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# Where the cows roam: Easement raises questions about future of Cozens Meadow

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McKenna Harford [FOLLOW](#)  
mharford@skyhinews.com



Cozens Meadow stretches along US 40 between the highway and the Grand Park neighborhood.

McKenna Harford / mharford@skyhinews.com

Cozens Meadow's green field dotted with wetlands and marked by the Elk Creek River stretches 466 acres along US Highway 40, providing a natural barrier between the Grand Park neighborhood homes and the traffic.

For years, the meadow has been utilized as open space by residents and guests alike and touted as a central part of the Grand Park neighborhood. However, a conservation easement recorded earlier this year is raising questions about the future of the land.

In public forum at the Sept. 2 meeting, former Fraser mayor Peggy Smith asked about a conservation easement for a portion of the meadow recorded by the Grand County Clerk and Recorder in March. Smith has also authored [a letter to the editor](#).

The easement, signed by Mayor Philip Vandernail, states that a 17.7 acre portion of the meadow will be put into a conservation easement in "full satisfaction" of the development agreement with the town.

The original 2005 agreement between Grand Park and the town outlined a conservation easement encompassing all 466 acres of Cozens Meadow to be owned and maintained by the town, according to the agreement.

"The whole deal is that it's not an HOA asset, but it's a public asset for the citizens of the Fraser Valley," Smith said. "The intention was always that the meadow was sacred ground."

In 2015, during her tenure as mayor, Smith signed final plats for some development within Grand Park authorizing the town manager and the town attorney to negotiate the final terms of the conservation easement.

However, the easement was not discussed in public meetings this year prior to being signed, based on agendas and meeting minutes.

Town Manager Jeff Durbin said the town was researching the conservation easement and didn't comment further on the authority of the document.

"We're looking into this," Durbin said.

Grand Park developer Clark Lipscomb returned a message from the Sky-Hi News, but the newspaper was not able to speak with him before Thursday's deadline.

The neighborhood also recently moved a herd of cattle into the meadow, creating issues for homeowners who saw cows getting into their yards.

Smith adds that the cattle make it difficult to recreate in the meadow, which was the goal of the open space.

In an emailed letter to homeowners, Lipscomb said the cows are part of a "maintenance and management program Grand Park has implemented on other portions of its property with great success."

The letter goes on to assert the cattle shouldn't interfere with the other uses of the open space.

"Ignore the cattle and they will likewise ignore you," it reads.

According to Durbin, the town doesn't have anything in its animal control regulations that would prevent the cattle from living in the meadow.

Durbin added that the town plans to discuss the easement further, but noted it may not fit on the Sept. 16 agenda.

"I anticipate having some kind of conversation with the town board," he said.

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