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## 'Their' land will now be taken for private development

Nov 28, 2018

To The Daily Sun,

Some years ago, when Senator Jeanne Shaheen was Governor (1997-2003), she had worked to sell the State School property in Laconia to pay for the construction of a State Prison in Berlin. It didn't happen as the deed to the property reserved it for the "feeble-minded" and indigent. Now years later Elizabeth H. Muzzey, the state historic preservation officer, will assist in finding the bodies buried there.

[Art.] 12-a. [Power to Take Property Limited.] No part of a person's property shall be taken by eminent domain and transferred, directly or indirectly, to another person if the taking is for the purpose of private development or other private use of the property. November 7, 2006.

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Apparently the original deed which gave the land to the state to provide the (in today's terms) mentally challenged and the indigent no longer has legal standing and "their" land will be taken for private economic development, contrary to Article 12a of the State Constitution. Of what purpose is the Article that it can so easily be ignored?

Their bodies are to be looked for, the effort will have been made and the theft of their land (held in trust by the State of New Hampshire) will be deeded over to private economic development. The "State School" was closed due to the poor conditions and care of the resident. Administrators,

employees and residents disappeared as has the deed to the property. The land deeded extends far beyond where the buildings are, a ball field sets just before where the road was moved on the property, it was never checked for unmarked burials. A public park which reaches down to the water and is rather hidden and poorly maintained will also most likely disappear with the "development."

Where bodies are buried has been considered as hollowed ground, we walk on it with respect and memory of those who have gone before; be it a simple unmarked plot or 200 acres. Selling and developing their land and last resting place (which is the whole extent of the deeded land which is their spirits to roam) may be inked new on paper now, a hundred years later. But what value is the new paper inked over the old? As Elizabeth H. Muzzey says, "I'm sure the state will do the right thing." It is their resting place. Perhaps a plaque will do.

G.W. Brooks

Meredith