

Dear Residents of Norfolk County,

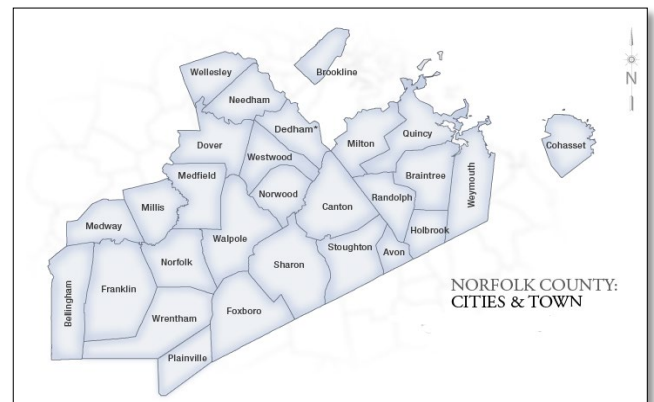
September 7, 2022

Despite loud and clear opposition from the *Walpole Residents, Walpole Preservation Alliance, current Students, Parent Network, and Alumni Association* of Norfolk County Agricultural High School, the current Norfolk County Commissioners are preparing to move forward with their plans to install large-scale solar plants on nearly 30 acres of combined farmland at the following two locations in the Town of Walpole:

1. *Hilltop Farm* (near Bubbling Brook), where, after denial from the Town of Walpole Zoning Department, the Norfolk County government is in litigation against the town and its residents.
2. *Norfolk County Agricultural High School*, which will result in the destruction of approximately 4.5 acres of existing farmable land and the cutting of an additional almost 3 acres of trees.

The Commissioners of Norfolk County are elected in good faith by the constituents; however, *the land belongs to the residents of Norfolk County!* The purpose of this letter is to share the facts that we have learned in the past 6 months and to help you make informed decisions. Following is a list of properties owned by Norfolk County:

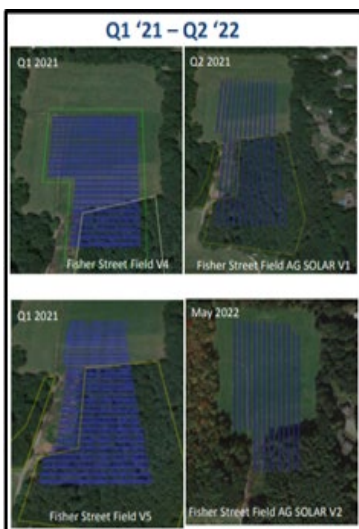
1. Brookline Court House
2. Stoughton Court House
3. Wrentham Court House
4. Dedham District Court
5. Dedham Superior Court
6. Quincy Court House
7. Presidents Golf Course, Quincy
8. Registry of Deeds, Dedham
9. Administration Building, Dedham
10. *Hilltop Farm, Walpole*
11. *Norfolk County Agricultural School, Walpole*
12. Conservation land in Holbrook and Norfolk



Source: <https://www.norfolkcounty.org/>

At a joint meeting between The Norfolk County Agricultural High School Board of Trustees and Norfolk County Commissioners on [July 13, 2022](#), the County Commissioners in attendance were asked if they had considered using any of this available infrastructure (*like the Registry of Deeds in Dedham*)

before destroying green space. One of the Commissioners expressed a dislike for solar panels on rooftops and stated, "*at some point, this baby is going to be born,*" and "*this ship has already sailed.*" One even stated, "*I don't like the way solar panels look on roofs*".



Source: <https://www.norfolkcounty.org/>

Residents of Walpole and neighboring towns, along with student, parents and alumni of Norfolk County Agricultural High School continue to attend public hearings to raise concerns over the multitude of adjustments they keep making to the same farmland at The Norfolk County Agricultural High School (*as seen in the picture on left*).

Out of approximately thirty public speakers at the last public hearing on [August 29, 2022](#), overwhelming majority expressed strong feelings that this community is not against solar panels and green energy, however it cannot be accomplished by destroying existing trees and farmland surrounded by residential properties.

When asked if the current County Commissioners would consider holding a public Q&A session (instead of public hearings - where they do not answer any public questions), the County lawyer stated, “ *It is not required by law.*”

This proposed field is also the location of *The Annual Haunted Hayride* organized by the current students at The Norfolk County Agricultural High School - as a team-building and fund-raising event for senior yearbooks and proms. According to the high school public records, The Haunted Hayride consistently brings in approximately \$40,000 per year to support student activities. Additionally, the proposed field is an extremely popular *recreational location* for The Norfolk County Agricultural High School *cross country course*, and nature lovers like *The Walpole Trails Committee* and *The Walpole Preservation Alliance*.

Most would agree that placement of such large-scale solar panels will obstruct the path of Annual Haunted Hayride and all recreational activities. However, the current County Commissioners believe that Haunted Hayride and walking trails can continue to operate underneath these large-scale solar panels.



Location of proposed farmland surrounded by residential properties
Source: www.google.com



Type of solar panels proposed at the Norfolk County Agricultural High School
Source: <https://www.norfolkcounty.org/>

Financially speaking, according to the proposed plan shared during public hearings, Norfolk County is expected to lease the 9+ acres of farmland at Norfolk County Agricultural High School for \$31,500 per year, for a 20-year period. Since the current annual fee for admitting *one* ‘out-of-district’ student at The Norfolk County Agricultural High School is \$24,000 (*and there is a waiting list of students!*), it would be more beneficial for the Norfolk County to admit two out-of-district students instead of giving up 9+ acres of green farmland for \$31,500 annually.

This land is so much more than just a place to put Solar panels. It is a recreational area for the community. It is home to many species of wildlife. It is an alternative classroom. It is a main part of the Haunted Hayride route.

The current Norfolk County Commissioners are required by law to vote on this proposed plan *within 60 days* from the last public hearing (*which took place on August 29, 2022*). *Friends, if you feel outraged, you are not alone!*

Here is how you can support this fight to save the nearly 30 acres of farmland at Norfolk County Agricultural High School:

1. Call Representative Paul McMurtry (P: 617-722-2015) and Senator Paul Feeney (P: 617-722-1222) to raise your concerns. *They are both against this proposed plan.*
2. Vote for Matt Sheehan as the next Norfolk County Commissioner in the General Election on November 8, 2022. *He is against this proposed plan.*
(<https://www.sheehanforcommissioner.com/>)

This will force one of the current Norfolk County Commissioners – Peter Collins out of office! He is in favor of destroying this land without exploring other options.

This letter is our collaborative request to join these efforts to protect the existing farmland in the town of Walpole and at Norfolk County Agricultural High School. Thank you for your support and attention to this urgent matter.

Respectfully,

- ◆ Norfolk County Agricultural High School Alumni Association
- ◆ Norfolk County Agricultural High School Parent Network
- ◆ Walpole Preservation Alliance
- ◆ Matt Sheehan Alumni, Member of the Board of Trustees at NCAHS

References: Video: Nov 19, 2020, Public Hearing for Hilltop Farm (only virtual): <https://youtu.be/jtt18go1tog>
Script: May 16, 2022, Public Hearing for Norfolk County Agricultural High School (only in-person): [norfolkcountyma/05-16-22_F.pdf](https://www.norfolkcountyma.gov/05-16-22_F.pdf)
Video: July 13, 2022, Joint Session (School Board of Trustees and Norfolk County Commissioners): <https://youtu.be/PCmrE4mmrUc>
Video : Aug 29, 2022, Public Hearing for Norfolk County Agricultural High School): <https://youtu.be/83vfJJfOHEg>