

**DRAFT**

**COURSE of ACTION for PARMELEE FARM**  
**Submitted to: Parmelee Steering Committee (PSC)**  
**By: Municipal Land Use Committee (MLUC)**

10-3-09 Revised

**Introduction:**

In a letter filed with MLUC dated February 11, 2001 Building and Code Official for the Town of Killingworth, Richard E. Leighton made general recommendations applicable to the buildings and access to the former Bosco property; now known as the Parmelee Farm. Briefly, he stated the pole barn requires demolition, the stone barn is useable with some maintenance, the post & beam barn has only salvage value, and, proper upgrades, access and clearing are required to make (legal) use of the site.

Various local groups have taken an interest in utilizing one or more of the Parmelee Farm structures. The Killingworth Historical Society (KHS) is committed to the Parmelee Farm House and front grounds. The Killingworth Community Gardens are completing their second autumn harvest in the fields directly behind the house. The Historic Preservation Trust (HPTAG) from New Haven has extensively studied the house and barn and reports optimistically on the house, but is extremely pessimistic regarding the post & beam barn. Others, skilled in preservation of historic structures, unanimously share HPTAG's reservations about the post & beam barn. The rear, newer extension of the post & beam barn has some utility for storage because it has decent structural integrity, fairly solid walls and a fairly intact roof, all in repairable condition.

The long-term site planning is evolving with PSC. Some trails have been "cut" through the forest and a walking path connected to HKMS parking areas along a scenic, abandoned roadway. The Community Gardens are established and are unlikely to move. The Historical Society is eager to bring the home and its long-forgotten lawns to life. The Killingworth Land Conservation Trust (KLCT) has waited patiently for the conservation easement which will permanently protect and preserve over 100-acres. Skating, sledding and cross-country skiing in the winter around pavilion(s) at the old pole barn site are strong possibilities, once the site is fully secure, safe, functional and organized.

### **Short & Medium-Term Site Plan Recommendations:**

Access is key to the successful use of the “developed” portions of the property. The Parmelee House at the front of the site has a comfortable entrance driveway and level areas suitable for parking of any KHS members’ & visitors’ vehicles. The 100 x 70 field, bordered by stone walls, immediately south of the kitchen wing will satisfy all of the long-term KHS parking needs. Scraping off the topsoil on this field for use elsewhere and adding a suitable, level gravel base for car parking is necessary.

Community Garden plot-holders require some additional parking close by the fence entrances. Once the post & beam barn is gone; additional, convenient Gardens parking slots will materialize and shall not conflict with the KHS parking or existing driveway access to the north end of the two rear fields.

It is anticipated that the “front” of the Parmelee site will be monopolized by Garden activities and proposed KHS uses. Directing any additional traffic for other site uses through the center of this “somewhat saturated area” should be avoided. The existing driveway and the short walking trail to the front HKMS parking currently allow pedestrian access to the Parmelee House, Community Gardens and barns; the “core” or “center district” of the site.

Uses of the Parmelee Farm’s rear, open fields would likely include community events, large gatherings, school events, agricultural fairs, picnics (incl. Town Picnic), and winter activities. The Killingworth Lions have shown some interest in financially supporting and participating more directly with the Parmelee Farm efforts. Lions have shown interest in barn repairs, pavilion erection, winter (skating) activities and initiating the next Killingworth Town Picnic on the site.

Adequate parking for modest Parmelee events is available at the school within short walking distance. Another access point closer to the rear field(s) is necessary in order to adequately support a large-scale event, transport stage/tent equipment and provide emergency services. There needs to be a second access point, suitable for vehicle traffic, into the site. This driveway would originate between the softball field and the soccer/baseball field and terminate at the pole barn/pavilion area, or, at the rear Parmelee field located south of the existing pole barn. The initial HKMS conceptual plans indicated an access drive from the RSD 17 property. A new connector (closer to the main HKMS facility & large parking lots) would provide secondary access for town, maintenance, fire and emergency personnel & equipment.

### **Course of Action:**

It is the intent to avoid establishing another committee or group related to Parmelee. There are two sound, established, local entities (PSC & MLUC) now charged with oversight, maintenance, scheduling and planning. What's needed is coordination of the established volunteer groups by the Parmelee Steering Committee and MLUC; each charged with acting in the Town of Killingworth's best interests and answering to the BOS, BOS' mandates and ordinances. Next up:

- Parmelee Steering and MLUC have reached a consensus regarding the future of the post & beam, and pole barns. MLUC's & PSC's decision is to remove the post & beam barn (keep the attached, rear portion) and either save reusable beams for some indeterminate future use, or, offer the parts to a local barn restorer or not-for-profit entity for their use. The pole barn must also be demolished.
- PSC, MLUC, KLCT, KHS and Community Gardens to attend a "committed stakeholders" meeting to insure all are "on the same page" with a unified "course of action" on the house, barns, Gardens, fairgrounds and funding. Each would accept establishment of "zones" on the site dedicated to specific uses and individually "managed" by these specific parties. The PSC umbrella would oversee/protect the town's, and, these various entities' interests.
- The KLCT shall be officially/contractually named by the Town of Killingworth as the "conservation designee" for the rear 100+ wooded acres on the previously undeveloped Parmelee land.
- PSC, Community Gardens, MLUC and the KLCT to host a 2nd "stakeholder's meeting" in order to gather opinions on progress, inform town boards & commissions, and, bring citizens up to date with the Gardens, trails, farm, house, barn, hurdles, planning and funding.
- With BOS' blessing, MLUC is prepared to apply for STEAP funding. A third local STEAP grant of \$150K - \$250K would be secured in order to perform demolition of (2) barns, complete the house interior renovations / HVAC / electrical, buy a tractor & accessories necessary to properly manage/cultivate the Gardens and fields, secure the remaining stone barn & structures, establish a 2<sup>nd</sup> (emergency & maintenance) access road between the school and the interior of the site, and, build the pavilion(s) at the rear fields.

- Ultimately these fair grounds/pavilion(s) would host our Harvest Fairs/Town Picnics, plus, enable varied use by (educational / agricultural / school / artistic / social / environmental) group activities under secure cover. The PSC would continue to oversee all scheduling, planning, agreements and use of the site in addition to resolving any conflicts between stakeholders.
- BOS to enact an ordinance declaring MLUC's & Parmelee Steering's mid to long-range charge(s), if any, as they relate specifically to the Parmelee Farm in order to give some permanency to these duties beyond the current BOS.
- Parmelee Steering, MLUC, Land Trust, Gardens and KHS to bring their unified, volunteer initiative and conceptual site plan to the BOS/BOF for a decision to proceed with applicable Municipal Improvement Permits, Town Meeting approval, demolition, restoration and construction.

The Parmelee Steering Committee and MLUC complement each other well and are eager to move forward with this first major phase. We speak for the many local organizations that have approached us excited by the prospects of reclaiming this agricultural property and utilizing it for the following uses (PSC Proposed Uses, Revised 10-1-09 by M. Becker):

- Historic Architecture Preservation.
- Research & Education Center.
- Open Space and Public / Utility Space.
- Arts, Recreation & Tourism.
- Events & Event Hosting Facilities.
- Gardening & Agricultural Activities.
- Passive Recreation.
- Other Uses.

Respectfully Submitted,

Municipal Land Use Committee  
 Richard Pleines, Chairman  
 Hilary Kumnick, Vice Chairman  
 Michelle Becker  
 Mark Clifton  
 Tim Elliott

*Modified from the original draft after input from the Parmelee Steering Committee*