

**HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 2, 2017
APPROVED: FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

Chairman Paul Willard called the meeting to order at 7:00pm in the Town Hall 13 Ayer Road 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, Wendy Sisson, Jim Breslauer, Jaye Waldron and Joanne Ward

Others Present: Liz Allard (LUB Admin), David Outman (HCT), Peter Dorward (HCT), Tom Cotton, (HCT), Jim Lee (HCT), Rick Sicard (Fire Chief), Jennifer March (Harvard Press), Mark Adams and Matt Adams

Follow up to Finance Committee Meeting

Wendy Sisson gave an overview of the meeting with the Finance Committee (FinCom) last week in regards to the warrant article for \$200,000 for the conservation fund. FinCom was interested in obtaining information from the Commission in regards to the maintenance of the existing open space, what percent of protected land is there in surrounding communities, how are surrounding communities funding the maintenance of their conservation land, the development of a forestry plan, and the idea of corporate funding for the maintenance of trails.

Liz Allard added that there was discussion around the leasing of conservation land for agricultural use. Funds received have been deposited over the years into a general fund account that was not available for use by the Commission. It turns out those funds should have been deposited into the Conservation Fund. Ms. Allard has reviewed the funds in that account back to 1998. The current balance of that fund is \$12,480. Ms. Allard has determined these funds are those of the Commission for the licensing of conservation land.

Paul Willard will attend the FinCom meeting on Saturday to answer any final questions. Ms. Allard requested a volunteer to review the license agreements that existed in order to get them back online. Revenue has not been consistent over the years and most fields do not have a current signed agreement. Fees have not increased in some case for more than a decade. Joanne Ward volunteered to review the files to try and get a handle on how to proceed with ensuring this revenue source is collected annually as it should be.

Review & approve MOU: Hours for administrative assistance to the Land Use Boards in Board of Health budget

A revised memorandum of understanding was previously circulated to the members. Minor edits were made to the memorandum as drafted by Joanne Ward. Wendy Sisson made a motion to approve the memorandum between the Board of Health and the Land Use Boards as revised this evening. Jim Breslauer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Approve Minutes

Jim Breslauer made a motion to approve the minutes of January 5, 2017 as amended. Jaye Waldron seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Land Stewardship Subcommittee Update

Wendy Sisson stated the spring walk will be held on April 2nd and will include a vernal pool element. The Committee is working towards getting the Land Stewardship website back up and running. A garlic mustard pull will be part of the April road side clean-up. Anyone interested in walking the Willard land can do so Saturday at 10am with members of the Committee as they determine the best location for the trails on that land.

Proposed Harvard Snowmobile Club Protocol

The draft protocol is still under development.

Update on Gifts of Land

- Stone Cutter's Path –Attorney Lanza has begun drafting the necessary deed to complete the transfer of this land. The questions remaining about the easements over private land have been resolved now that the Commission has stated they have the ability to access the property from other abutting Town-owned land.
- Still River Road – Harvard Conservation Trust and the executor of this property have been in contact. The Trust had several questions, to which the executor has responded. At this point the Trust's lands committee needs to determine if they are willing to accept the land.
- Maxant, Willard Lane –Ted Maxant would like to gift 2.67 acres of land that currently has a conservation restriction on it to the Town as open space. Mr. Maxant would like to be able to maintain the land as an "English forest" as he has for years. Wendy Sisson will review the land this weekend and report back to the Commission on whether or not they should accept this land as a gift.

Request for Determination of Applicability Hearing – Harvard Fire Department, Lancaster County Road & 320 Ayer Road, Harvard#0117-01. Opened at 7:30pm

Executive Session

Jim Breslauer made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the possible purchase of real property, the public discussion of which could have detrimental effects on the negotiating position, only to return to the public meeting once completed. Joanne Ward seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Wendy Sisson, aye; Joanne Ward, aye; Jim Breslauer, aye; Jaye Waldron, aye; Paul Willard, aye.

At the conclusion of the discussion under executive session, Jim Breslauer made a motion to come out of executive session and to return to the public meeting. Joanne Ward seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Joanne Ward, aye; Jaye Waldron, aye; Jim Breslauer, aye; Wendy Sisson, aye; and Paul Willard, aye.

Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant Application

Liz Allard along with Peter Dorward attended the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant workshop this week. A summary of that workshop had been distributed to the Commission earlier this week.

Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) Update

Liz Allard stated is still working towards the final review of the overall document, which she should have completed by the end of February. Once complete she will forward the OSRP to the appropriate authorities for their comments. Once those are received the final document can be sent to the State for approval.

Adjournment

Jim Breslauer made a motion at 9:23pm to adjourn the meeting. Joanne Ward seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Allard
Land Use Administrator/
Conservation Agent

**Harvard Conservation Commission
Request for Determination of Applicability
Hearing Meeting Minutes
Harvard Fire Department, Lancaster County & 320 Ayer Road, Harvard#0117-01
February 2, 2017**

The public hearing was opened at 7:30pm by Chairman Paul Willard under the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act, Ch. 131 §40 and the Harvard Wetland Protection Bylaw, Chapter 119 of the Code of the Town of Harvard in the Town Hall Meeting Room at 13 Ayer Road, Harvard

Members Present: Paul Willard, Jim Breslauer, Wendy Sisson, Jaye Waldron, Joanne Ward

Others Present: Liz Allard (LUB Admin) and Chief Rick Sicard

This hearing is for a Request for Determination of Applicability filed on behalf of the Harvard Fire Department for the removal of vegetation within 200' of the existing fire ponds on Lancaster County Road and at 320 Ayer Road, Harvard.

Chief Rick Sicard was present to discuss with Commission the work necessary to begin the process of determining how to bring existing fire ponds in Town back to good working order. The fire ponds around Town have not been maintained since they were established, therefore a majority of them have over-grown trees and shrubs that require removal in order to have unobstructed access. A number of the existing cisterns associated with the fire ponds will need to be replaced as well. The plan is to use these two sites as test sites on how the process should proceed with the other fire ponds around town. This application is only for the removal of vegetation around the fire ponds and not the actual dredging of the pond. That activity will be filed under a separate application.

Wendy Sisson had concerns with invasive plants taking over once the vegetation is removed. Chief Sicard explained once cleared of the existing overgrowth, the areas will be maintained as to not allow for re-growth of any plant species. Ms. Sisson was also concerned about the habitat these ponds are supporting as most function as vernal pools. Chief Sicard has discussed that matter with the Conservation Agent, who has explained once the work to actually dredge the fire ponds are permitted it will be a requirement to do so at the appropriate time of year.

Members discussed the manner in which the ponds should be dredged and suggested Chief Sicard look into a dredge line as opposed to excavating. Jim Breslauer asked about the cost to create a hydrant system off of Bare Hill Pond and the Devens aquifer. Chief Sicard stated that cost would far outweigh the cost of revitalizing the existing fire ponds.

With no further questions or comments, Jim Breslauer made a motion to close the hearing and issue a Negative#2 Determination of Applicability. Joanne Ward seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Allard
Land Use Administrator/
Conservation Agent