



Press Release for Immediate Distribution

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PUBLIC HEARING TO REVIEW RECOMMENDED FINAL PLAN FOR MAINE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD TRAINING FACILITY AND MOUNT APATITE RECREATION AREA

AUBURN, ME. – The City of Auburn will hold a public hearing on the recommended Final Joint Land Use Study for the Maine Army National Guard (MEARNG) Training Facility and Mount Apatite Recreation Area.

The major recommendation of the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS), funded by the Department of Defense – Office of Economic Adjustment, is that the City swap land for the existing Little League fields, which are located on Department of the Army property, pending the outcome of discussions about easements for continued public use of trails, which today or may in the future, cross Federal property, and negotiation of an acceptable land swap ratio. Other recommendations include physical improvement of access, parking, sidewalk, crosswalk, signage, and other safety features as well as changes in administration and future land use policy, all intended to ensure the mutual compatibility of the Training Facility, Mount Apatite Park, and the Ball Fields used by the Auburn Suburban Little League now and in the future. The City and MEARNG have been working with a city-appointed, 13-member Policy Committee (see below) and *Integrated Planning Solutions*, consultants hired by the City since November 2012.

“If the JLUS is implemented, the safety of ball players, Park users, and Guard personnel will be improved, relieving some burdens on use of the MEARNG facility now and in the future,” said Jeff Squires, Training Site Manager for the facility. “Right now, soldiers, heavy equipment, Little League

families, hikers, gem-hunters, and others come together on parts of the site, which raises concerns about safety of all concerned.”

Community organizations, including the Androscoggin Land Trust, Auburn Recreation Advisory Board, Auburn Suburban Little League, Sno Gypsies Snowmobile Club, and Taylor Pond Association, as well as area residents and businesses, were active participants in the study process – serving on the Policy Committee and providing a table with information about their organization at the open house which was held early last summer.

The Planning Board and City Council will hold their Public Hearing on **Tuesday, June 10, 2014, starting at 6:00 PM**, in City Council Chambers on the second floor of Auburn Hall, located at 60 Court Street. The City Council has tentatively scheduled its review and adoption of the JLUS at the same meeting on June 10th.

“This meeting is one more opportunity for the public to offer comments and suggestions prior to completion of the plan,” said Kat Beaudoin, principal of *Integrated Planning Solutions*. “We join the City of Auburn and the Maine Army National Guard in inviting community members to come to the Public Hearing.”

To view the final recommended JLUS or for more information about this Study visit the study website at www.auburnmaine.gov/Pages/Government/Auburn-Maine-Joint-Land-Use-Study or check out the Study Facebook Page at Auburn Joint Land Use Study. The website includes information about the progress of the Study and details about Policy Committee and community planning sessions. Readers can also offer comments on the posted materials and the final recommended plan at the website.

Packets of information are available for the press upon request.

Policy Committee members include:

Jeff Benson, representing Auburn Suburban Little League
Dana Little, representing Androscoggin Land Trust and Taylor Pond Association
Kevin Norcross, representing Auburn Snow Gypsies
Mike Peters, a local businessman (Mac’s Grill)
Frank Piffath, an Auburn Resident
Philip Savignano, representing the Auburn Recreation Committee
Carol Segal, an Auburn resident and business owner

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