



# Wilton Land Conservation Trust

## TRUSTEES

Bruce E. Beebe  
*President*

Charles P. Flynn  
Robert H. Russell, Jr.  
*Vice Presidents*

Dawn Bennett Ladenheim  
*Treasurer*

Thomas M. Sinchak  
*Secretary*

Thomas Burgess  
E. Dan Cappel  
Jay M. Dulberg  
Nancy Faesy  
Elizabeth Fink  
Jeffrey Golterman  
George Lamb  
Nicholas F. Lee  
David L. Lynch  
Frank Mabley  
Donald Marquardt  
David Michael  
Teresa Mucci  
George H. Ongley  
William A. Ziegler

Anthony P. Grassi  
*Trustee Emeritus*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 7, 2006

The Board of Selectmen unanimously approved a contract to preserve the 15.7 acre Offinger Farm on Chestnut Hill Road in a vote last evening. The scenic land will be protected through a conservation easement, which will prevent the development of six building lots. The cost of the easement is \$2.0 million. The market value of the property is estimated to be about \$4.0 million.

Prior to the Board vote, First Selectman William Brennan reiterated the Selectmen's appreciation to the Offinger family. "We all recognize that the family is making a substantial gift to the town," he said.

The property is familiar to most as the open fields that provide the backdrop to a longstanding farmstand at 250 Chestnut Hill Road. The land is still farmed by the owner, Adrian Offinger who raises and sells vegetables, zinnias and honey. Keeping this land open for farming is the goal of the Offinger family which has worked the land for more than 75 years.

The conservation easement protects the property in its entirety and precludes the development of six new lots. Selectwoman Alice Ayers stressed the importance of protecting such a prominent parcel, recounting to the Board members the uproar that was heard ten years ago when the picturesque horse farm on Belden Hill Road was lost to development. "This property is not only valuable as a scenic asset, it is also an important cultural asset, a reminder of Wilton's agricultural heritage," Selectwoman Marilyn Gould added, noting that the property was listed as an open-space priority in the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development of 1998.

Authorization for First Selectmen Brennan to sign the contract is only the first official step in the preservation process. Over the next two months Conservation Commission members and staff will speak to many groups on the importance of preserving this property. Acquisition of the conservation easement will be put to a vote at the Town meeting in May.

For additional information please contact Patricia Sesto, Director of Environmental Affairs, at 563-0180.