

Town of Ayer Conservation Commission

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432 * 978-772-8249 * 978-772-8208 (fax)

Minutes for **02/25/10** – **Approved 04/22/10**

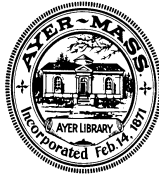
Location: Ayer Town Hall, 1st Floor

Members present: Bill Daniels (BD, Chair), Dave Bodurtha (DB, Vice-Chair), George Bacon (GB), Takashi Tada (TT, Clerk), Jessica Gugino (JG), Becky DaSilva-Conde (CA, Conservation Administrator)

APAC taped: Yes

7:10 PM – Open Meeting

- **Discussion: ZBA Application – 20 Fletcher Street**
 - Alexis Forrest, 20 Fletcher Street, is planning to add a garage and breezeway to her home.
 - Work will involve some excavation, but the excavated soil will be kept onsite and used for regrading.
 - The driveway connects to Maple Street, not Fletcher Street.
 - No issues raised by CA.
 - JG moved to notify ZBA that Commission has no issues with the application; GB 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
 - After Ms. Forrest exited the meeting room, John Cadogan (new member of ZBA) explained that the property is located within the Zone II, which is why the application needs review from other boards.
 - Commissioners stated that the application is incorrect – it does not indicate that the lot is in the Zone II.
- **Meeting Minutes Approval**
 - 2/11/10: no changes.
 - GB moved to approve 2/11/10 minutes, as written; JG 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Discussion: Preliminary NOI for Fitchburg Commuter Rail (MBTA)**
 - Mike Turgeon indicated the MBTA will file a NOI next week and requested an expedited review by the Commission.
 - Proposed work involves resurrection of the second track along Fitchburg Line.
 - First phase is between Bennetts Brook (Littleton Town Line) and Willow Road (PanAm-Southern offloading facility).
 - Commission scheduled a site walk on Saturday, 3/20/10 (tentative).
 - Mr. Turgeon will arrange to have a flagman present to ensure safety.
- **Discussion: Land Use Regulations – Pine Meadow Conservation Land**
 - BD read published legal notice (*Ayer Public Spirit*) and provided background information for those in attendance.
 - Pat Huckery, MassWildlife, explained the existing state laws regulating hunting.
 - BD showed the firearms setbacks on a map overlay, and discussed the suitability of different weapons in a relatively small area (approximately 130 acres).

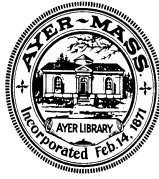


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- Per Ms. Huckery, the Region 9 deer density is approximately 20-25 deer per square mile.
 - MassWildlife's management goal is 8 deer per square mile.
 - MassWildlife does not endorse professional culling of deer populations.
 - The main obstacle to deer management is access to hunting areas.
 - Massachusetts has an excellent hunter safety record.
 - Uncontrolled deer populations lead to more ticks, which transmit Lyme disease and other illnesses.
 - The vast majority of hunting in Massachusetts occurs during the roughly two-week period of deer season (shotgun) in the fall.
 - Hunting is prohibited on Sundays.
- Currently, hunting is not allowed on Pine Meadow Conservation Land because there are no Town regulations specifically permitting it.
- Some residents, including Tom Poole (former Commission Chair) supported hunting on the land, while others expressed concerns about safety.
- Steve Smith, member of Ayer Greenway Committee, said the conservation land is becoming more intensively used for passive recreation and outdoor education.
- Residents in the audience agreed that if hunting is to be permitted, the Town must make concerted effort to educate the public.
- **Discussion: Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) – Extension**
 - Beth Suedmeyer, Ayer resident and former employee of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), brought up the fast-approaching deadline for extending Ayer's OSRP for another two years.
 - The deadline is end of February.
 - The extension is an alternative to doing a new five-year OSRP.
 - The current OSRP expires this year.
 - To qualify for the two-year extension, Town must write an action plan that covers the two additional years.
 - Towns with an OSRP in place are eligible to receive state grant funding to support open space and recreation.
 - The point of contact is Melissa Cryan, Division of Conservation Services (DCS).
 - OSRP is not part of the Comprehensive Plan.
 - The current OSRP did not resolve comments issued by the state when the plan was prepared in 2005.
 - BD asked which board(s) is responsible for the OSRP.
 - DB mentioned that the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) is appointed/governed by Board of Selectmen.
 - DB suggested exploring the use of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to pay for preparation of the extension.
 - BD drafted a letter to Melissa Cryan and Bob O'Connor, DCS.
 - CA will contact Melissa.
 - Commission wondered if an extension needs to be approved by Town Meeting.
- **CA Updates**



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- 152 Central Avenue
 - John Canney removed the materials that were stored within the buffer zone.
 - CA Time Sheet Approvals
 - BD will request the BOS or Town Administrator to designate a Town employee who will sign CA's time sheet.
 - Draft Land Use Regulations
 - Can they be posted on Town website?
 - Weed Control RFP needs to be updated and sent out for bids as soon as possible.
 - BD will forward the latest version.
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- **10:35 – Adjourn Meeting**
 - JG moved to adjourn; GB 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.