



NEWSLETTER

January 1, 2022

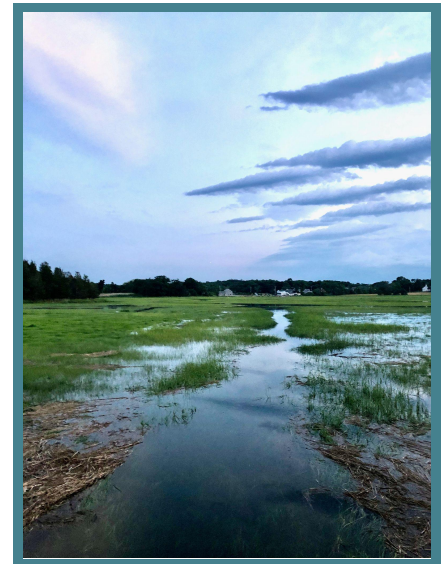
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

A look back at 2021:

Save Essex Landscape (SEL), a nonprofit organization, was created by Essex residents in early 2021. SEL was established to give voice to our community, to bring awareness to issues affecting our neighborhoods and landscape, and to inspire participation in town government.

Our first mission as an official nonprofit was alerting Essex residents to a proposal to erect a cell tower at 73 Eastern Avenue. The site abuts not only the Great Marsh and vulnerable wetlands, but is nestled in a neighborhood of more than 40 residences. SEL notified a concerned citizens group about its efforts to revise the current bylaw at the 2021 spring town meeting. We also sent out notifications about multiple town meetings held by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), the Conservation Commission (ConCom), and the Planning Board (PB). We believe that town government functions better when citizens' concerns are heard. But citizens need to participate, so this has been a key goal of SEL: to educate Essex residents of important projects affecting our community and its natural resources.



When SEL saw the vital need to update the town bylaw regarding cell towers, it sought advice from a legal team specializing in municipal law. Fundraising was key in making that possible. All donations have gone directly to legal counsel for this mission.

In November we shifted gears with our legal team to challenge the October decision by the ZBA to grant four variances (with no conditions), as well as that of the PB for its special permit of the cell tower.



SEL is also highlighting the health of our wetlands, and the critical need to protect them and the Great Marsh, a designated Important Bird and Biodiversity Area. This fall SEL hired Patrick Garner, a prominent wetland scientist, to evaluate the storm management report from Gateway Consultants for a proposed storage unit at 73 Eastern Avenue. The storage unit is sited in the 100-foot buffer zone abutting Ebben Creek. We provided ConCom a detailed report from Mr. Garner that

outlines why this Notice of Intent should be denied. Furthermore, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection had provided technical comments asking for the project to be revised. Through continued pressure from the public, ConCom voted to hire an independent engineering firm to do a peer review evaluating all reports submitted to ConCom. This is what community activism looks like, and why we need more residents to get involved.

How can you help and what can you do?

“Every individual makes a difference.” Dr. Jane Goodall

PARTICIPATE AND BECOME ACTIVE!

Please sign up for town email alerts for meeting dates and times for various boards and committees. The link is: www.essexma.org/subscribe

PLEASE DONATE: Save Essex Landscape, Inc - P.O Box 10, Essex, MA 01929

100% of all donations go to legal/experts' fees.

SEL is a non profit 501(c)(3); your gift is tax-deductible.

www.saveessexlandscape.com

OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN THAT WE ARE FOLLOWING:

SEL is casting its focus outward to our neighboring towns, and looking to support similar endeavors to protect neighborhoods and natural resources. Several nearby towns are being targeted by developers, with proposed projects encroaching on the wetland areas, in critical watershed areas, and using 40B, a statute that enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals to approve affordable housing developments under flexible rules if at least 20-25% of units have long-term affordability restrictions.

HAMILTON : Save Chebacco Trails and Watershed - www.savechebaccotrails.org
Development of 50 luxury homes sited on land in a critical watershed connecting Essex, Manchester, and Hamilton water sources.

MANCHESTER: SLV (Strategic Land Ventures) - 40B Affordable Housing
CIMAH (Citizens Initiative for Manchester Affordable Housing)-
www.citizensbythesea.com
Development of 157 units on a 24-acre parcel atop Shingle Hill. Opponents note concern for storm water draining from such a development directly into Sawmill Brook, which feeds the town well and supplies 40 percent of the town's drinking water.

IPSWICH: Ipswich Citizens for Sustainable Growth - can be found on [Facebook](#) and [GoFundMe](#).
Ipswich residents are opposing a 191-unit development along Route 133's agricultural and scenic corridor. Opponents state that the seller plans to file the property under Chapter 40B, which allows bypassing local zoning bylaws. Town residents also bemoan the extra burden on water supply this development will create, given frequent water shortages the town already experiences.

We thank you for your support of SEL, and hope you can join us at the next important meeting that addresses the following:

*January 4, 2022 Essex Conservation Commission
7:30 PM presentation by Save Chebacco Trails
8:00 PM public hearing of NOI for proposed storage unit.*

**Remote access will be available - remote login information on ConCom webpage at www.essexma.org*

We wish you all a happy, healthy, and productive 2022!
Save Essex Landscape