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Regional
State turns down Middlesex Fells ice rink proposal

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A controversial proposal to build an ice rink off South Border Road in the Middlesex Fells Reservation will not move forward after the state Department of Conservation and Recreation decided to drop further consideration of the plan.

DCR Commissioner Leo Roy conveyed the decision in a letter Wednesday, Dec. 19, to the group proposing the plan — referred to by the agency as The Friends of Winchester Rink.

"As you may know, the Middlesex Fells Reservation is an abundant array of flora and fauna, and also provides a great deal of recreational opportunities that are enjoyed by the general public," Roy wrote in his letter, made available by DCR. "The DCR does not want to disrupt this delicate balance of conservation and recreation, and has to unfortunately decline the Friends of Winchester Rinks's proposal."

The proposal from the group, composed of people with a background in youth sports in Winchester, called for locating the ice rink on 5 acres of an approximately 13-acre site in Medford near the Winchester line. The site is commonly known as the "99mm site" because in World War II part of it was used for 90-millimeter anti-aircraft artillery.

The ice rink plan had drawn strong opposition from the Friends of the Middlesex Fells, which contended it would disturb the ecology of that section of the park and cause traffic headaches.

"I am extremely happy for the Fells. Its integrity will remain intact and that [is] what we are here for," said Ron Morin, the group's executive director, of DCR's decision to reject the plan.

Medford Mayor Stephanie M. Burke, who had strongly opposed the ice rink plan, was notified of the DCR decision in a phone message from Roy on Tuesday, Nov. 18, according to her spokeswoman, Lauren Felth.

Burke that day posted a message on her mayoral Facebook page about her notification from the commissioner. "Thank you to the Friends of the Fells and all those who advocated against this proposal. As a result of our efforts, our precious open space will remain just that," she wrote.

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Credit: By John Laidler Globe Correspondent

Caption:

TOM FLUMMERFELT The so-called 90mm site in the Medford section of the Middlesex Fells Reservation.

Tom Flummerfelt

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