

The Battle of Parsons Field

Before Parsons Park was permanently secured, there was the 80's. What the town buys it can also sell. It can also try to use the land in ways not intended or voted by the town. The concept and laws surrounding "open space" have been in the forefront of the growing conservation movement of the last forty years. The intent of the Parsons Park Corporation was to create a permanent open space in the field , but that intent had not been made law.

Some in town and in town government thought a stage, gazebo, lighting and a large arch over the entrance to the field was an appropriate use. Many, including the original Park families begged to differ and the battle was on, all in the friendly arena of healthy democratic debate, of course! The arch was installed and promptly spray-painted by a local who was then arrested, but not jailed! A stage with electric power was set up and the tug of war continued and finally the selectmen took the unsightly arch down, no gazebo was ever constructed and Ray Jarvis worked tirelessly with conservation law experts in the 90's to permanently secure the open space status. There was another attempt to build a "municipal complex" in the Parsons woods in back of the bank in the late 80's but that was soundly defeated. And the arch? The last time we saw it, it had been appropriated from the dump to help fete Francis Holway at Abenaki for her big roast in 1984.