquito, notice at each of the main entry points to the Woods, and through our committee's webpage, which invited public input. We reviewed the correspondence received by the town on this topic, including material that was collected before our Committee was appointed.

Approximately 60 people came to our hearing in June, and nearly half took the opportunity to share their thoughts with the committee. We have received and carefully read numerous emails.

SLIDE 6 – committee goals

Early on, we articulated our hope that solutions could be found that balanced three mutually important goals:

- Support the preservation of the ecological health of the Woods, and Harvard University’s stewardship of their land for ecological research and education;
- Respect and support the rights of private landowners and recognize their generosity
- Continue to welcome visitors to the Woods in a manner consistent with its ownership and preservation purposes.

Balancing these three objectives – stewardship of the woods, the interests of the landowners, and a welcome to the public – is not simple, but our committee believes that it is possible.

What is Estabrook Woods?

SLIDE 7 – Woods area outline map

There are many definitions of what constitutes “The Estabrook Woods” but for our purposes, we are focused on land in the northern part of Concord, between Lowell Road on the west, Barnes Hill Road on the South, and Monument Street on the east, and extending north to the town border with Carlisle and beyond.

The partnership with Carlisle is important. Our two towns, and several land trusts have worked together to protect the woods and deal with management issues. Our committee understands that the Woods function as a system, and that issues or decisions in one part of the Woods may have an impact elsewhere, including across town borders.

The Estabrook Woods is one of Concord’s largest intact natural areas, with over 1400 acres of contiguous protected land (and more in neighboring Carlisle). But many people who visit the Woods don’t realize that most of the land is privately owned and

protected from development as a result of a 60-year collaboration to support a biological reserve for research and education. Understanding this unique land protection mosaic is important to our understanding of the Woods.

SLIDE 8 – public conservation land

In fact, the only Town-owned conservation land in the Concord portion of the Woods are highlighted on this slide. The largest parcel is the 100-acre Punkatasset Conservation Land, most of which was acquired by the Town in 1971 (92 acres) and 8 acres of which was acquired in 1990 along Saw Mill Brook. This 100 acres is managed by the Town's Department of Natural Resources. The other town-owned conservation land is a 13-acre parcel around the Monument Farm subdivision near the Concord-Carlisle town line, which provides a buffer to land owned by Harvard and neighborhood access to the Estabrook Woods. Together these two town-owned parcels are well less than 10% of the Concord portion of the Woods.

SLIDE 9 - Harvard University land

The largest landowner in Estabrook Woods is Harvard University's Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) and its Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, which owns a 672-acre woodland preserve. The preserve, administered as part of a research facility based in Bedford known as The Concord Field Station, was established in the 1960s as a result of the vision of two Harvard professors who worked with landowners in Concord and Carlisle to acquire contiguous land to be used by faculty, and graduate and undergraduate students for teaching and research in the environmental sciences, zoology, ecology, and animal behavior. Their efforts were aided by generous Concord residents, property owners, The Nature Conservancy, and a grant from the Ford Foundation.

It was in support of Harvard's woodland preserve that the Towns of Concord and Carlisle, the land trusts of Concord and Carlisle, private owners, the Trustees of Reservations, and thoughtful visitors have worked together to protect and steward additional land around Harvard's preserve within Estabrook Woods. Over many years, parcel by parcel, land was protected through gift, purchase, and by legal instruments – mostly conservation restrictions, or CR's -- that preserve the land for conservation purposes.

SLIDE 10 – Land Trust properties

This slide shows the land owned by land trusts. The Concord Land Conservation Trust owns and cares for three parcels, the largest of which is the 59 acre Chamberlin Woods property, providing public access to the Woods from Lowell Road.

SLIDE 11 – Private Conservation Restrictions

The rest of the protected land in the Woods in Concord—nearly 400 acres—is privately held by many separate landowners who have agreed to forgo or limit development and to protect particular conservation values through deed restrictions or conservation restrictions.

On this private land, the granting of public access varies. From the beginning, Harvard has generously permitted public access on its land for compatible recreation, so long as use remains modest and quiet and does not interfere with research and conservation efforts such as recent reintroduction of Blanding’s turtles. Punkatasset and the Land Trust properties are open to the public with certain use regulations.

There is also substantial acreage adjoining the protected land that is developed or developable, including numerous homes, private and public ways, and privately held parcels without any deeded public access. Some private landowners have given general or limited permission for access across their property, but private property rights need to be observed.

SLIDE 12 – All protected land

What does this all mean? When you or I enter the Estabrook Woods, we might think we are in “public conservation land” but the fact is that on our hike we might well be passing through land held by several different owners – including Harvard University and private landowners. The burdens of land stewardship and management fall largely on private shoulders. We are guests on these private lands, through the generosity of owners and a history of warm welcome and courteous visitors.

Thanks to the foresight of many individuals and organizations, the Woods are still here for us to explore and enjoy, and it is important to keep in mind the complexity of landownership as we consider issues related to access of this resource.

Access and Parking

SLIDE 13 – Three access points (with arrows appearing on clicks)

Currently there three highly used access points to the Woods in Concord. These are: (*click #1*) at the entrance to Punkatasset Conservation Land on Monument Street; (*click #2*) at the end of Estabrook Road, and at the entrance to the Concord Land Conservation Trust Land (*click #3*) at Chamberlin Woods on Lowell Road. Most visitors to the Woods use these entrances, and as a result they are the pressure points where challenges are most keenly felt.

SLIDE 14 – Punkatasset access point

- Parking at Punkatasset is along the shoulder of Monument Street, which until recently accommodated approximately 13 cars. Recent changes to the driveway at #851 have effectively reduced that number to 10 cars. This area has been heavily used for many years. This entrance has clear rights of public access through town conservation land.

SLIDE 15 – Estabrook Road access point

- Roadside parking at the end of Estabrook Road can accommodate approximately 11 cars. Prior to the temporary “No Parking” restriction, on busy days additional cars would park along Estabrook Road – perhaps 25 or more on certain days. The legal status of public access at this location is currently in dispute. We will say more about this in a minute.

SLIDE 16 – Chamberlin Woods access point

- Parking at Chamberlin Woods on Lowell Road is along a wide gravel shoulder, and can accommodate approximately 16 cars. This area has been lightly used until recently when anecdotal evidence indicates the number of visitors entering the Woods here has increased significantly. This entrance has clear rights of public access through land trust land.

Our Committee looked at parking, signage, visitor management, and access at these and other locations. We considered whether there are steps that might be taken to more thoughtfully welcome visitors to the Woods without negatively impacting the legitimate rights of landowners, and while supporting stewardship of the Woods.

Preliminary Recommendations

I am Polly Reeve, (429 Williams Road) co-chair of the Estabrook Woods Access Study Committee.

SLIDE 17 – Preliminary Recommendations title slide

We now turn to the Committee's preliminary recommendations. As Sally indicated, these are available on a handout in the back of the room.

Our committee was appointed by the Select Board intentionally to represent quite different perspectives, and our differences have led to spirited disagreements and debates. Nevertheless, on the whole we have been able to listen and learn from one another and have reached consensus on almost all of our preliminary recommendations. In our handout, you can see the areas where we have been unable to agree – they are shaded in grey, and they have to do with whether to keep the “No Parking” ban in effect on most of Estabrook Road. Yes, after all these months of conversation, this is still a point of disagreement among us, and I suspect, among you who are here tonight.

At the top of page one, you will see that the Committee has singled out what it considers to be the two most important recommendations – one dealing with resolution of legal uncertainties about the access at Estabrook Road, and the other dealing with a new parking area on land near the entrance to Punkatasset.

But let's briefly go through the recommendations in the order they appear in the handout.

SLIDE 18 – Educate the public

We concluded early on in our process that misunderstandings about the extent of private land ownership in the Woods and its purpose as a woodland preserve for conservation and research are an important part of the problems we face. Too many people who come here think that this is a dog park, or that this is all public land. These misunderstandings are exacerbated by the internet, where information about the Woods (accurate and inaccurate) is broadly available, attracting more users and sometimes conveying misconceptions about the ownership, purpose, stewardship, and management of the Woods.

Therefore, the Committee recommends posting information signs at each primary access point, to help visitors understand the unique nature of the Woods and the

importance of respect for landowners and responsible stewardship. The Committee further recommends that similar information be posted on various websites to encourage more reasonable visitor expectations about the Woods, parking, and use.

SLIDE 19 – Foster observance of consistent guidelines

The Committee recognizes that some (but by no means all) visitors, particularly at Estabrook Road, have failed to treat landowners, other users, and the Woods with respect. Examples include trespassing (sometimes blatant and unapologetic), making campfires, creating new trails on private property, failing to keep dogs under control or cleaning up after them, driving vehicles across lawns or in other places where they are prohibited, and many other unacceptable behaviors. There were times when safe access to homes was impeded. These behaviors are inconsistent with both responsible stewardship and common courtesy.

Further, we believe that the lack of signage at trailheads and directional signage at certain locations within the Woods contributes to conflicts and confusion. Clear communication of expectations is important.

SLIDE 20 – Proposed use guidelines

Therefore, we recommend adopting a set of visitor guidelines, shown here, to be used throughout the Woods. Most of these courtesies are in harmony with the rules and regulations of town conservation land and land trust land, but we recommend going further in one specific area: namely, dogs.

During 2015, the police reported 15 dog related incidents at the Estabrook Road access serious enough to warrant an officer being sent to the scene, and many of the behavior problems that are currently being experienced in Estabrook Woods involve dogs. These include:

- Dog waste pollution
- Dogs scaring, chasing, knocking over or biting people or animals
- Dogs entering residences, barns, and cars, and running loose on roadways.

Internet sites have promoted Estabrook Woods as a destination for dogwalking, and professional dogwalkers are increasingly bringing their charges to the Woods for fresh air and exercise. The result is that dog usage has soared, along with the misunderstanding that the Woods are a “dog park.”

Many of us on the Committee are dog lovers, and we know that Estabrook Woods brings much joy to dogs as well as humans. But we also feel strongly that stricter limits and clearer expectations pertaining to dogs will be important for long-term ecological and communal well-being.

- It should be the expectation and norm that all dog waste is picked up and packed out.
- As a research area and woodland preserve, large numbers of dogs cannot be accommodated. For this reason, we recommend prohibiting commercial dog walkers and limiting the number of dogs per person to two.
- In order to maintain safety and order at each entry point, dogs should be leashed as they arrive, and remain on leash until they pass a leash release sign, which will be located on each trail an appropriate distance from the trail head. On returning, dogs should be leashed at this same point.
- Signage related to these rules must be clear, and enforcement consistent.

We are including suggestions for communicating these rules without causing unnecessary “sign pollution,” and we urge the Concord Police Department and Natural Resources Division to assist as possible to encourage observance and enforcement of these rules.

We have some suggestions for property owners, too – their generosity in welcoming visitors is greatly appreciated, and we encourage them to protect their property and contribute toward harmonious use of the Woods, especially by using modest fences and/or clearly posting signs where visitors are not welcome.

We also suggest minimal and tasteful signs be added at parking areas to show where to park, how to park, and dog leashing expectations, and that the Concord Trails Committee review and modify as needed published maps, signs, and other trail information to harmonize the information available and minimize confusion.

SLIDE 21 – Resolve legal uncertainties

As we state in the handout, two very different legal opinions regarding the status of access at the end of Estabrook Road remain unresolved. **We have urged the Town to work with town counsel and direct abutters to resolve legal uncertainties and to**

secure permanent public access at the end of Estabrook Road. This is one of our highest priorities.

Estabrook Road was the historic road to Carlisle, dating back to the 17th century. Town records show that the Town of Concord in 1932 successfully petitioned the Middlesex County Commissioners to discontinue Estabrook Road as a public way from a point beyond #393 Estabrook Road, where there is now a chain and the paved road ends. Town Counsel is of the opinion that the Town's actions in 1932 resulted in the abandonment of the obligation to maintain this portion of Estabrook Road without giving up public rights of access.

Direct abutters disagree, relying on their attorney's legal opinion that the 1932 vote resulted in the portion of the road beyond #393 becoming a private way with ownership held by direct abutters, each extending to the middle of the way. Pursuant to this interpretation, the neighbors have expressly granted permission for public use upon certain conditions and have stated that they would like to continue to do so if conditions can be met. They have requested that the town make the temporary parking restrictions permanent, and have stated that they would rescind permission for the public to use the access trail if additional parking is created or allowed along the road.

The uncertainty resulting from this disagreement has made it difficult for our committee to resolve some of the issues that led to its creation.

But the committee agrees on this point – Estabrook Road is an historically significant part of Concord, and assuring public access to the Woods here is an urgent priority. We are pleased that the Selectmen and Town Manager have been in conversation with the other parties and we hope that everyone interested in the Woods will be patient in giving this matter time for a peaceful resolution of these complicated issues.

SLIDE 22 – Address parking issues

The question of how many cars should be accommodated around the Woods -- and where -- was at the heart of nearly every debate the Committee had, and consensus was difficult to achieve, as you can see by the gray shading in the handout.

First some background: The Town does not have historic data to compare the number and frequency of cars that parked at the various Estabrook Woods access points 10

years ago, 5 years ago, 2 years ago, and now, but most agree that the Woods are increasingly attracting visitors from across the region.

Moreover, most agree that the recent parking restrictions at Estabrook Road have limited visits on busy days, and already have had a domino effect in increasing the use of other access points, for example at Chamberlin Woods on Lowell Road.

The Committee looked for ways to welcome visitors to Estabrook Woods that provide safety, security, stewardship, and no undue burden on a single neighborhood. We were looking to accommodate approximately the same number of cars as had been possible before the “no parking” restrictions were implemented, while recognizing that shifting parking patterns can bring new challenges.

In the end, and given our differences of opinion, we recommend several interrelated steps to address parking and access to the woods. Since one of our two highest priorities involves changes at the Punkatasset entrance, let’s look more closely at this area.

SLIDE 23 – Punkatasset existing parking

Punkatasset is a very popular point of entry to the Woods, with direct access to public Town-owned conservation land. From the trailhead, it is an easy walk to Hutchins Pond, and to trails that directly access land owned by Harvard University.

Here we see an aerial view of the entrance to Punkatasset on Monument Street, with shoulder parking along the west side. Until late this past summer, there was room for 13 cars here. A recent driveway curb-cut eliminated three of those, so today there are 10. Since we started this committee, we have heard from many members of the public that these parking spaces are not ideal, as they are on a busy road and the shoulder is not generous.

The former Apthorp Land is located at #873 Monument Street. It is the 4-acre lot on the right as you walk down the entrance driveway to Punkatasset and is surrounded by conservation land on all sides. The land was given to The Trustees of Reservations by the Apthorp family in 1998. The family retained a life estate, enabling them to stay in the house, which they did until 2006, at which time they released their rights and the Trustees took over management of the property. The land was given with no restrictions. The Trustees are parties to numerous conservation restrictions in the

Woods, and are currently considering how to use this land. They are open to further conversations with the Town to see if there are proposals or outcomes that could be mutually beneficial. A staff member for the Trustees, David Santomenna, who is here tonight, attended nearly all of our meetings, and followed our process closely.

SLIDE 24 – Proposed Apthorp parking

This slide shows the space on the Apthorp land where there is the potential for new off-street parking. One of our highest priority recommendations is that the Town work with the Trustees to determine the feasibility of this idea. If this parking area can be built, we recommend eliminating on-street parking on Monument Street at this entrance. Providing additional and safer parking here would welcome visitors to the Woods at a location where the Town has a public purpose and resources.

Our preliminary assessment is that 20-24 cars can be accommodated in the field near the road. For illustrative purposes, this is roughly the same number as can be accommodated at the Meriam's Corner parking lot for the Battle Road Trail.

The committee was not charged with negotiating on behalf of the town. We do not make a recommendation on what terms might be negotiated – whether this could be a partnership, a lease, a purchase, or a memorandum of agreement, for example. This would be something for the Selectmen to consider.

If this parking area cannot be built or negotiations with the Trustees are not fruitful, the Committee would reluctantly recommend that the NRC consider a 13 car lot on the Punkatasset Conservation land in order to remove on-street parking. The NRC has had preliminary conversations about these two ideas, and also prefers the Apthorp land proposal.

SLIDE 25 – Estabrook Road parking

Our next recommendation on parking concerns Estabrook Road. This is perhaps the most popular entry to the Woods – it is a very special place. The landowner at #393 has generously accommodated space for approximately 11 cars. Until last winter, it was also possible for cars to park elsewhere along the edge of Estabrook Road on busy days. The Committee estimates that on some peak days, upwards of 25 or more cars might have parked along the road. Right now, with the parking restrictions in effect, these eleven spaces are the only parking allowed on the Road.

We recommend that the Town work with the neighbors to maintain and slightly improve these spaces. This could include design changes, including slightly regrading or relocating parking spaces, and removing or relocating boulders, that could improve the situation and fully accommodate 11 cars, while keeping the rural, historic feeling of the road.

The Committee did not reach consensus on whether to lift the parking restrictions and if so, how many spaces should be allowed. The following recommendations indicate our split votes, looking at two scenarios:

First, assuming that a parking area can be built at the Apthorp land, a majority of the Committee further recommends that UNTIL THE PARKING LOT IS BUILT, the Town temporarily lift a portion of the no parking restriction on Estabrook Road, sufficient to provide parking for 3 to 8 additional cars. Once the Apthorp lot has been built, the spaces would be removed, with the final number of spaces on the road being 11 and a “No Parking” restriction on the remainder of Estabrook Road. A minority of the committee favored no temporary spaces.

If a parking lot CANNOT be built at the Trustees’ Apthorp land, a majority of the committee recommends: adding parallel parking on the west side of Estabrook Road for 5 to 11 more cars just south of #299. Deciding on the exact number of spaces was difficult given the uncertainty over the legal rights of direct abutters to close the access and their intent to close it if additional spaces are added. Providing additional parking spaces was not a consensus decision.

SLIDE 26 – Monument Farm parking

Our final parking recommendation deals with Monument Farm Road.

As mentioned earlier in this presentation, there is a 14.6 acre parcel of town conservation land located on Monument Farm Road, near the Carlisle town line. The conservation land was transferred to the Town when the Monument Farm subdivision was approved. The parcel wraps around the development to the south and then runs north along Two Rod Road and the eastern border of land owned by Harvard University. Much of the land is wet. The deed grants the Town rights to mow the field and to maintain the drainage on the property.

There are two existing trails that run from Monument Farm Road into the Estabrook Woods that are used by the neighborhood. Currently there are no signs at the deeded

trail access and there is a small trail marker at the Conservation Land Trail. There is no provision for parking. The Committee recommends that the Natural Resources Commission review deeds and approvals, and work with neighbors, including Harvard and Carlisle, in order to accommodate parking for 3-5 cars on the town's frontage on Monument Farm Road. The existing trail would need to be rerouted to be entirely on Town property, requiring bog bridges in a few locations.

SLIDE 27 – Parking chart

This chart summarizes the sum of our parking proposals. I know it is hard to absorb on this screen, but it is also available as a handout in the back of the room. It shows that the end result of these proposals, if implemented, would be similar overall Woods parking capacity as before the parking restrictions were put in place on Estabrook Road, but with the impact shared by different locations.

SLIDE 28 – Other recommendations

The Committee makes other recommendations for each of the access points, dealing with signage, snow plowing, trail adjustments, and avoiding conflicts with private owners. In the interest of allowing more time for your comments, we won't go into detail on these now, but you can see more specifics in the handout.

We recognize that issues are likely to arise around the Woods in the future, after our Committee is disbanded. We recommend that a group – formal or informal – be constituted to discuss issues and build consensus around solutions and keep the towns of Concord and Carlisle, the various land trusts, landowners, and visitors on the same page and working cooperatively.

Finally there are a few things we discussed but are not recommending at this time. If issues persist, they might be considered in the future. They include:

- a) Parking by permit only
- b) Resident only parking
- c) Adopting a leash requirement throughout Estabrook Woods
- d) Prohibiting dogs altogether in the Estabrook Woods

To repeat, we considered these things, but are NOT recommending them at this time.

In conclusion, I want to add that as a Committee, we recognize that the conflicts we have faced in the last few months at the Estabrook Road trailhead are not unique. These kinds of issues have arisen at many beaches, parks, and wild areas around the

country and around the world. But this doesn't mean that they are simple to address. Balancing our stated objectives is not an easy matter. Nevertheless, our committee believes that it is possible. Over the course of the past six months, we have been committed to respectfully and seriously working together toward a thoughtful resolution, and we welcome your comments in the same spirit.

SLIDE 29 – Thank you

Sally: Let me close with some thoughts on tonight's format. Again, I remind you that tonight's public hearing is being recorded by CCTV. It is being broadcast live this evening and may be rebroadcast in the future on the public access channel. Please use the microphone and, before you speak, please state your name and address for our records. In order to hear as many people as possible, we ask that you keep your remarks under three minutes.