



Town of Ayer Conservation Commission

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432 * 978-772-8249

Minutes for 1/17/2017 – Approved 1/26/2017

Location: Ayer Town Hall, 2nd Floor

Present: Bill Daniels (BD, Chair), George Bacon (GB, Vice-Chair), Takashi Tada (TT, Member), Bonnie Tillotson (BT, Member), Jessica Gugino (JG, Member/Clerk), Brian Colleran (CA, Conservation Administrator)

Not Present: Takashi Tada (TT, Member)

APAC taped: No

7:10 PM – Open Meeting (SPECIAL MEETING for Bylaw review)

- **Discussion: ConCom FY 2018 Budget Request**

- Town Administrator Robert Pontbriand's budget email of 1/12/2017 was reviewed.
- ConCom will include funding for a Town cell-phone for CA.
 - After discussion, members decided to opt for an iPhone which will allow for the collection of data in the field.
 - The Commission can decide on whether it wants to fund the extra charge of tethering it to the office iPad at a later date if it is found to be useful.
- Per Mr. Pontbriand's request, ConCom will include a separate budget line item in the amount of \$25,000 for Pond/Weed Control.
 - This will be an annual request.
 - The funding for this purpose needs to be set up so that unexpended funds roll-over and accumulate into the next FY so that a base for ongoing treatment of the ponds can be established.
- A separate budget line item in the amount of \$10,000 for survey work on the Mountain Laurel Conservation Restriction was not included.
 - ConCom members did not feel that Spring Town Meeting 2017 was the time to seek this funding, given that ConCom will be hoping to pass a revised bylaw.
 - BD also asked that further research be done to see if the Commission's Wetland Fund can possibly be used to pay for this rather than ask Town residents to support another expense.
- BD will contact Mr. Pontbriand by phone to go over the above discussion.

- **Discussion: Updating Ayer's Wetland Bylaw**

- Ayer ConCom is using the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) model Bylaw (2006) as the basis for its revisions.
- Section IV, Applications and Fees
 - At its previous special meeting (12/12/2016) on the Bylaw, ConCom members opposed the imposition of local filing fees (in addition to the State's WPA fees, a percentage of which already goes to the Commission's Wetland Fund).
 - CA said Mr. Pontbriand supported keeping this in the draft Bylaw.
 - BD said that this would be a deal-breaker for ConCom in terms of pursuing a new Bylaw.
 - Having just asked Town residents to approve the expansion of the CA position to full-time/benefits, it was strongly felt that the inclusion of additional local filing fees would be perceived as greedy and likely doom successful passage of a new Bylaw.
 - BD will talk directly to Mr. Pontbriand about this.



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- Section V, Notice and Hearings
 - Minor changes to the MACC template will be made to reference to a notice to abutters.
 - This change will direct applicants to reference the information found in ConCom's "Notice to Abutters" on the website and in the toolkit.
- Section VI, Coordination with Other Boards
 - In this and other sections, where the MACC refers to 'days', ConCom will mirror the same language rather than specifying 'calendar' or 'business' days.
- Section VII, Permits and Conditions
 - It was noted that the section specifying that permits may be renewed once for an additional one-year period was advantageous for ConCom.
 - This would mean that projects taking longer would have to file for a new permit, with accompanying updated wetland flagging.
 - Since wetlands can change over the course of just a few years, this limitation works toward the goal of furthering the protection of resource areas.
- **Discussion: ConCom Database**
 - Using the Town's portable big screen monitor, CA showed how he has been creating a new database for ConCom.
 - This includes tracking the history of OOCs, DOAs, ORADs, COCs, etc. issued for parcels throughout Ayer.
 - This will enable coordination between the database and the parcel mapping that CA also has been doing.
 - ConCom foresees being able to close out old unfinished business related to expired but not closed OOCs.
 - This in turn will be of good service to homeowners who may not realize that their deeds have unfinished business attached to them.
 - The database and parcel mapping will also be highly useful for ConCom to consult on the Town's large screen monitor during Public Hearings and Meetings with applicants.
 - Accordingly, BD asked CA to check with Cindy Knox, of Information Technology, for whatever cords, etc., would be needed to establish the software/hardware connectivity between CA's office computer and the Town's big monitor(s).
 - BD was extremely pleased with the way the database is being designed and set up by CA.
- **9:30 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
 - GB moved to adjourn; BT 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.