

**HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
OCTOBER 6, 2016
APPROVED: NOVEMBER 17, 2016**

Chairman Paul Willard called the meeting to order at 7:02pm in the Town Hall Meeting Room under MGL Chapter 131 §40 The Wetland Protection Act and The Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 119 the Wetland Protection Bylaw

Members Present: Paul Willard, Don Ritchie, Wendy Sisson, Jim Breslauer, Joanne Ward

Others Present: Liz Allard (LUB Admin), Marty Green (Harvard Press), Stu Sklar (BOS) and Kara McGuire Minar (PB)

Approve Invoice

Liz Allard stated the following invoice have been received for inclusion on the next bill warrant:

- ESRI - \$400.00

Joanne Ward made a motion to approve the invoice for ESRI. Jim Breslauer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Ratify Emergency Certification – 327 Still River Road

Liz Allard stated an Emergency Certification (EC) was issued to Phil and Beth Wilson for the removal of a tree within 100' of wetland resource area that was damaged during a storm on September 11th. The age and decay of the tree were threat to human health and safety. The EC required the stump of the tree remain in place due to its location adjacent to an intermittent stream.

Wendy Sisson made a motion ratifying the issuance of the Emergency Certification for 327 Still River Road as described above. Joanne Ward seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Request for a Certificates of Compliance, Sundeen, DEP#177-649 & Williams 177-636

Liz Allard has reviewed two locations at which request for Certificates of Compliance (COC) have been received. The COC for Brian Sundeen, at 35 Scott Road, was for a previously installed pool. Yard waste and other debris have been removed from the 100' buffer zone as required by the Order of Conditions (OOC). The other COC is for the installation of a new subsurface disposal area for Jonathan Williams at 13 Whitman Road. Areas of disturbance have been stabilized as required by the OOC. Ms. Allard recommended the COC be issued for both locations.

Wendy Sisson Made a motion to issue the Certificates of Compliance for the above mentioned locations. Jim Breslauer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Update on Gifts of Land

- Stone Cutter's Path - Nothing new to report

Bylaw Amendment – Land Subject to Flooding

Jim Breslauer stated he was still gathering information for this amendment

Exchange of Conservation Land for Ayer Road Roundabout

Stu Sklar, a member of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) stated the Town has spent \$14,000 already on this project. The committee does not want to proceed with long range planning unless they know whether or not the Commission will vote to support the exchange of conservation land along Ayer Road needed for the roundabout. Mr. Sklar stated other measures are being taken to reduce speeding along Ayer Road, such as the purchase of speed enforcement signs in fiscal

year 2018. Mr. Sklar stated there are a lot of ideas on calming traffic along Ayer Road, with the roundabout being the last one. Mr. Sklar noted the roundabout is appealing because the bridge on Lancaster County Road needs to be replaced at the Town's expense. Making the sight line better for Poor Farm side is another initial improvement.

Jim Breslauer asked what the cost would be to the Town to construct the roundabout. Mr. Sklar stated half million dollars. Mr. Breslauer then asked how much to repair the bridge. Mr. Sklar stated two to three hundred thousand dollars. Mr. Breslauer noted the letter from the traffic consultant is not consistent with the letter from the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program in regards to the habitat. In addition, the letter the Commission received from the BOS letter does not expressly state the land on Lancaster County Road near the bridge as land available for the exchange.

Paul Willard wanted to know if Lancaster County Road could be closed without a roundabout. Mr. Sklar stated maybe if Gebo Lane was reconfigured to a right angle.

Kara McGuire Minar, the chair of the Planning Board, explained a traffic light at the Dunkin Donuts location is not acceptable to MassDOT due to the potential to back up traffic on Route 2. MassDOT likes roundabouts as traffic calming measures.

Mr. Willard asked if the issue along Ayer Road is speeding. Ms. McGuire Minar stated according to the Police Chief it is volume and not speeding.

Mr. Willard would be favorable to a land swap if there was an agreement to remediate the road runoff from the bowling alley to Bower's Brook right across from the post office.

Ms. McGuire Minar talked about the new Master Plan and the Commercial Design Guidelines and how the roundabout would assist in making the area user friendly.

Mr. Willard asked about installing third lane along Ayer Road. MassDOT does not think that would slow traffic down. Mr. Willard asked for a no cost test of ticketing along Ayer Road before he gets on board with this. Mr. Sklar stated he would see to it that police presence is increased along Ayer Road to assist in reducing speeding.

After a discussion amongst the Commission as to the vote needed this evening, Jim Breslauer made a motion to declare as surplus, the 5,419 square feet of land on the Ayer Road Meadow conservation land as detailed on the Roundabout Concept Plan on Ayer Road in Harvard, prepared by Bristol Traffic & Transportation Consulting LLC, dated 7/18/16. Don Ritchie seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Willard Land Conservation Restriction & Trail Easement

Wendy Sisson stated the Willard conservation restriction is in process and should be completed by the end of the year.

The Commission had request a trail easement from the home owners association along Pine Ridge Road to be able to join the Willard land to the existing trail system. The association responded with some requests of their own. After a brief discussion, Jim Breslauer made a motion to allow Paul Willard and Wendy Sisson to discuss the request and work out the details with the president of the association, Pablo Carbonell. Don Ritchie seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

LAND Grant Update

As mentioned during the site inspection by the State as part of the LAND grant process it was mentioned that allowing bow hunting on conservation land is a plus. Historically hunting has not been allowed on conservation land due to the heavy use of open space within Town; however

this would be an ideal location to allow such an activity. The Commission will need to further explore this option to determine how to regulate the activity.

Liz Allard stated comments made in the past about open space include the perception that the Commission is not maintaining the open space currently under their control, so why allow funding for additional land purchases. The stewardship of conservation land needs to be conveyed in some manner. There has been a tremendous amount of work by the Land Stewardship Subcommittee over the past five years. Ms. Allard has collected the details of those activities and spoke to Marty Green, from the Harvard Press, earlier this evening about putting an article together to highlight the accomplishments.

Members reviewed the draft handout detailing Article 1 for Special Town Meeting (STM). Suggestions were made and will be shared with the Harvard Conservation Trust.

Jim Breslauer agreed to read the motion for Article 1 at STM. Members agreed having a representative from the Board of Selectmen, Harvard Conservation Trust, Community Preservation Committee and Capital Planning and Investment Committee stand together when the article is read.

Adjournment

Don Ritchie made a motion at 9:00pm to adjourn the meeting. Jim Breslauer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Allard
Land Use Administrator/
Conservation Agent