

Letter: Open space a precious commodity; hold onto it

To the editor:

Your editorial in support of NAID (March 18) was full of the usual platitudes and cliches that are so embarrassing to our local political discourse. Actually, let me withdraw that word discourse and substitute blather, which is a more apt description. First of all, let me make clear that I am not a birdwatcher, which is the usual synonym around here for a greenie, camera-toting kook (usually from Japan or some Boston suburb). Your assertion that the 102 acres in question are only valuable to birdwatchers makes it sound like some sort of extreme, outlandish, absurdist, fringe proposition to argue for its preservation as open space, but far from it. My position is, enough is enough, even out by the highway. Newburyport is bursting. We have become an overdeveloped municipality that can no longer sustain itself; our budget is exploding, our services decreasing, our taxes breeding like proverbial mice. And people want a new school?

What we do not need is a further drain on our resources, whether financial or environmental. This talk about local jobs is nonsense. Every time I go through the neo-waste of our industrial park, all I see are license plates from New Hampshire. Tax relief? Don't make me cry - the people out there, thanks to the annual propaganda spewed out by the chamber, get a sweetheart deal on their rate packages every year, and laugh about it all the way to the bank. Instead of clapping our hands about economic growth as some kind of miracle bromide, we should see it for the Drains that it often can be. Take a drive for yourself and look at the various vacancies out there now.

An old Irish saint was once asked why a man couldn't go to heaven if all he had committed in his whole life was a string of venial sins. The saint replied that that was the way to lose paradise, little by little. Open space is an unbelievably precious commodity, shrinking away in front of our very eyes, little by little. Remember that old adage: Once gone, forever gone. Forget about the birds, think about yourself and what's important in life. An office park with hundreds of cars isn't worth two cents in my book.

JAMES CHARLES ROY

Newburyport