

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE

RESOLUTION NO.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING RESOLUTIONS BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND REQUESTING EAST PROVIDENCE CITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER PURCHASING THE METACOMET GOLF CLUB AS OPEN SPACE

WHEREAS, the Metacomet Golf Club was incorporated in 1901 and is set on 105 acres of peaceful rolling hills and well maintained lush green grass located on scenic Veterans Memorial Parkway overlooking Narraganset Bay in the City of East Providence; and

WHEREAS, in February 2020, the Metacomet Golf Club announced its intention to sell its property to Marshall Development, which has communicated intent to convert the parcel from a private golf course into a mixed-used, commercial/residential location with some public access to local space; and

WHEREAS, the East Providence City Council maintains the sole authority to approve the zoning changes and changes to the East Providence Comprehensive Plan necessary to permit mixed-use, commercial/residential development on the Metacomet land parcel; and

WHEREAS, in line with East Providence Code of Ordinances, Subpart B entitled “Related Special Acts”, Sec. 20 entitled “Parks and Recreation” empowers the City of East Providence to acquire land for recreational and conservational purposes and authorizes the City of East Providence to acquire land and interests therein in the City of East Providence for parks, recreation and/or conservation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the East Providence City Council has an obligation to consider City Ordinance Sec. 19-75 entitled “Determination” which states the City Council shall consider the recommendation of the planning board, the city comprehensive plan, the concerns expressed at the public hearing, and public interest in making a determination on a petition; and

WHEREAS, the East Providence City Council acknowledges that residents of the City have, through direct communications, public hearings, petitions, etc., communicated firm opposition to any development of the Metacomet land parcel; and

WHEREAS, the East Providence Conservation Commission is an advisory body to the City Council, pursuant to R.I. General Laws §45-35-1, the Commission recommends, that the City maintain current zoning which seeks to maximize open space within the City of East Providence and that the proposed development be used for the maximum benefit to the community which is consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, a substantial portion of the site remain as open space to preserve and protect the natural resources of Watchemocket Cove; and

WHEREAS, a potential buyer of the Metacomet property will retain, per City Ordinance and the current O-1 zoning designation for the parcel, authority for certain usages, either strictly “by right” or through special use permitting, including but not limited to hospitals, cafes, off-street parking and loading, transit shelters, and amusement parks; and

WHEREAS, the lack of community and public access to safe and open green space is a critical area of concern for residents in East Providence, Rhode Island and New England, as these green spaces play a critical role in helping residents and visitors stay active, and as said green spaces improve the climate and reduce environmental damage of man-made developments; and

WHEREAS, the East Providence Comprehensive Plan has been established with the stated intent to promote orderly development that protects the public health, safety and welfare and to continue to maintain open space properties; and said Comprehensive Plan provides for goals and objectives including the preservation of private open lands; regeneration of the private non-profit East Providence Land Conservation Trust; and seeking Federal and State funding for programs and land acquisition where necessary; and

WHEREAS, the East Providence Comprehensive Plan explicitly states that “Development of any of the City’s golf courses would result in a loss of open space which would be a detriment to the overall recreation and open space system of East Providence,” and that said plan establishes an objective to support the continued operation and maintenance of the private golf courses operating in the City; and

WHEREAS, the East Providence City Council acknowledges its responsibility to apply its powers to advance the collective interests of the City, to include the residents thereof, in accordance with established statutes, ordinances, policies and strategy; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Sec. 1-3 entitled “Powers of the City” of the East Providence City Charter, the City of East Providence “may acquire property within or without its corporate limits for any City purpose”; and

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island House of Representatives and the State Senate are currently considering a Resolution respectfully requesting the members of the East Providence City Council to consider purchasing the Metacomet Golf Club as open space; and

WHEREAS, said House resolution outlines potential funding sources to support such an action to include municipal bonding, supplemented by Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management grants, as well as Federal aid, and suggests the establishment of the “Metacomet Conservancy Land Trust” to oversee the parcel and preserve its accessibility to the public; and

WHEREAS, said Senate resolution acknowledges the critical role green spaces play in helping residents and visitors get outside and become active, and improves the urban climate, abates the urban heat-island effect by their ecological-balancer function, and reduces environmental damages; and

WHEREAS, an essential portion of Rhode Island’s mission for the use of green space bond money is to fund and protect coastal features, farmland and wooded acreage all over the state, and the preservation of the Metacomet Golf Club as open space is perfectly suited to this cause; and

WHEREAS, the East Providence City Council does hereby wish to preserve the Metacomet land parcel in its current state.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The East Providence City Council supports the aforementioned House and Senate Resolutions.
2. The East Providence City Council respectfully requests that the Mayor of East Providence, through the action of the City’s Administrative Departments, investigate the feasibility of a City purchase of the Metacomet land parcel, and advise the Council with regard to findings pertaining to cost, financing options, strategy for acquisition (to include fee simple and the right of Eminent Domain), and additional land usage restrictions so as to preserve the Metacomet land parcel in its current state.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon approval of this Resolution by the East Providence City Council, the City Clerk shall send a certified copy to the Governor of the State of Rhode Island, the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Rhode Island, the President of the Rhode Island Senate, the Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives, the Senators and Representatives from the City of East Providence, the U.S. Representatives and Senators for Rhode Island, the Secretary of State, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and the Mayor of the City of East Providence.

This Resolution shall take effect upon passage.

Adopted: _____

Attest:

City Clerk of the City of East Providence, RI

Introduced by: Councilwoman Sousa, Councilman Mourato, Councilman Cahoon, Council Vice President Rodericks