

# Canonchet Farm Master Plan Review Committee

*“This report was drafted by the volunteer Canonchet Farm Master Plan Committee at the direction of the Town Council. It is provided here for public perusal but has not been officially adopted. Comments are welcomed but must be made either at hearing or in writing to either the Planning Board or Town Council. Public hearings are pending in Spring 2009. Please check the Town calendar for upcoming hearing dates.”*

# Canonchet Farm Master Plan Review Committee

## Report to the Narragansett Town Council



Photos by Bill Krul

March 2, 2009

# Executive Summary

The following mission statement for Canonchet Farm summarizes the Canonchet Farm Master Plan Review Committee's vision for this unique 174-acre Town-owned property in the heart of Narragansett:

*Canonchet Farm shall serve Narragansett residents and visitors as a public park offering a balance between diverse recreational and educational opportunities and the natural setting of the property.*

This mission statement identifies the goals of increasing use by residents and visitors and preserving the natural beauty of the land. Achieving consensus on the balance between increased use and preserving Canonchet Farm's natural setting has been a difficult task for the Review Committee and will continue to present challenges into the future.

The Narragansett Town Council appointed nine individuals to the Review Committee in September 2007 with the charge to review and revise the 1993 Master Plan for the property. The decision to update the Canonchet Farm Master Plan was prompted by public awareness and attention brought by a proposal by a private group to clear land on Canonchet Farm for the purpose of hosting polo matches. This proposal highlighted the neglected state of Canonchet Farm and the land's potential value to investors and to the Town itself.

The Review Committee has done more than update the 1993 Plan. It has participated in a long and time-consuming process of gathering information, reviewing both the 1993 and 1979 Master Plans, discussing alternatives, and voting on specific recommendations. The process has been democratic and, at times, contentious. Identifying the point of balance between use and preservation has proved to be an elusive target and has underscored the need to create a governance model for Canonchet Farm that will draw from a broad range of experience and opinion.

The following recommendations (please refer to the report for a complete list) represent the Review Committee's best efforts to encourage Farm use and protect its natural beauty. A majority of the Review Committee approved the following:

- Selective clearing of the Upper Meadow (see map) and exposure of stone walls
- Creation of a loop trail encircling the Farm with new access points and construction of a visitor center with restrooms
- Improvements to the land and ponds across Boston Neck Road from the Town Beach including creation of trails for the handicapped, clearing of invasive plant material, restoration of views, and support of passive recreation such as fishing and boating
- Construction of a bike path on a dedicated surface connecting the planned terminus of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path at Mumford Road with access to the South County Museum and the Town Beach through the property
- Town regulation of large gatherings.

A majority of the Review Committee voted against the following:

- Expanding the current parking lot across from the Town Beach and continued use of the fields as beach overflow and event parking (see map)
- Allowing through traffic from Anne Hoxie Lane to Strathmore Street
- Identifying Strathmore Street as the primary vehicular entrance to the Farm.

The members of the Canonchet Farm Review Committee respectfully present this report to the Town Council and citizens of Narragansett. Canonchet Farm is a unique parcel of land, and how we handle and manage its future reflects on all of us.



## Table of Contents

### **Executive Summary**

#### **I. Canonchet Farm**

- A. Current Use and Administration
- B. Master Plan Review
- C. Issues Affecting Development

#### **II. Master Plan Review Committee Process**

- A. Public Forums
- B. Identifying Recommendations
- C. Refining Recommendations
- D. Farm-wide Activities
- E. Canonchet Farm Name
- F. Funding

#### **III. Areas of Controversy**

- A. Parking
- B. Vehicular Access to and through the Farm
- C. Public Events
- D. Clearing
- E. Bike Path
- F. Governance

#### **IV. Challenges**

### **Appendices**

- A. History of Canonchet Farm
- B. Summaries of the 1979 and 1993 Master Plans
- C. Review Committee Members and Affiliations
- D. Working List of Itemized Recommendations
- E. Maps

## **I. Canonchet Farm**

Canonchet Farm is currently an underutilized area of 174 acres in the heart of Narragansett. The Town acquired the land by eminent domain in 1974 for the public to use for “parks, recreation, and conservation purposes.”<sup>1</sup> Since that time two Master Plans have been commissioned with few concrete results, the South County Museum being the exception. The museum is currently the main reason people come to the Farm in spite of efforts to develop other attractions.

### **A. Current Use and Administration**

Most visitors to Narragansett experience Canonchet Farm as the place to park when visiting the Town Beach or as the location of the South County Museum.

The Department of Parks & Recreation of the Town of Narragansett currently administers and maintains the Farm. Permit applications for Farm activities are handled by this department. Since the number of visitors utilizing the trail system is small and resources are scarce, maintenance of the trail system has not been a priority. The Boy Scouts and other volunteers have helped to clear and maintain trails, and the Friends of Canonchet Farm, a non-profit organization, is ready to take on projects.

### **B. Master Plan Review**

Two Master Plans have been prepared for Canonchet Farm, both at the behest of the Narragansett Town Council. The first was submitted in 1979 by Albert Veri Associates and the second was prepared in 1993 by Clarkson Collins, Director of Planning and Community Development for the Town of Narragansett. The second plan builds on the first, but each reflects a very different point in time.

The 1979 Veri plan was prepared before the South County Museum moved from North Kingstown to Narragansett (1985) and before the Canonchet Farms neighborhood was developed (1993). The Veri plan recommendations that were never built include an interpretive center, a band shell, a gatehouse, a pedestrian overpass connecting the beach to the farm, a channel to allow for the passage of paddle boats between Little Neck Pond and Lake Canonchet (referred to in the Veri plan and elsewhere as *Beach Pond*), a picnic train, miniature golf, a store, and a clambake facility. Projects that were built but that are no longer in use include an exercise trail (abandoned), a swamp nature trail north of the Narragansett Elementary School (now a walking trail without signage), and a picnic area by the non-resident beach parking lot (vandalized and abandoned). Projects that were built and that are still in use include one fishing pier on Lake Canonchet and public gardens planted by the South County Museum.

The 1993 Plan was written after The South County Museum assumed a lease on three acres of Farm Property. Projects proposed but not built include a clambake facility in a different location than the Veri plan, a handicapped-accessible loop trail from the beach parking lot along the western shore of Little Neck Pond and back to the parking lot, and rebuilding the horse barn by the museum from its ruins. Sewer hookup for the museum was proposed but not built. The following projects were completed but have since fallen into disrepair: refurbishment of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Land Evidence Record Book No. 91 Oct. 3, 10, & 17 1974

picnic grounds by the beach parking lot, signage for the swamp nature trail, and erosion control on Anne Hoxie Lane. Completed projects still relevant include repairs and improvements to Museum buildings (also proposed by Veri), obtaining title to the land surrounding the horse barn ruins, obtaining rights of way to the Robinson Cemetery and to Canonchet Farm through Strathmore Street, and selectively clearing the slope north of the museum. Electric service to the museum was buried and the water line capacity increased.

The South County Museum was the main beneficiary of both plans. The museum has been the only well organized entity functioning on Canonchet Farm land and has been successful in obtaining support for its mission from many sources. The current challenge is to increase the use by residents and visitors beyond the museum and the beach parking lot to explore and enjoy more of the property.

### **C. Issues Affecting Development**

Canonchet Farm has tremendous potential as a draw for tourism to Narragansett. It is located directly across Boston Neck Road from the Town Beach and is near the town's central residential and commercial areas. Developing the Farm's commercial potential was a major component of the Veri plan. Almost 30 years later, we are looking at the same land from an entirely different perspective.

#### Legal Constraints

The Town of Narragansett acquired Canonchet Farm in 1974 under condemnation proceedings enabled by state legislation and local ordinance. This purchase was funded primarily with a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, resulting in additional constraints on the use of the property. Any proposed use or property modification may be approved by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Planning Department. Specifically prohibited are any uses that would prevent access by the general public and may restrict use for private profit.

#### Environmental Considerations

An official survey of the wetlands has not been performed but much of the 174 acres consists of freshwater and saltwater wetlands that are protected by state acts and local regulations. These laws require a scientific determination of the boundaries of these wetlands and establish setbacks from these boundaries of up to 200 feet, depending on the type of wetland and district. Additionally, DEM has established that Canonchet Farm is part of the Strategic Area Management Plan (SAMP) for the Narrow River Watershed, requiring special protection. Clarkson Collins, the author of the 1993 plan, estimated that up to 60% of the Farm is wetland, and therefore must be managed as conservation land. Between setbacks and other constraints, the land left for intensive use is limited.

#### Public Opinion

A majority of the public appearing before the Review Committee did not favor intensive development of the Farm. The most vociferous opponents of intensive use of the Farm were immediate neighbors. In addition, a larger group of interested residents has formed the non-profit Friends of Canonchet Farm, whose mission is to improve, manage and preserve Canonchet Farm in partnership with the public; intensive development of the property would be unlikely to

win the Friends of Canonchet Farm's support. Joining opponents of intensive use are the Narrow River Preservation Association, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Rhode Island Audubon Society, the Narragansett Conservation Commission and the Narragansett Tree Board, and other residents from Narragansett who have attended Review Committee meetings. Passive use and preservation are their themes.

### Financial Challenges

Management and development of the land will require considerable funding and that remains a challenge to the community. Given the current financial climate, the Review Committee recognizes the difficulty of obtaining funding for any project identified in this report. We urge the Town Council to recognize the importance of this property to the town and to the quality of life for the residents. We strongly encourage the Council to find a financial structure including both public and private participation. We believe this challenge will be met.

## **II. Master Plan Review Committee Process**

### **A. Public Forums**

There are a surprising number of groups with interests in the future of the Farm. The Review Committee initiated its proceedings by inviting several groups to give their input on what to do with the Farm. Summaries of these presentations are included in the Review Committee minutes, available in the office of the Narragansett Town Clerk.

Narragansett Department of Planning and Community Development (Mike DeLuca 12/10/07)

Friends of Canonchet Farm (Tara Flaherty & Kathie Kelleher 12/19/07)

South County Museum (Jim Crothers, Daryl Anderson & Frank Maroni 12/19/07)

Narragansett Conservation Commission (Bill Bivona 12/26/07)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Charlie Vandemoer 1/9/08)

Narrow River Preservation Association (John Boothroyd 1/9/08)

Rhode Island Audubon Society (Eugenia Marks 1/9/08)

Narragansett School System (Katherine Sipala 1/14/08)

Narragansett Chamber of Commerce (Debbie Kelso 1/14/08)

Narragansett Department of Parks & Recreation (Barry Fontaine 1/29/08)

Narragansett Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (Christine Sullivan 1/29/08)

Residents of Narragansett (public forums)

### **B. Identifying Recommendations**

The Review Committee reviewed both Master Plans thoroughly, sifting through recommendations both old and new. Each member composed a document outlining the member's personal vision for the Farm and subsequently produced a list of his/her specific recommendations. The Review Committee spent several sessions evaluating 60 separate items, sorting each Review Committee member's list and consolidating recommendations where possible. Each member then ranked these consolidated recommendations in terms of priority. Although never taken to a formal vote, the items listed below received unanimous or almost unanimous support with high priority for implementation.

### Entrance to the Farm

1. Improve vehicular and pedestrian access at Anne Hoxsie Lane, and the appearance of this area.
2. Design and build a new pedestrian entrance and trail at Sprague Park playground connecting to the existing trail system.

### Trail System

1. Create a farm-wide loop trail connecting all entrances with side loops and spur trails to points of interest.
2. Upgrade, improve and expand the existing trail system. Manage wet areas by relocating trails and/or by erecting bridges and boardwalks. Improve the trailhead near Beech Grove.
3. Create boardwalk access with overlook to Pettaquamscutt Cove.
4. Create a handicapped-accessible trail system adjacent to Little Neck Pond, Lake Canonchet, or both, originating from the picnic area near the Beech Grove. The handicapped-accessible trail system could link a fishing pier, the vernal pool, and the glacial erratic.

### Picnic Areas

1. Refurbish or relocate the existing picnic area adjacent to the Beech Grove and connect it to the proposed loop trail and to the ponds.

### Land

1. Survey the wetlands and ponds.
2. Develop a plan to selectively clear trees and extensively clear invasive plants to open vistas and expose stone walls throughout the Farm. The priorities are: the ponds, areas visible from Route 1A (Boston Neck Road and Narragansett Avenue), trails, the Upper Meadow, and stone walls in areas with high visibility.
3. Obtain professional guidance to identify and evaluate the health of the Beech Grove, other stands of trees, and individual trees of particular significance to the Farm.
4. Obtain professional guidance on how to protect the vernal pools.
5. Evaluate the stone walls for historical significance and reconstruct the walls, if necessary, according to preservation guidelines and expert assistance.

### Parking

1. Relocate Town employee parking and eliminate the current lot. Encourage the Town to explore an off-Farm location for employee parking.
2. Create dedicated parking for Canonchet Farm in the vicinity of Anne Hoxie Lane.
3. Designate handicapped parking for the South County Museum at Strathmore Street and for Canonchet Farm at Anne Hoxie Lane.

### Governance

1. Create a Canonchet Farm Park Board/Commission. In this model, the Farm would be managed through a partnership between the Town and other interested groups.

### Funding

1. Allocate a portion of the beach overflow parking revenue to support the Farm.
2. Recommend that the Town allocate sufficient funds to begin implementing the recommendations of the Review Committee and augment town funds with grants, private donations, and volunteer work.

Please refer to the Appendix D for the working list of itemized recommendations discussed by the Review Committee.

The process of identifying recommendations revealed fundamental disagreement within the Review Committee on certain key issues and a workshop was scheduled to address these differences.

### **C. Refining Recommendations**

The Review Committee conducted a daylong workshop for the purpose of “articulating an overall vision for the Farm. The positions of each Review Committee member with respect to specific uses and plans for the Farm were understood because of the proposal listing and ranking system [referred to above]. The final challenge of articulating an overall vision for the Farm needed to be addressed so that the uses and related committee member priorities could be molded into a set of recommendations and the committee could draft a report.”<sup>2</sup> The Review Committee met on July 19 in a public retreat to achieve these objectives.

Several “themes” for the property were identified. After much discussion and delineation, they were broken down as follows:

1. The Town Comprehensive Plan should integrate and include Canonchet Farm into its planning process.
2. The Farm should be kept as a natural place with public access.
3. Canonchet Farm should be maintained as a public place with public access and use and as a site for public functions.
4. The public should have a major role as stewards in the maintenance and upkeep of Canonchet Farm.

The Farm was divided into three areas on the basis of current and projected use. Area A, approximately 36 acres, was identified as an area of intensive use. Area B, approximately 20 acres, would be an area of intermediate use. Area C, approximately 100 acres, was designated an area of low use. Potential activities for each section are listed below. *The activities in italics will be discussed under Areas of Controversy.*

Maps identifying Areas A, B, & C located in appendix E
---

#### **Area A**

Area A, approximately 36 acres, is comprised of the current parking lot across from the Town Beach, Little Neck Pond and Lake Canonchet, the Beech Grove and abandoned picnic area, the vernal pools and glacial erratic north of the Beech Grove, and Anne Hoxie Lane.

The Review Committee identified the following activities as appropriate for this area of intensive use:

---

<sup>2</sup> Canonchet Farm Master Plan Review Committee minutes, June 23, 2008, modified for clarity.

Hiking  
Picnicking  
Trail development  
Handicapped-accessible trail development  
Educational activities  
Fishing  
Non-motorized boating  
Parking

Recommendations:

1. Improve vehicular and pedestrian access at Anne Hoxie Lane, and improve the appearance of the entry area.
2. Create a handicapped-accessible trail system adjacent to Little Neck Pond, Lake Canonchet, or both originating from the picnic area near the Beech Grove. The accessible trail system could link a fishing pier, the vernal pool, and the glacial erratic.
3. Refurbish or relocate the existing picnic area adjacent to the Beech Grove and connect it to the proposed loop trail and to the ponds.
4. Obtain professional guidance on how to protect the vernal pools.
5. Relocate Town employee parking and eliminate the current lot. Encourage the Town to explore an off-Farm location for employee parking.
6. Develop a pedestrian entrance to the farm at the junction of Beach Street, Narragansett Avenue and Boston Neck Road. Improvements in this area include clearing of invasive plants, enhanced gardens, opening vistas and development of a walkway, with the long-term goal of connecting the central commercial and residential areas to the Farm and the Town Beach.
7. Create dedicated parking for Canonchet Farm in the vicinity of Anne Hoxie Lane.

**Area B**

Area B consists of 20 acres, including the High Meadow (an area of approximately seven acres bordered by stone walls), the Low Meadow (an abandoned orchard that currently serves as beach overflow parking) south of the High Meadow, and the gravel extension of Anne Hoxie Lane to the South County Museum.

The Review Committee identified the following activities as appropriate for this area of intermediate use:

Hiking  
Vista/observation development  
Stone wall maintenance  
Providing access to the South County Museum  
Building a visitor center with restrooms (The Review Committee approved this facility for Area B, but has no objection to locating it elsewhere.)  
*Parking*<sup>3</sup>  
*Hosting large gatherings*<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> See III. "Areas of Controversy"

<sup>4</sup> See III. "Areas of Controversy"

Providing vehicular access from Beach Street and Boston Neck Road to Strathmore Street via Anne Hoxie Lane with gates and other measures for security

*The Review Committee approved extending the existing clearing of the Upper Meadow in Section B in like fashion to the limit of the stone walls.<sup>5</sup>*

Recommendations:

1. Designate handicapped parking for the South County Museum at Strathmore Street and for Canonchet Farm at Anne Hoxie Lane.

### **Area C**

This area represents all other Farm land and is the largest parcel, consisting of approximately 100 acres. Much of this area is wetland, and not suitable for intensive use.

The Review Committee identified the following activities as appropriate for this area of low use:

- Hiking
- Fishing
- Observation platforms
- Non-motorized boating
- Educational activities
- Conservation activities
- Removal of invasive plants

Recommendations:

1. Design and build a new pedestrian entrance and trail at Sprague Park connecting to the existing trail system.
2. Create boardwalk access with overlook to Pettaquamscutt Cove.
3. Obtain professional guidance on how to protect the vernal pools.

### **D. Farm-wide Activities**

Many of the activities noted above apply to all areas of the Farm. They include the removal of invasive plants, education and conservation programs, the observation of wildlife such as birding and animal tracking, vista and observation enhancement, and trail maintenance and development. Fishing and non-motorized boating were approved for Areas A and C. The Review Committee voted to maintain the Farm's stone walls for safety and aesthetic purposes and with rebuilding the walls to historic guidelines.

Recommendations:

1. Create a farm-wide loop trail connecting all entrances with side loops and spur trails to points of interest.
2. Upgrade, improve and expand the existing trail system. Manage wet areas by relocating trails and/or by erecting bridges and boardwalks. Improve the trailhead near the Beech Grove.
3. Survey the wetlands.

---

<sup>5</sup> See III. "Areas of Controversy"

4. Develop a plan to selectively clear trees and extensively clear invasive plants to open vistas and expose stone walls throughout the Farm. The priorities are: the ponds, areas visible from Route 1A (Boston Neck Road and Narragansett Avenue), trails, Upper Meadow, and stone walls in areas with high visibility.
5. Obtain professional guidance to identify and evaluate the health of the Beech Grove, other stands of trees, and individual trees of particular significance to the Farm.
6. Evaluate stone walls for historical significance and reconstruct the walls, if necessary, according to preservation guidelines and with expert assistance.

#### **E. Canonchet Farm Name**

The Mission Statement refers to Canonchet Farm as a public park. Canonchet Farm is referred to as the Farm in this document. It is no longer a farm, and is more accurately described as a public park. Changing the name from *Canonchet Farm* to *Canonchet Park* would be a more accurate description of its current state and be less confusing to potential users.

#### **F. Funding**

A major challenge for the Farm will be finding the dollars to implement the recommendations contained in this document. Previous plans had laudable objectives for Canonchet Farm that were never implemented or that were built but not maintained. The South County Museum is the exception. A core group of dedicated supporters took ownership and continue to work on the museum's development.

The Review Committee has recommended that the Town allocate sufficient funds to begin implementing the recommendations of this Review Committee. Town funds will need to be enhanced with grants, private donations, and volunteer work. Organizations, such as the Friends of Canonchet, which has demonstrated a commitment to the Farm, may play a role in implementing the recommendations contained within this report. The presence of a concerned group of citizens advocating for the Farm could make all the difference in developing the Farm's potential.

### **III. Areas of Controversy**

While there were areas of the management plan that the entire Review Committee agreed upon, there were some key areas that represented points of contention from the beginning. The merits of these conflicting positions were debated in many meetings, and ultimately votes were taken to determine the will of the majority. However, the votes were either 5-4 or 6-3 on these issues, reflecting different positions between two factions of the Review Committee.

#### **A. Parking**

Canonchet Farm currently provides two parking areas for the Town of Narragansett. The parking lot in Area A at Anne Hoxie Lane accommodates approximately 100 cars. The second area parking lot accommodates approximately 300 cars in the Low Meadow.

It has been suggested by a town official to propose an expansion of the lot at Anne Hoxie Lane to 400 cars. Expanding this lot would relieve the pressure for beach overflow parking and

presumably remove cars from the current overflow parking area.

A majority of the Review Committee approved a motion “to phase out overflow beach parking” and allow museum, event, and Farm parking in Area B. The Review Committee eventually approved the use of Area B for events subject to town review and approval. This motion was followed by the defeat of the motion to expand the current beach parking lot in Area A and the defeat of a motion to allow large gatherings of up to 2,000 people in Area B. Area B effectively becomes a designated parking area for visitors to the Farm and to the South County Museum.

The defeat of the motion to expand the beach parking lot speaks to the larger parking issues facing the Town of Narragansett. Beach parking is a source of revenue for the Town and as such is a valuable resource. There is a shortage of parking both for Town employees and for non-resident visitors on busy summer weekends, and expanding the beach lot would go a long way towards solving these problems. This solution, however, met opposition from many sources (see public comments in the minutes). The land earmarked for the lot expansion is close to wetland, if not defined as wetland. A larger parking lot across from the beach would detract from the vistas looking west from Boston Neck Road over Lake Canonchet and Little Neck Pond. The lot would be used primarily in the summer months, sitting idle for much of the year. Parking lots in public facilities such as the schools already exist and are underutilized at the time beach parking is at a premium. Shuttles from the public facilities such as schools to the beach were offered as an alternative to expanding the beach parking lot as well as a way to change the way non-residents pay to use the beach.

#### **B. Vehicular Access to and through the Farm**

A majority of the Review Committee voted against identifying Strathmore Street as the primary vehicular entrance to the Farm and against a through road from Strathmore Street to Anne Hoxie Lane. The proposed through road would have two gates constructed and maintained by the Town, one near the South County Museum and the other above Anne Hoxie Lane, open at the discretion of management.

The Town has a long history with issues of access to the Farm and to the South County Museum. Strathmore Street is used to access the Museum and it is now possible to drive from Strathmore Street by the Museum and through the Farm to Boston Neck Road on Anne Hoxie Lane. The Town maintains gates to prevent through traffic and provide security for the Museum and the residents of the Canonchet Farm neighborhood.

The Town fought hard to protect the right of way on Strathmore Street to the South County Museum through the housing development approved in 1993. According to members of the Review Committee, the Town does not want to give up the ability to drive through the Museum and the Farm from Strathmore Street to Boston Neck Road.

The South County Museum has recently completed a new Master Plan that essentially eliminates the through road. The majority of the Review Committee in effect supported the Museum by voting against identifying Strathmore Street as the primary vehicular entrance to the Farm and against maintaining the current gravel road from Strathmore Street to Anne Hoxie Lane.

Those in favor of maintaining vehicular access through the Farm point to public safety issues, to optimal traffic flow in the event of large gatherings in the Upper Meadow, and to the Town's reluctance to jeopardize the legal access they fought so hard to protect. Those opposing a through road feel that vehicular access to the Farm through Anne Hoxie Lane is sufficient.

### **C. Public Events**

Every member of the Review Committee believes that increasing the number of users of the Farm is essential. There is unanimous support to increase those activities, such as hiking, fishing, and educational programming that would have minimal environment impact. The proposal to host large events in the Upper Meadow, however, met with significant opposition and the initial motion to hold gatherings up to 2,000 people was defeated.

Those opposed to large gatherings are concerned about the adverse effects on the land, especially at times when the ground is more vulnerable to harm, such as in the spring. The scheduling of events in quick succession could also be detrimental, as the land would not have time to recover. The desire of the Review Committee to restrict parking and traffic flow within the Farm might be sorely tested by the hosting of large public events.

Proponents of hosting events point to the success of the South County Museum's annual fall festival, with an attendance approaching 2,000. The Upper Meadow is a logical space to host large gatherings, and parking could be restricted to the current lot at Anne Hoxie Lane and the beach parking lots.

The Review Committee reached a compromise:

- Gatherings of 100 or fewer will follow the current permitting process through Narragansett Parks & Recreation.
- Sponsors of gatherings of more than 100 must appear before the governing board of Canonchet Farm. This board will make its recommendation to the Town Council, which will have the final authority to approve or deny permits for these larger events.

### **D. Clearing**

The majority of the Committee approved “to extend the existing clearing of the field in Area B in like fashion to the limit of the stone walls.” The field is the Upper Meadow, an area of approximately seven acres. A portion of the meadow is field-like, devoid of underbrush, with solitary trees scattered about. The field can and must be maintained by mowing to keep it from reverting to forest.

Clearing in the Upper Meadow will create a large area on the highest point of the Farm. The purposes of additional clearing are to enlarge an existing open space, to improve vistas to Pettaquamscutt Cove, to expose the perimeter stone walls, and to enhance the existing space as a venue for events.

### **E. Bike Path**

A feasibility study for constructing a spur connecting the planned terminus of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path on Mumford Road to the South County Museum was performed in 2000 by

the engineering firm Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, Inc. at the request of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. Five alternative alignments for the Bike Path were identified and evaluated for financial feasibility and environmental impact.

The route ultimately recommended by this study begins at the intersection of the bike path and Mumford Road. It then enters Town property adjacent to the driveway serving several Town facilities including the Narragansett Elementary School, Sprague Memorial Park, and the Community Center. The proposed path runs through school property and Sprague Park to the intersection of Strathmore and Wanda Streets, and then along Strathmore Street, terminating at the Museum.

The majority of the Committee voted to extend the bike path on a dedicated surface through the interior of the Farm to the beach with access to the South County Museum believing that this would significantly increase access and activity within the Farm. The bike path would connect Boston Neck Road (Route 1A), a popular biking route, with Kingston. A path connecting the parking lots at the Elementary School to the beach might also serve to transport beachgoers in the summer months and provide access for emergency vehicles.

Opponents of this plan are concerned about the extreme cost of construction and wetland disruption. They have safety concerns for walkers and doubt that the path will receive extensive use.

#### **F. Governance**

The Review Committee has supported three models pertaining to governance of Canonchet Farm. In each model the Review Committee considered instituting a framework that is based on the current committee structure that assists in the management of the Towers and the Land Trust/Sunset Farm. In each, the committee is appointed by, and reports to, the Town Council while discharging its stated duties.

Under this general model, the committee is responsible for administering the provisions of the Canonchet Farm Master Plan. Its responsibilities include advising Town staff on the preparation of budgets, administering the finances of the Farm, monitoring the progress of the fundraising efforts, organizing planning efforts, coordinating volunteer activities, and advising the Town Council.

Model 1: “Create a Canonchet Farm Park Board/Commission, managing the Farm through a partnership between the Town and other interested groups.”<sup>6</sup> (Not formally adopted).

Model 2: “Create a Commission/Committee with members appointed by Town Council and composed of relevant representatives from town departments and town committees, relevant representatives from independent organizations, and individuals with relevant professional experience.”<sup>7</sup> (Adopted)

---

<sup>6</sup> See Item List in the Appendix D

<sup>7</sup> Committee Minutes, August 25, 2008

Model 3: “Establish a Committee with five voting members, one from the Town Council, one from the Planning Board, one from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, one from the Conservation Commission, and one representative from the Friends of Canonchet Farm; and two non-voting members, the Director of Parks & Recreation or the Director of Community Planning, and a representative from the South County Museum. This Committee will be appointed by the Town Council to advise the Town Council and staff on the management of the property.”<sup>8</sup> (Adopted)

These models are not as dissimilar as they might appear at first glance. Models 1 and 2 broadly outline the composition of a commission/committee that would include representatives from interested groups as well as individuals with relevant experience. Model 3 does not make allowances for individuals with relevant professional experience to serve on the committee. They could be called in for expert advice.

The Town Council will ultimately decide on the constitution of the governing body for Canonchet Farm and whether to expand appointments to residents with special expertise.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The Review Committee has learned that any discussion of Canonchet Farm engenders strong views and passionate debate. Those who care about the future of the Farm care a great deal and they make their voices heard. Some want to see the Farm stay almost as it is, a wild place, undisturbed. Some want to see increased activity of a passive sort, such as hiking, fishing, and birding, with a focus on education and conservation. Others want to see town residents using the Farm much more intensively, for concerts and festivals, and biking, walking and rollerblading on a path through the Farm.

The challenge ahead is to strike that balance between increasing use of the Farm and preserving the land, as desired by the residents of the Town of Narragansett. They own it.

One of the greatest challenges facing Town Council will be to settle on a governance model that will promote the priorities of the residents of Narragansett. Another huge challenge will be to find funding to support the improvements detailed here.

The report touches on many of the opportunities and issues facing Canonchet Farm. Recommendations which are contained in the report reflect in-depth public input in addition to positions cultivated through a year and a half of Review Committee education, debate and reflection.

This report will be submitted to the Town Council for its review and approval. The Review Committee anticipates that prior to approval the Town Council will distribute the report to various town departments for comment. In addition, the report will be submitted to the public for informational purposes as well as gathering additional public comment.

---

<sup>8</sup> Committee Minutes, August 25, 2008; wording revised by author for clarity

It is anticipated that upon completion of this process the Town Council will approve an amended report. Recommendations in the final report will be included in the Town of Narragansett's Comprehensive Plan subject to further approval by relevant state authorities. The Town would then move forward with implementing the recommendations.

The Review Committee believes that the final amended report should be used as the guideline for writing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a landscape architectural firm. The landscape design firm's mandate would be to design, phase, timeline, and budget the recommendations described in the Town Council's Canonchet Farm Master Plan. The design would assure the Town that the features of the Master Plan would conform to Federal, state and local ordinances. The firm's work would also:

- Develop a long-range implementation program
- Establish construction standards for trails, bridges, boardwalks, and fishing and observation platforms
- Specify signage
- Define wetland setbacks
- Produce guidelines for stone wall restoration including brush clearing along the walls, vista enhancement, pond restoration, parking, entrances and Park access
- Set up maintenance schedules.

The Review Committee believes that a "best practices" standard of modern park design and the description of operating standards are critical for producing a first-class facility tied to accurate management and capital budgets.

We are fortunate that Canonchet Farm has remained relatively untouched. Today Providence is a beautiful city, filled with old and historic buildings that might have been torn down had funding been available during the era of Urban Renewal. Canonchet Farm, although neglected, has not been ruined. In this case, less has perhaps resulted in more.

## Appendix A

### History of Canonchet Farm

What we now call the 174-acre Canonchet Farm was effectively utilized by the Narragansett Indians for seasonal cultivation, hunting, and fishing since about 1000 A.D.

The Narragansett's work was much admired by early European visitors, such as Verrazano in the 1520's. As a result of the Pettaquamscutt Purchase of 1658, vast acres were transferred to the English settlers. By the early 1700's, the present Canonchet Farm was a small part of the holdings of the Robinson family, which ran a very well developed and diversified farm on the land.

By about 1750, the Sylvester Robinson house was built on the farm area. Governor, and later Senator, William Sprague purchased the Robinson land in the 1850's. Soon after he married Kate Chase in 1863, the couple began building their summer mansion "Canonchet," which enclosed the Sylvester Robinson house in a 64-room, four-story Victorian mansion.

Sprague's fortune and first marriage ended almost simultaneously. During the decline, Sprague was forced into leasing property along Boston Neck Road to various businesses during the mid 1800s to the early 1900 boom in Narragansett Pier. A right of way through the property was granted in about 1900 to the Sea View Trolley Railroad which went from Narragansett to Wickford.

Sprague's second marriage to Inez Calvert resulted in the restoration of the mansion. In 1909 the mansion and property were sold to Sprague's sister-in-law (and widow of his son William), Avis Calvert Sprague Wheaton Borda.

Before she could move in, the mansion burned to the ground in a spectacular fire. Avis maintained the property as a working farm for years thereafter.

The current Canonchet Farm is a 174-acre parcel that was acquired by the Town of Narragansett in 1973 to prevent a housing tract from being built. In 1985 the Town granted use of two acres to the South County Museum. Subsequent agreements have brought the Museum's total use to approximately seven acres.

In 2007 the Town of Narragansett traded 23 acres of the Farm to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services in return for land to complete a bike path from Kingston Station to the Narragansett Elementary School on Mumford Road. In 2006 a proposal to develop a polo field and support facilities on Canonchet Farm led to the founding of Friends of Canonchet Farm and to the appointment of the Canonchet Farm Master Plan Review Committee by the Narragansett Town Council in 2007.

## Appendix B

### The 1979 and 1993 Master Plans for Canonchet Farm

Two master plans were prepared for Canonchet Farm:

- **“Recreation Plan, Canonchet Farm, Narragansett, Rhode Island”** was prepared by Albert Veri Associates for the Narragansett Town Council. The plan document is dated June 1978, but should probably be dated June 1979, as the contract to prepare the plan is dated April 3, 1979 and the court had settled on a condemnation date of January 31, 1979.
- **“Canonchet Farm Master Plan”** was prepared in 1993 by Clarkson Collins, Director of the Planning and Community Development Department of the Town of Narragansett.

The accomplishments of both plans are summarized in Tables B-1, B-2 and B-3 in this appendix.

#### The 1979 Veri Plan

Anne Hoxsie Lane was constructed in 1984. At that time, South County Museum had not yet located at Canonchet Farm, and the Canonchet Farms neighborhood had not been built. The Museum lease started in 1985, when there were only two houses and several farm sheds on the property. The Museum added six buildings to hold museum artifacts. The fields behind the Museum were cleared in 1990 to retain the farm look and to enhance the view of Pettaquamscutt Cove.

A housing development proposal, Canonchet Farm Estates, was being finalized in 1993. When the development was built, the stone horse stable ruins were divided between the property of the developer and the Farm. Strathmore Street had not yet been declared a public right-of-way. A private lot (part of the development) to the west of the Museum leasehold cut the main east-west trail in two. Access to the Robinson Cemetery was blocked.

South County Museum was the main beneficiary of both plans, mostly because the Museum had a presence on the property and had many legitimate needs. Even though the Museum was not present when Veri drew up his plan, the Museum benefited from four of the five projects that Veri proposed and that are still in use. In the Collins proposal, the Museum benefited from five of the six projects that are still in use. These projects were completed and continue to be used because the Museum was motivated to assure that its projects would be completed, and provided significant labor and funding toward this end. These accomplishments included: Public gardens, renovation of buildings, land acquisitions including the end of Strathmore Street, access to the Robinson Cemetery, and an easement to complete the east-west trail behind the museum.

During the review process for creating Canonchet Farm Estates, the developer wanted Strathmore Street to become a private way. However, Strathmore was always a public thoroughway, there was no agreement by the Planning Board and the public to restrict public access, and there is no provision in Town regulations for a private road in a major subdivision. Consequently, the Town affirmed that the road would remain public, and the primary condition for the approval of the subdivision was that access would be available to the Farm through Strathmore Street from dawn until dusk every day.

The other Veri project that was built and continues to be used is the fishing pier at Lake Canonchet, originally planned for Pettaquamscutt Cove. It has a large and strong advocacy group in the fishing community.

Forty percent of all of the proposed projects were built and are still in use, or had been used in the past until circumstances changed. All of these uses had strong advocates. Although the remaining 60 percent of the projects were good ideas, they had no strong lobby to get them built and no financial backers.

Table B-1 lists the projects proposed by the Veri plan, and the fate of each.

<b>Table B-1: Veri Plan Projects</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
1	Exercise trail	Built near the present entrance to the Museum, but not where Veri had planned it along the electric company easement. The Myrtle Wheeler Physical Fitness Course was used for a time, on the Museum leasehold, and later abandoned.
2	Swamp nature trail	Built to the north of the Narragansett Elementary School, but not where Veri planned which was to the east of the Narragansett Elementary School. Used for a time, with a map keyed to numbered plant specimens, but numbers on specimens were not maintained. Still used as a walking trail.
3.	Interpretive center	Never built.
4.	Picnic train	Never built.
5.	Clambake facility	Never built. However, a barbecue grill and covered dining hall were built behind the Narragansett Community Center.
6.	Fishing pier	Built on Canonchet Pond at the crossing between Canonchet Pond and Little Neck Pond, but not where Veri planned which was on Pettaquamscutt Cove.
7.	Playfields	Built at the Narragansett Elementary School, but not where Veri had planned on the grassed elevation behind and to the north of the South County Museum.
8.	Band shell	Never built. Gazebo built at Casino Park, instead, for same use.
9.	Building renovations	Still ongoing, but substantially completed under South County Museum and Narragansett Parks & Recreation direction.
10.	Marsh Trail	Existing marsh trail is used, but was never improved.
11.	Public gardens	Planted by the South County Museum, but not where Veri planned which was located in an area now included in the Canonchet Farm Estates. More gardens are planned by South County Museum on the museum campus.
12.	Gatehouse	Never built, but gates installed across Strathmore Street at the entrance to South County Museum and across Anne Hoxsie Lane at the eastern entrance to the Museum.

<b>Table B-1: Veri Plan Projects</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
13.	Pedestrian overpass	Never built. Was supposed to bridge Boston Neck Road in front of the Narragansett Town Beach.
14.	Open channel	Never done. Was supposed to allow passage of boats between Lake Canonchet and Little Neck Pond.
15.	Paddle boats	Never implemented.
16.	Miniature Golf	Never implemented.
17.	Picnic grounds	Built next to the non-resident beach parking lot in 1991, at the foot of Anne Hoxsie Lane, but not where planned, around the grassy elevation behind the Museum. Used for a time, but vandalized and abandoned. Picnic tables are now installed at South County Museum and at the Narragansett Town Beach. These additional picnic facilities could have drawn users away from Canonchet Farm.
18.	Store	Never built.
19.	Strathmore Street	Town completed agreement with Canonchet Farm Estate developer to make Strathmore Street a public right-of-way, up to the entrance to South County Museum.
20.	Horse barn ruins	Never reconstructed. Ten-foot buffer purchased around the barn, so that the entire barn is now on the South County Museum leasehold.
21.	Land purchase and gift	Parcels were acquired from the Canonchet Farm Estates developer to complete Strathmore Street to the Museum, to gain access to the Robinson Cemetery, and to re-join the east-west trail through an easement across the private property directly to the west of the Museum.

### **The 1993 Collins Plan**

Clarkson Collins updated the Veri plan by re-listing seven of Veri’s 21 projects (Table B-2) and adding five new ones (Table B-3), for a total of 12 projects. The remaining 14 Veri projects were dropped.

Of the five Collins projects that are still in use, and built where planned, two of them were carried over from the Veri Plan. The carryovers were land acquisition, and building maintenance and improvements, both projects that benefited the Museum. Three projects were new: Increasing the number of museum buildings and museum gardens; utilities improvements for the Museum; and habitat/view clearing. Only the last did not pertain to the Museum. Again, four out of five projects still in use and located as planned were for the benefit of the Museum.

Collins also recommended constructing gardens in the vicinity of the Museum.

In 1993, the picnic grove beside the beach parking lot was still used, with eight picnic tables. Since the Collins proposal, the picnic tables were vandalized to the extent that the grove was abandoned as a picnic facility. Collins had requested that bathrooms and a clambake shelter be added to the picnic tables.

Table B-2 lists the seven projects proposed by the Veri plan and carried over to the Collins plan, and describe the fate of each project. Table B-3 lists the five new projects proposed in the Collins plan, and describes the fate of each project.

<b>Table B-2: Veri Plan Projects in the Collins Plan</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
1.	Picnic grounds	Veri placed these on the grassy elevation behind the South County Museum. Collins placed and developed them next to the beach parking lot. The facility was built, but vandalized and abandoned.
2	Swamp nature trail	Veri planned this trail to the east of the Narragansett Elementary School. Collins' nature trail is the main trail that starts at Anne Hoxsie Lane and ends at the Museum. The Boy Scouts identified and labeled trees and plants, but the labels were vandalized. Eventually, a marked and labeled nature trail was built to the north of the Narragansett Elementary School.
3.	Building maintenance and improvements	These are the same ongoing repairs and improvements of Museum buildings that Veri mentioned.
4.	Clambake facility	Veri put the clambake facility near his picnic grove, on the edge of the grassy elevation behind the Museum. Collins put the clambake facility near his picnic grove next to the beach parking lot. Eventually, a barbecue grill and covered dining area were constructed behind the Community Center. The barbecue facility was deemed a satisfactory substitute for the clambake facility. Collins supplemented his clambake facility with a volleyball court, outdoor games, and rest rooms. These were never installed, because the facility was abandoned.
5.	Horse barn ruins reconstruction	This was proposed by Veri, but never achieved. Collins called for restoring the barn to useable condition, and suggested that the cost might reach \$250,000 to \$500,000. He suggested that the building be used to house other museum facilities, such as a Firemen's Museum or a Tomaquag Indian Museum.
6.	Land acquisition	Both Veri and Collins suggested obtaining title to the ground surrounding the horse barn ruins, and rights-of-way to the Robinson cemetery and through Strathmore Street to Canonchet Farm. These arrangements have been completed.
7.	Public gardens	Both Veri and Collins suggested historic and thematic gardens as a suitable development within the Farm. Veri would have put them in an area now occupied by Canonchet Farm Estates. Collins placed them in the vicinity of South County Museum. Actually, the museum planted several gardens, and has developed a detailed landscaping plan that includes many of the gardens of the types envisaged by both planners.

**Table B-3: New Projects in the Collins Plan**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
1.	Farm and Museum	<p>The South County Museum moved from North Kingstown to Narragansett in 1985. In 1993, when Clarkson Collins wrote his Master Plan for Canonchet Farm, South County Museum already occupied three buildings, sought to lease one other from the Town of Narragansett, and planned to build five new ones. The Museum's plans were completed, after the Collins plan was submitted.</p> <p>Collins also anticipated the continuing repairs needed on town-owned buildings that were being leased by the Museum. He proposed, as did Veri, the rebuilding of the horse barn ruins and finding another museum to fill it. Rebuilding the barn was not pursued by the town, although the South County Museum negotiated with the Firemen's Museum and the Tomaquag Indian Museum, with little success. The Museum also negotiated with Bob Smith to create an antique car museum. This was also unsuccessful.</p>
2	Road drainage	<p>Collins cited the erosion on Anne Hoxsie Lane, and suggested that an engineered solution be found. The lane cannot be paved, according to the terms of the grant used to buy Canonchet Farm. Silt from the road flows into Little Neck Pond. The top of the lane, in front of the Museum, washes out periodically.</p>
3.	Handicapped Trail	<p>The Collins plan called for constructing a trail for the handicapped extending in a loop that swings out from the beach parking lot, along the western shore of Little Neck Pond, and returning to the parking lot. The project would also include a dock on Little Neck Pond. This has not been done. The area would be considered a freshwater wetland by CRMC.</p>
4	Habitat Enhancement/Vista Enhancement	<p>The Collins report called for maintaining the field cleared in 1990 for view enhancement and creation of a field habitat, on the north facing slope at the rear of South County Museum. He mentioned saving the existing fruit trees to maintain the vestige of the former orchard, and starting a tree farm in which trees would be planted for replanting elsewhere. The clearing has been maintained as lawn, but the fruit trees have not been pruned or treated for insects that spoil the fruit. No trees have been planted.</p>
5.	Utilities	<p>This section of the plan called for burying electric utilities, increasing the capacity of the water main, and connecting the museum to public sewers. The electric</p>

**Table B-3: New Projects in the Collins Plan**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
		service has been buried and the water line increased, but the sewer line has not been provided.

## Appendix C

### Canonchet Farm Master Plan Review Committee

Name: John L. DiPanni  
Address: 149 South Pier Road, Narragansett, RI  
Employment: Self Employed  
Relevant Experience / Town Affiliations: Pawtucket Parks & Tree Commission  
RI Tree Council (Board of Director)

Name: David Figgins  
Address: 225 South Pier Road, Narragansett, RI  
Employment: Simplex Grinnell Fire Protection  
State of Rhode Island  
Relevant Experience / Town Affiliations: Narragansett Conservation Commission  
Narragansett Tree Board

Name Terrence Fleming  
Address: 38 Bedford Circle, Narragansett, RI  
Employment: Health Benefits Consultant  
Relevant Experience / Town Affiliations: Member, Planning Board  
Member, Land Trust

Name Thomas Fortier - Chairman  
Address: 192 Kingstown Road, Narragansett, RI  
Employment: Arborist  
Relevant Experience / Town Affiliations: Friends of Canonchet Farm - Chairman

Name: Charles P. Lee  
Address: 320 Ocean Road, Narragansett, RI  
Employment: Smith Barney, Inc.  
Relevant Experience / Town Affiliations: Friends of Canonchet Farm (Trustee)  
VNS Home Health Services (Trustee)  
South County Hospital

Name: Anne B. Richardson  
Address: 30 Seagate Drive, Narragansett, RI 02882  
Employment: Horticulture and Landscape Design  
Relevant Experience / Town Affiliations: Friends of Canonchet Farm (Member)  
Horticulture & Landscape Design (Longwood  
Gardens Program)  
Friends of Wissahickon (Fairmont Park,  
Philadelphia) (Member)  
Healthcare Consulting (Wharton Graduate MBA)

Name: William R. Scott  
Address: 59 White Swan Drive, Narragansett, RI  
Employment: Retired Treasurer / CPA, Self-Employed CPA part time.  
Relevant Experience / Town Affiliations: Lions Club (Secretary)  
Narragansett School Dept Search Committee  
Narragansett Homestead Exemption Committee

Name: Christine Sullivan  
Address: 13 Sabbatia Trail, Narragansett, RI  
Employment: University of Rhode Island  
Relevant Experience / Town Affiliations: Narr. Park & Recreation Advisory Board - Chair

Name: Christopher Wilkins  
Address: 67 Narragansett Avenue, Narragansett, RI  
Employment: Building & Remodeling  
Relevant Experience / Town Affiliations: Narragansett Town Council

## Appendix D

### Canonchet Farm Advisory Committee Working List of Itemized Recommendations/Worksheet May 27, 2008

Each member composed a document outlining the member's personal vision for the Farm and subsequently produced a list of his/her specific recommendations. The Review Committee spent several sessions evaluating 60 separate items, sorting each Review Committee member's list and consolidating recommendations where possible. Most members then ranked these consolidated recommendations in terms of priority. Please note that not all members voted on each issue.

The priority ratings were:

1. **High:** This item should be acted upon in the next one to two years
2. **Medium:** This recommendation should be acted upon in the next three to five years
3. **Low:** This proposal should be implemented in the next five to ten years
4. **Do not support:** This item should not be implemented

The following tables indicate the number of Review Committee members that assigned the various priority levels to the recommendations. For example, under Entrance Recommendations, five Review Committee members gave Item 1 a High priority, one member assigned the recommendation a Medium priority, and four members did not express an opinion on this proposal.

Entrance Recommendations	High 1-2 yr	Medium 3-5 yr	Low 5-10 yr	Do not support
1. Improve vehicular and pedestrian access at Anne Hoxsie Lane, and the appearance of this area. Explore reconnecting Lake Canonchet and Little Neck Pond.	5	1		
2. Design and build a new pedestrian entrance and trail at Sprague Park. This new trail would start at a point behind the baseball field and the playground, and would connect to the existing trail system at a high knoll. The entrance would be enhanced with benches and tables to encourage picnics.	3	2	1	
3. Design and build a new pedestrian entrance in the vicinity of the Community Center.	1	2	2	4
4. Identify two entrances to the Farm, with Strathmore Street designated as the main entrance. The other entrance could be Anne Hoxie Lane or another alternative yet to be designed and built.	3	1		1

Trail System Recommendations	High 1-2 yr	Medium 3-5 yr	Low 5-10 yr	Do not support
1. Create a farm-wide loop trail connecting all entrances with side loops and spur trails to points of interest	6			
2. Upgrade, improve and expand the existing the trail system.	6			

<b>Trail System Recommendations</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
Manage wet areas by relocating trails or by erecting bridges and boardwalks. Improve the trailhead near the Beech Grove				
3. Create boardwalk access with overlook to Pettaquamscutt Cove	2	4		
4. Construct fishing/nature platforms on the west sides of, in order of priority, Crooked Brook, Little Neck Pond, Lake Canonchet, and Pettaquamscutt Cove	1	2	2	
5. Encourage the Narragansett School Department to enhance the loop trail by the Narragansett Elementary School	1	4	1	
6. Create a handicapped-accessible trail system adjacent to Little Neck Pond, Lake Canonchet or both originating from a picnic area near the Beech Grove. The handicapped-accessible trail system could link a fishing pier, the vernal pool, and the glacial erratic	4	2		
7. Explore the use of two acres in the Upper Meadow or elsewhere for use as a dog park, drawing on the experience of South Kingstown		2	1	3
8. Extend the Bike Path from Mumford Road to the Narragansett Town Beach on a dedicated surface through the Farm with access to the South County Museum	3	1	1	1

<b>Picnic Area Recommendations</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
1. Refurbish and relocate the existing Beech Grove picnic area that is now north of the existing beach parking lot and connect it to the proposed loop trail and to the ponds. Site the picnic area to protect the Beech Grove from excessive foot traffic	5	1		

<b>Recommendations Concerning Restrooms</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
1. Designate the existing facilities at the Narragansett Town Beach, the South County Museum, and the Senior Center for seasonal Farm use and require portable restrooms for special events, per Narragansett Parks & Recreation guidelines	5			

<b>Recommendations for Education and Signage</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
1. Create a comprehensive system to give directions and information to users of the Farm to include educational materials for all ages, and signage for flora, fauna, points of	2	3	1	

<b>Recommendations for Education and Signage</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
interest and history				
2. Encourage the South County Museum, the Narragansett School Department, and the Friends of Canonchet Farm to develop educational programming for children	4	2		

<b>Recommendations for the Land</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
1. Survey the wetlands	6			
2. Selectively clear five acres of the stone-walled field, the Upper Meadow, for the purpose of hosting large gatherings and events such a concerts, festivals, dog shows, and so on	3	2		1
3. Develop a plan to selectively clear trees and extensively clear invasive vegetation to open vistas and expose stone walls throughout the Farm. Priorities for such clearing are: the Ponds, areas visible from Route 1A (Boston Neck Road and Narragansett Avenue), trails, the Upper Meadow, and stone walls in areas with high visibility	4	1	1	
4. Obtain professional help to identify and evaluate the health of the Beech Grove, other stands of trees and individual trees of particular significance on the Farm	5		1	
5. Obtain professional guidance on how to protect the vernal pools	6			
6. Evaluate the stone walls for historical significance and reconstruct the walls, if necessary, according to preservation guidelines and with expert assistance	3	3		
7. Extend the existing gardens at the corner of Narragansett Avenue and Boston Neck Road, creating a walkway along the Lake Canonchet to the Farm	2	3		
8. Donate a portion of the saltwater marsh to the Audubon Society	1			7

<b>Recommendations for Parking</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
1. Relocate employee parking and eliminate the current lot. Encourage the Town to explore an off-farm location for employee parking	5			1
2. Design and construct a new lot south of Anne Hoxie Lane for 400 cars, with a visual buffer from Boston Neck Road	4	1		1
3. Create dedicated parking for Canonchet Farm use in the vicinity of Anne Hoxie Lane	3		2	
4. Restrict beach overflow parking to the new lower lot (Item 2). No overflow beach parking would be allowed in the upper fields	5	1		
5. Designate handicapped parking for the South County	5			1

<b>Recommendations for Parking</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
Museum at Strathmore Street and for the Farm at Anne Hoxie Lane				

<b>Recommendations for Governance</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
1. Create a Canonchet Farm Park Board/Commission. In this model, the Farm would be managed through a partnership between the Town and other interested groups	4		1	
2. Give Narragansett Parks & Recreation primary responsibility for the operation, management, and upkeep of the Farm. The Town would coordinate the efforts of all other groups	2	1		2

<b>Recommendations for Funding</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
1. Allocate a portion of the beach overflow parking revenue to support the Farm	6			
2. Recommend that the Town allocate sufficient funds to begin implementing the recommendations of the Review Committee and enhance the Town funds with grants, private donations, and volunteer efforts	6			

<b>Miscellaneous Recommendations</b>	<b>High 1-2 yr</b>	<b>Medium 3-5 yr</b>	<b>Low 5-10 yr</b>	<b>Do not support</b>
1. Ask the Town to formulate access restrictions to the Farm in the interest of public safety	3			2

### **Discussion Items**

The following discussion items were considered but not assigned a priority ranking:

1. Evaluate the feasibility of using the upper field for event parking.
2. Formulate a plan for emergency and other vehicular access to and through the Farm.
3. Consider changing the name of Canonchet Farm. Suggestions include Canonchet Park and the Park at Canonchet Farm.
4. Explore transferring Canonchet Farm to the Narragansett Land Trust.

## **Appendix E**

### **Maps**