

**HARVARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
SEPTEMBER 18, 2014
APPROVED: NOVEMBER 6, 2014**

Chairman Paul Willard called the meeting to order at 7:00pm in the Town Hall Meeting Room under the MGL Chapter 131 §40 Wetland Protection Act and the Code of the Town of Harvard Chapter 119 Wetland Protection Bylaw

Members Present: Paul Willard, Don Ritchie, Wendy Sisson, Charlie Gorss, Jim Breslauer and Jaye Waldron

Others Present: Liz Allard (LUB Admin)

Approve Minutes

Wendy Sisson made a motion to approve the minutes of August 7th as written and the minutes of August 21st as amended. Don Ritchie seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Community Preservation Committee Application for Invasive Plant Species Control

Wendy Sisson reviewed the application to the Community Preservation Committee for invasive plant control on Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary with the members. After a brief discussion, Jim Breslauer made a motion to authorize Wendy Sisson to submit an application to the Community Preservation Committee for \$50,000 in funds for invasive plant species control on the Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary over the next three years. Don Ritchie seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Maple Lane Tree Removal

Wendy Sisson, as the chair of the Land Stewardship Subcommittee, stated there is an existing tree that is currently caught up on other trees along Maple Lane. Although there is no immediate danger, the tree should be removed sooner rather than later. Ms. Sisson has received estimates from local tree services; \$900 to take down the tree and leave it in place, \$2000 to take down tree and remove from the site. She will obtain other estimates.

Ms. Sisson also explained she would like to consider a restoration project of the maples along Maple Lane, which were originally planted by the Shakers. The restoration would require the removal of the white pines and the pruning of the existing maples to help the health of the trees. Ms. Sisson suggested the Commission seek private donations for the project as Community Preservation funds would not be available for such a project. Ms. Sisson envisions this to be a two year project at a cost of \$62,000. Ms. Sisson will gather additional information to present to the Commission at a later date.

Forestry Plan – 121 Littleton Road

Liz Allard has previously distributed the Forest Cutting Plan for 121 Old Littleton Road. This property is also known as the Lawton Land and is the property the Commission is seeking to purchase a portion of from the Harvard Conservation Trust (HCT), once they take ownership, to preserve as open space. Members of the Commission agreed they would want to re-negotiate the Purchase & Sale agreement with HCT if the forest cutting plan is executed by the current owner prior to the sale to HCT. Paul Willard stated he would follow up with Molly Cutler, the president of the HCT.

Review & Approve Order of Conditions, CHOICE, 105 Stow Road, DEP#177-632

Liz Allard had previously distributed the draft Order of Conditions for 105 Stow Road for the members' review. Members questioned whether or not the conditions in regards to stormwater management were too much for such a small site. Ms. Allard explained the conditions reflect the requirements under the State's Stormwater Checklist. With that said, Wendy Sisson made a

motion to approve the Order of Conditions as drafted. Jim Breslauer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Request to Use William's Land for Dog Training

Liz Allard stated the request was not completed by the requester therefore the Commission has no information available to approve the request.

Master Plan Steering Committee Update

Jaye Waldron stated the Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) has received all of the working papers. The Natural Resource working paper was previously distributed to the Commission members for comment. Ms. Waldron requested any comments the members may have should be to her by this coming Sunday. Jim Breslauer noted the maps references within the paper are wrong and there are no recommendations for the future.

Ms. Waldron informed the Commission the MPSC will be holding two public workshops in November and December; one on Devens and public input meeting on the Master Plan recommendations.

Review & Comments on Master Plan Working Paper "Open Space & Natural Resources"

See above.

Wetland Violation – 8 Finn Road, DEP#177-629

Liz Allard informed the Commission she had discovered a wetland violation at 8 Finn Road while reviewing the site for compliance under an existing Order of Conditions for the installation of a septic system. Ms. Allard explained the new home owners have cleared all of the vegetation from each side of the intermittent stream that runs through the property. Ms. Allard has spoken with the property owner and explained the resources on the property and has requested the area be allowed to re-vegetate naturally. A follow-up letter on the matter was also sent to the owners.

The Commission discussed what steps they can take to get the information to a new property owner prior to a wetland violation. Members wondered how other Commissions deal with such an issue. Jaye Waldron suggested this topic be recommended to the Mass Association of Conservation Commissions as a workshop for their annual meeting.

Planning Board Request for Comments – Global Signal, 47 Poor Farm Road

Liz Allard stated the application received by the Planning Board is for the exchange of existing antenna on an existing wireless cell tower at 47 Poor Farm Road. Existing equipment cabinets will be replaced as well. Ms. Allard stated there are no resource areas in the proposed project area that would be of concern to the Commission. The members agreed a letter should be sent to the Planning Board stating they have no comments in regards to this application.

Request for Reserve Fund Transfer for ArcGIS to Complete Land Book Update

Jim Breslauer had not had an opportunity to review the existing contract with CAI for GIS services to the Town. Liz Allard detailed the differences between what the Town has currently for GIS and what ArcGIS can provide. Two of the pluses to ArcGIS is the data layers can be manipulated and a finished product contains a map legend. Jim Breslauer asked what the hold up is on getting the ArcGIS. Ms. Allard stated the Commission approving the Request for a Reserve Fund Transfer. With that said, Jim Breslauer made a motion to allow for the submittal of a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$1224.00 for the purchase of ArcGIS for the Land Use computer. Jaye Waldron seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Update on Camp Site & Dock on the Clapp Land

Paul Willard stated the tarps remaining at the site have since been removed. The only remaining item is the dock. Mr. Willard will follow up with others on the pond to see if anyone is interested in towing it away.

Request for a Certificate of Compliance – 24 Cove Road, DEP#177-604

Liz Allard stated she has reviewed the site at 24 Cove Road for compliance with the Order of Conditions (OOC). Ms. Allard stated the site has met the conditions of the OOC and recommends the issuance of the Certificate of Compliance. Wendy Sisson made a motion to issue the Certificate of Compliance to Richard and Maribeth Marcello, 24 Cove Road, DEP#177-604. Don Ritchie seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Lawton Declaration of Conservation Restriction

Liz Allard and Wendy Sisson have been working with the Harvard Conservation Trust (HCT) to finalize the wording within the Declaration of Conservation Restriction. Ms. Sisson stated the document is written in a manner in which the HCT has control of land because they will initially own it. As Ms. Allard understands the situation, the Commission will be purchasing a parcel of land that will already contain a conservation restriction. The members had no comments on the restriction as drafted.

Use of Conservation Land

Liz Allard stated she recently became aware of several different groups around town that are conducting walks on conservation land under the care and management of the Commission. Although the activities are encouraged, it would be useful for the Commission to be aware of these activities. Notification can help prevent conflicting activities from occurring at the same time; can allow for users to be notified of any existing or potential concerns with the trails; and can provide the Commission with useful data for support when obtaining other parcels of open space. Ms. Allard suggested a letter be sent to those the Commission knows are using the trails to ask they inform the Commission of the activities they have planned on conservation land. Members agreed.

Potential Wetland Violation - Cruft Lane

It was reported that the field at the corner of Littleton Road and Cruft Lane has been tilled for what appears to be planting of hay. The Commission had informed the property owner previously that the area could not be used as an agricultural field as it has value as a resource area. In addition, it was noted that a forest cutting plan can not be executed for the intent to change the existing use of a property (i.e. from forestry to agricultural). Paul Willard noted there is a difference between a forest cutting plan and a forestry plan. Members agreed they would review the site over the next week.

Adjournment

Jim Breslauer made motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:38pm. Jaye Waldron seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Allard
Land Use Administrator/
Conservation Agent