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## Weymouth Opens New Hilltop Park Honoring Shooting Victims

By Johanna Seltz, Globe Correspondent | October 26, 2018



*George H. Raymond Photos*

Weymouth officials and neighbors gathered on the grounds of the town-owned Emery Estate overlooking Boston Harbor to celebrate the completion and grand opening of the new 17.9-acre King Oak Hill Park.

The hilltop park includes two purple leaf plum trees planted in memory of Weymouth Police Sergeant Michael Chesna and lifelong Weymouth resident Vera Adams.

Chesna, 42, was fatally shot in the line of duty and Adams, 77, was killed in the same July 15 incident from gunshots randomly fired into her home. Emanuel A. Lopes, the 20-year-old man accused of both shootings, is awaiting trial on murder charges.

King Oak Hill Park features a quarter-mile looped walking path and a covered pavilion that can accommodate 100 people. The \$1.7 million project also included parking and bathrooms, as well as reconstruction of Emery Lane with new sidewalks, curb ramps, and streetlights, according to a statement.

The state provided \$400,000 toward the project in a grant from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The town bought the Emery Estate in 2011 using \$1.9 million in Community Preservation funds.

At the time of the purchase, officials said they wanted to protect the 24-acre property from development, with no clear idea how to use the land or the 1903 mansion, which was designed to resemble George Washington's Mount Vernon. The building — which needs “well over \$1 million” in work — is not part of the park and its future is still up in the air, according to Planning Director Robert Luongo.

“The mayor is a real preservationist and is adamant about saving the house, even though a lot of people have discouraged him from doing it,” Luongo said. “We’ll mothball it for the winter and make a decision by the spring of 2019.”

The property had been home to the Emery family — prominent wool merchants — for nearly a century, used as a private home and occasionally farmed. For 33 years, the Emery family hosted high school students from the Weymouth Bible Club on Thursday nights.

“By transforming the grounds of the Emery Estate into a truly useable and accessible park, we’ve created a special place where people can gather, be active, and enjoy time outdoors, all while connecting with an important piece of the town’s natural and cultural history,” Mayor Robert Hedlund said at the Oct. 22 dedication.