

Town of Freedom Community Survey

Additional Comments and/or Issues

Summary: The following comments were given on Freedom's Community Survey. Some of the issues include increases in property taxes, overcrowding at the lakes, the lack of patrols on the lakes and the roads, the need for a town website for better communication regarding meetings and events, a need to control development and the expansion of campgrounds, and preserve the natural and historic resources of Freedom. In addition, there were comments concerning the need to revitalize the main street area and have some retail activity.

High quality of life in Freedom. Great civic pride and town spirit. Great community involvement in current issues and town problems. Wonderful library. Community cooperation above average.

We should recycle paper

Freedom is the town that time forgot. It's about time some things came into the future. We need enforced speed limits within town as people, dogs strollers, etc. feel the need to stand around talking etc in the road ways. Ok widen the road on one side from the church to the Loon Lake Road corner and make parking on that side only. Don't wait until someone is hit by a car or the emergency vehicles can't get through. Where are the police all day? They don't seem to be patrolling.

Preserving and protecting things and places is important but must be balanced with cost and benefit. If this survey had included a choice of "at little or not cost" as a choice on those questions, you would get clearer direction.

Keep taxes down. Watch spending. Keep people coming to Freedom.

The lake is overcrowded. Jet skies do not obey no wake zones. A nice little community is being over run by flat-landers that have no regard for natives on the lake and roads. Being in Freedom for 73 years it is declining every year by development that send the taxes skyrocketing.

We need to control and avoid in the future the kind of development and land use represented by Totem Pole.

We need the store open.

The growth/expansion of Danforth Bay Campground concerns me: increased number of motorcraft on such a small body of water. Milfoil, decreased water quality, destruction of shoreline, safety of swimmers, kayakers, etc. Would love to see speed limits (no wake) and limit on motorboats at campground. Concern development at Huckins Pond, destruction of wildlife habitat, overuse – destruction of natural setting.

Goal should be to slow growth, maintain quality, encourage open space to the greatest extent possible. While we haven't had a huge growth yet, there is enormous and growing

development pressure that will be coming to Freedom. That could totally overwhelm and change Freedom fundamentally if we are not strict with growth controls. We have a great community. Guard it carefully. Thank you.

The town has become very unfriendly to business yet business provides a tax base that doesn't require services to the level of individual homes and business provides a means to earn a living. It is very shortsighted to believe you should be just a bedroom town for other town's businesses. Then you have to provide schooling without the business tax base to support it.

Additional services must be provided to our senior citizens.

Please continue to protect and preserve the beauty of Freedom from current growth.

Too much iron in our drinking water. Transfer station needs to be open longer in the summer. Private septic a must. There's not enough programs or activities for adults or children. Regular businesses – not out of homes. Zoning already stiff. Housing is fine in Freedom, no apartments or condos needed. Nice country town, no need to over populate with housing. Need a few stores in town.

Attracting business to Freedom is vital for the future of our town and it's residence. The commercial zone needs to be greatly expanded and affordable housing rentals need to be offered.

Concerned about traffic speeds in the village. Upset about development around Loon Lake. The places look awful and there are so many houses. Let's keep our rural feel

I am very concerned about the amount of housing development in Freedom. We are rapidly losing our open/green space – a characteristic that has made Freedom so special for so many years. How much of this development is being regulated or planned? I am also concerned about the amount (and speed) of traffic passing through the village by commuters using Old Portland Road/Cushing Corner Road as a cutoff.

Affordable senior housing should be a priority, as seniors must now move out of Freedom.

There is no gain in growth.

Believe in limiting number of homes build per year. Would like to continue this being a small town..

We live in a great area. Local business should be encouraged to grow.

Our elderly and older retired residents should not have to be concerned of every having to leave because they cannot afford to live in Freedom. They are a natural resource.

I moved to Freedom over 20 years ago as I liked what I saw. I do not want Freedom to change.

With the current cost of land and houses, it is impossible for a single person working in this area to afford to own their own home.

(Responding to the Natural and Historic Resources section) Economic cost must be borne by taxpayers. Are they willing to support protection of wildlife habitats and wetlands? Impossible to protect shorelines with high power/high speed boating is allowed on small bodies of water such as Broad Bay. Boating rules are seldom enforced. With a 300' shoreline, we have lost 5'-10' over the past few years due to erosion from the wake of large boats.

Our family has owned property in Freedom for 60 years. Since we are seasonal homeowners, we have never been able to vote in any town elections on town issues that concern us. We do pay our share of property taxes and it seems that we should be able to vote on Freedom town money issues that directly affect us seasonal homeowners. We should not be able to vote in any State or County elections.

For people having to go through zoning and planning process, it is very time consuming if problems arise and you must wait until the next month before you can present the correct problems. The boards should meet at least twice a month that would certainly help in getting through the process more quickly. I am not positive, but I believe the state requires towns to have bi-monthly Planning and Zoning meetings that I believe is a good idea. We have short building seasons and that would help the landowners to get thru a sometimes lengthy process more quickly. Thanks for your consideration.

Let's keep our town quaint and beautiful and free from crime and congestion. Don't let it get like Ossipee and points north and south.

Winter Snowplowing: In Lake Ossipee Village, the road grader does majority of the plowing and usually does a fine job. However, they tend to plow wider than needed, thereby knocking down mailboxes and small trees.

Many of the questions in this survey are not really yes or no questions. There are a lot of gray areas there.

All major roads in Freedom need pedestrian/bicycle lanes and/or sidewalks. I'm very surprised this issue was not surveyed with this form. Overall Freedom is well managed and has generally adequate land use regulations.

I have lived here my whole life and things have changed in many ways to fit a few residents. We used to have local stores, a friendly church and post office, but that was the good old days. We need to provide more services to our residents because Freedom has grown a lot and will continue. Loon Lake use to be a nice place to go swimming for everyone. I have enjoyed the land where the town forest is going to be but I guess not in the future because again a few make the decisions. A town piece of property should be open to all.

I don't think zoning is properly enforced. People who do not follow building/zoning requirements should be forced to remove non-permitted structures and return the landscape to its original and not be allowed to only pay a fine and keep their non-conforming structures. Campgrounds should not be allowed year round status (other than caretakers) and should be closed before 6 mos and 1 day. Boating access should be monitored to be sure lakes are not over-populated with boating traffic. Shorefront should be carefully protected from erosion and overdevelopment.

This survey is a great idea. I couldn't answer all of the questions because I am not fully informed.

We need a web page for town info and access.

We are on a private water supply for our development. There are problems with our water quality that are not being addressed by the new owners.

Town needs to watch carefully building at Totem Pole and Danforth. Camps are being upgraded to the point of no longer being seasonal. Campers are putting on permanent porches/decks without permits and creating year round camps. How does the town prevent a person living year round at these camps. Without monitoring both places could develop into year round alternative housing/affordable housing.

I would like to take this opportunity for thanking the town for putting a weight restriction on vehicles. Thanks a lot now our income has dropped to under \$50,000. Maybe the town should make new year round residents feel welcome instead of making people wish they had never moved here. My dream retirement home has turned into a nightmare.

Freedom does not make new residents feel welcome unless you are in the accepted group. Maybe real estate agents should submit resumes to the town ZBA and Selectmen so the right sort of people will be approved by them before they purchase their home and ruin their lives by buying here.

Excessive speed on roads, especially Ossipee Lake Road. Patrol more frequently.

The Danforth Bay expansion plan is a very bad idea. It has the makings of Totem Pole II written all over it, despite what the original proposal states.

Closing Selectmen's Office Fridays – ridiculous. We need 5 days per week. Town Clerk evenings only – ridiculous. Need during at least 2 days per week. Selectmen's meeting held Monday nights are being held illegally on the second floor – No handicap access per State law. Improper accounting policies at town office need State investigation. Thank you for this opportunity.

Winter road plowing is great, but in Lake Ossipee Village the grader goes too far back on the roads which ends up damaging many trees, digging up the tar on the side and last but not least is the damage to many, many mailboxes that we need to pay to have a new one put up every spring. There is not need to plow our streets as wide as a six land highway in this

village. Also they have come close to breaking off some water shut offs that are not off the road that far. Should take a little more time trying not to damage peoples mailboxes would be greatly appreciated. No mailbox, no mail, not good.

Need a web page with posted information. Better Town Clerk hours.

Need to recycle plastic and newsprint. Need signs/enforcement on litter. Need better up keep on roads – dirt roads and fill in tar road cracks to decrease frost heaves. Slow the school bus down.

Not ATV on Town forest, I strongly agree.

Boating regulations should be more stringent. There is not enough patrol of the waterways. Jets should be banned around youth camp areas. More control over the milfoil problem is needed.

Totem Pole must be brought under control. It is a camp, not a year round residence. There is the single most important topic that must be addressed. Keep seasonal residence seasonal.

Lake capacity should be limited. Too many boats and watercraft now. The state should pay for the milfoil control.

Something must be done about Totem Pole. The town should go back to allowing only 6 months of usage. Give an inch, they'll take a yard. It is only a seasonal residence.

Speed control on roads I find a problem.

If the Zoning Board and Planning Board would listen to the Dept. Heads such as the Road Agent, some of the problems we have would not exist.

Let's take barricades down to our new so-called Town Forest so people can use it. How are we supposed to get to Trout Pond?

Freedom Village has exceptional character which should be preserved. Restrictions to types of housing, types of businesses, signage, roadways and other parameters which define the rural character of the town should exist. Large developments, large retail and commercial development should not be allowed. Preservation of the Pine Barren in and around Freedom should be preserved. Preserving and protection water quality in and around the lakes in town should be a high priority, including watershed management. Tightening rules on camps and shoreline septic is important.

Code enforcement needs to be enforced better.

I feel the police and fire departments as well as the road crew does a great job for the town of Freedom. I also feel that the lack of rental property in our town directly impacts our tax rate because it keeps the cost of running our school system in line, more kids from rental

homes in our school system means more taxes. Madison and the Conways are good examples of what I am referring to.

Town officials let everyone down by allowing an increase in a seasonal campgrounds operating season. Totem Pole should be held to its original agreement with the town of Freedom.

This survey is a great idea. Our family has loved this town since 1931 and we're glad to see the good efforts that are being made.

Totem Pole needs to be stopped now.

The parties responsible for the Totem Pole mistake need to correct their errors. This should never be allowed to grow to a year round. It has the potential to become a trailer park with all the problems that can bring. As a summer recreational park, its ok, but even 11 months is too much.

Seasonal campgrounds such as Wabanaki, Calumet, and Danforth Bay bring in money with minimal impact. These campgrounds only bring in vacationers who spend money and then leave when the season is over. Totem Pole is a different story. They own their small parcel of land and with that seem to want to claim it as a permanent residence. Totem Pole should be turned back into a regular campground. There are no recreational activities for kids. Camp Huckins does some nice activities for them and the school does some. Would like to see a town recreation department.

Improve communication by utilizing public access TV for town meetings.

I feel most of these questions are loaded. There are few which can be answered one way or the other and still keep the town intact. They can be argued either way and make perfect sense.

There is too much growth in this town already. It needs to be slowed or stopped. The town is losing rather has lost, the rural character that brought everyone here. Do you have to say yes to everything and everyone?

We should restrict growth and preserve open space. We should limit the rate of growth. We should plan to assist elderly families to hold on to what they have in the face of increasing taxes. We should be more proactive in protecting water (surface and ground), forests, fields, and open space.

Unless something is done now to control milfoil and the number of boats, speed and boating laws, Freedom's tax base is going to erode. The town of Freedom needs to work with and support the lakefront property owners who, through taxes, do a lot to support the town's financial bases.

While I believe the Police Department does a good job, enforcement of the speed limits on Huckins Rd is poor. Each weekend we deal with 40-50 mph traffic. And on weekends

where there is a camper change at Camp Huchins, the situation worsens. I would appreciate some visibility of our local Police to tone things down.

We need to ambitiously attack milfoil problems to protect all property values.

As a new resident property owner on Berry Bay, I feel very discouraged. I pay extremely high taxes on a cottage with no heat/foundation. We have no children in the schools and use no town service except the transfer station – our road is privately maintained. I sense a “us vs them” attitude against lake property owners and the town is being subsidized by property owners like me. I’m planning to convert my cottage to a year round home in the next few years and am very interested in town affairs, but have to voice or vote. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this survey. I’ve been coming to Freedom most of my life (now 60) and want to keep it small and charming and hope to retire there.

We are concerned about the amount of campfire some coming from the existing campgrounds. In addition what is being done about the proposed additional 250 campground sites at Danforth Bay? There is a need for a flashing stop light at the intersection of Bennet Road and Ossipee Lake Road. The Danforth Bay campground has brought in great amounts of traffic. They plan on expanding. What are the limits on this campground. How big can it grow? I feel there is great erosion taking place in the small channel between Danforth Bay and Ossipee Lake. People bring down large boats with large engines which are tearing up the channel.

Intersection of Ossipee Lake Road, Bennet Road, and E. Danforth has to be dealt with. Too many vehicles are ignoring the current warnings and stop signs on Bennet and Ossipee Lake Road. I feel that flashing red stop lights should be incorporated with the present warnings and signs. The presence of a police cruiser, on occasion, would help considerably. Thanks

This is an excellent survey. Looks like you covered everyone. Why do you need additional surveys: Who else is there in town? I hope people won’t fill out two surveys!!

Freedom is a nice community and should be kept as such. Growth is good for the economy but it should be regulated. Lot sizes should not be reduced.

The town should adopt regulations concerning height/design standards to protect views. Also stringent rules on mobile homes and their removal when no longer habitable.

I love the small town quality of Freedom, but in the short time I’ve been here, I’m shocked at the rapid growth. I worry that lawns will replace forests. The town needs to communicate with its citizens. It almost gave away residency to Totem Pole. Its leaders need to follow the will of its full time residents and not cater to summer vacationers or money interests. Freedom also needs to revitalize itself with more opportunities for younger people. We need small stores and restaurants downtown. We need a way for seniors and younger people to mingle. Full time town employees should not work outside their town jobs.

I wonder why Freedom never acquired shorefront land years ago for swimming for town residents and taxpayers.

The town should strongly enforce the building code in all seasonal parks before it gets out of hand.

Freedom is a wonderful town and I would hate to see it change. We are especially impressed with the library that we use every time we go to NH. The staff is friendly and very knowledgeable.

Only tennis recreation for adults. No town park. Kids have to make their own fun. Town doesn't run programs for them. Beach club runs swim lessons, camps run sports/games. Schools depends on parents to run, organize and pay for programs. Too many building permits, new homes. Slow down growth.

The Planning Board is not protecting the town's long-term interests, nor the rights of local property owners. It is permitting development, residential and agricultural, that is detrimental to the town and its taxpayers. What is wrong with the people who are serving on the Planning Board?

Stay small

The last section "Our Local Natural and Historical Resources" is a little ambiguous. Everyone should agree its important to preserve - however with good management growth and development can usually help and make property more valuable. While its important to protect shoreline and wetlands there should be an equitable balance to promote growth and development cost effectively.

Open space should be protected from development, but should be managed to allow all types of recreational activities. Summer/winter/motorized and non-motorized.

Seasonal campgrounds should not be opened the entire year....it puts a burden on the town's school, library, roads, transfer station etc. and those owners would not be paying comparable taxes, but put a real strain on the town's resources,

Preservation of open spaces and natural resources and protection of wetlands should be encouraged but not forced upon landowners. Converting seasonal camping grounds such as Totem Pole to full time residences should not be allowed.

1/4 - 1/2 acre lots in village are plenty. New more 1/2 acre subdivisions with strict codes fir single family dwellings. No apartments. No low family housing.

As a summer resident we get no information from the town. As a Freedom Village Condo owner we use very few services the town offers. That should be taken into consideration. Maybe plow our roads? Does the town have any influence over getting us docks. We support Abbotts, Lazy Susan, Mobel, L-R subs so we do contribute to the economy.

Seasonal camps pay as much, if not more taxes than anyone else in the town.

Communication by Town boards needs to be improved immediately.

Totem Pole should not be open more than 6 months a year.

Nothing on this survey mentions the number of boats on Ossipee Lake. I hope they are taxed highly. The noise is terrible on the weekends. Also the growing pollution of the weed that seems to be spreading. I hope my tax dollars are well spent for schools, teachers, town employees and local library since my Freedom taxes are double what I pay at home. I would have to sell our cottage, but I am old and retired. Maybe industry would help the tax base.

Keep up the good work.

We strongly agree that we must protect the lake shore line but we must use common sense. We should be allowed more latitude in protecting the shore line from erosion (use of large rocks, etc.) Also, some dirt roads which are well-traveled could be improved by possible paving. Thank you.

NH DES employees do not show creativity in protecting the erosion of the shoreline. It appears that they are afraid that any decision may be criticized. So “no decision” or a weak recommendation is best (for who?).

Water – Our ground water should not be for sale to anyone. It's our resource and should absolutely not be sold by anyone for personal profit.

Rural district lot size and road frontage requirements should be decreased. This would accomplish the following: Allow owners to sell a smaller parcel thus preserving more land in its natural state. Allowing the sale of a smaller parcel would give landowner the ability to create retirement income. Requiring the use of or sale of a large parcel often will limit the market an owner can sell to. We are not proposing wide-scale development but feel strongly that the landowner should have more flexibility in selling a parcel, and not being bound by the 5 acre minimum.

Anything that you can do to lower the tax on raw land and forest will help to keep it from being sold for building lots. Whoever is running the town is doing a good job. Too bad that you don't have anything to keep the young ones from leaving town.

The sudden shift of the tax burden to the lake property owners is not right. If the grand list is equalized and all properties are re-evaluated, the taxes should not change all that much. Feelings of inequality could result in a strong Lake Association lobby.

Better painted white or yellow lines – Bennet Road. Large stop lines at end of Bennet Road at dangerous intersection with sign to drivers to yield to cars coming up hill and turning – very dangerous. What happened to the bike route around the lake?

The towns residents should be educated to the fact that Totem Pole Park and other seasonal residents pay a large chunk of the tax base. The town should be more supportive unless they want to prorate the tax paid for the amount of use allowed from the town.

Glad to see long range planning in this town. I like cluster housing concept, thereby preserving large green space areas. Keep up your fine work for your town and the area in general.

We would really like to see increased recycling efforts.

Important issues: road improvement, historical preservation, light commercial options in village, safe healthy water, preservation of forests and wetlands, restrictions for housing and planning for future. Thanks for the survey.

Freedom is a lovely town and should be kept that way by governing the amount of bulding, commercial use and clearing of land. We must keep the integrity of this community and its natural resources. Acquiring Ford's land as Town Forest is wonderful and should be only a start. We do not need another North Conway or even Tamworth. We need to maintain the peace and quiet and the quaintness of this town and lake. Thank you.

There should be some place in Freedom village to get coffee, soft drinks and or light lunches. I think it was a stupid ghasly mistake to zone the whole village residential. There's nothing to do, nowhere to go except to church, town hall, town offices and post office. It's a dead town full of ancient people and therefore boring.

We have enough conservation land in Freedom now. We have a high percentage of protected land now. There is no affordable housing for young families or seniors on a limited income.

Better road maintenance in the summer i.e. Freedom Shore Road is badly needed. Planning Board allows too many exceptions and "grandfathering" to building permits without more formal notification of abutting property owners.

Freedom is a highly desirable town and I have every dream to live there permanently. I believe it is an oasis that should be preserved and this may be achieved with sensitivity to seniors and low-income families who are resourceful and respectful to rural roots.

Ossipee has quite a number of homes/cottages whose septic systems are flooded over routinely. It is a hazard to water (drinking) and to quality of the lake adding pollutants and nitrates into the lake causing plant infestation. The lakes existed from glacial times to the 1950's and 60's without weed problems. Now with sewage seepage, weeds are encroaching. The state says this is natural progression – yes with human pollution, not evolution. The state will not allow treatment of plant infestations except for milfoil. Other weeds are unwanted also and there are proven chemical, biologicals to treat them. The town needs to pressure the state to allow clean-up of our lakes and ponds for rec use of people and fish. Older septics should be required to be brought up to standards. Please be responsible in "green" efforts. Its great to have Trout Pond area, but do reasonable logging/forestry of it.

Do not say “never touch it”. Some environmentalists are too radical in preservation. Dump – would rather pay a higher yearly fee or have a resident/non-resident fee and not charge for separate items e.g., refrig, mattress, etc. Separate fee encourages people to leave items by roadside or in woods.

The town should respect people’s right to use their property the way they want. The state should end fee dumping, across the state. So people will stop dumping trash on other people’s property. Bicycle lanes, tennis courts or any other recreational facility should not be paid for by the taxpayers. I do not ride a bike or play tennis and I should not have to foot the bill for them. They are not going to buy my lift ticket.

I’d like to see more adult and senior programs by the town – i.e., library, recreation, etc. There should be a more active main street with a café like the Eaton store. There’s only Susan’s or Whittier House. Campgrounds like Totem Pole should not become dense residential housing. They should remain recreational only – not full, primary domicile. There should be protection for the open greenery. Freedom should not end up looking like a suburb with lawn after lawn. Trees and undegrowth should remain so streets keep their rural look. The town needs a website. People should be kept informed of events so that things like the Planning Board’s hearing on Totem Pole is publicized and the public can express their views on decisions which would have a major impact on all of us. Residents should not hear about decisions after the fact.

Establish a program and a leader to do more recycling of paper and metal at the transfer station. The ZBA should place greater attention on allowing logical exceptions to zoning law requirements for improvements of existing properties. Help rather than hinder property owners who are willing to improve the utility and value of their property.

Thank you for asking for our opinions. Part year residents should be more active in the town’s planning and this is one way to obtain our opinions. Thank you to all of the town employees and volunteers who keep the town running. We appreciate your service. You should be very proud of the jobs you do and how many people you serve in our community. Please keep up the good work.

My family has owned a piece of property on Ossipee Lake since 1939. The taxes are getting so high that it appears the state of NH and the town of Freedom only wants the very wealthy to own water front property. We’re getting to a point where we can’t afford to hold the property any longer and will either have to sell the property or rent it to pay the taxes. This is truly a sad time in our lives.

Winter camping in the town of Freedom would strengthen the infrastructure and also the economy.

Taxes are too high.

Taxes in Freedom have gone up drastically, Every effort should be made to keep the taxes low or lower.