

Town of Ayer Conservation Commission

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA01432 * 978-772-8249 * 978-772-8208 (fax)

Minutes for **02/11/10** – **Approved 02/25/10**

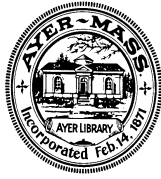
Location: Ayer Town Hall, 1st Floor

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

7:00 PM – Open Meeting

- **Accounts Payable**
 - Lowell Sun: \$127.50 – Legal notice for RDA, Ch. 91, 7 Wachusett Ave. East
 - CA received payment from Patrick Marr.
 - GB moved to approve payment of Lowell Sun invoice; JG 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Announcements**
 - Conservation Commission's public meeting/hearing schedule re: land use regulations at Pine Meadow Conservation Land, was published in the *Public Spirit*.
- **Meeting Minutes Approval**
 - 1/14/10: no changes.
 - JG moved to approve 1/14/10 minutes, as written; GB 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
 - 1/28/10: Correction: trapping of certain species is allowed under the state's hunting regulations.
 - GB moved to approve 1/28/10 minutes, as amended; JG 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.
- **Discussion: Land Use Regulations – Pine Meadow Conservation Land**
 - BD received a copy of Ch. 131, Sec. 59, from Pat Huckery of MassWildlife (DFW). This is the same citation that was provided by Town Counsel.
 - According the state hunting regulations:
 - Discharge of firearms is not allowed within 150 feet of roads, and within 500 feet of occupied buildings (residence, school, etc.).
 - BD suggested including the school grounds within the safety zone.
 - Firearm categories include: shotgun, primitive firearm, bow, rifle, and small-game rifle.
 - Night-time restriction: 22-caliber or less.
 - Automatic weapons are prohibited.
 - Trapping (box and snap-trap) is allowed for certain species.
 - It is illegal to harass hunters.
 - MassWildlife's Hunter Education Program is based in Ayer.
 - Sonia Christiansen (sp?) is in charge of the Deer and Moose Management program.
 - Discussion of potential restrictions:

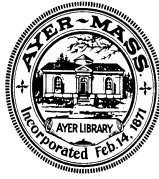


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- JG provided examples of local hunting regulations from Framingham and Marshfield, which require hunters to register with the Town and restrict certain species and weapons.
- According to state law, a Town does not assume liability for hunting on its land unless it charges for permits.
- JG suggested that a system of no-fee permits might encourage responsible hunters and discourage the irresponsible ones.
- The benefits of a no-fee permit system are awareness, safety, and record-keeping.
- BD was not comfortable with limiting hunting access to Ayer residents only.
- BD summarized the primary issues regarding regulation of hunting:
 - Weapons limits
 - Species limits
 - Permit limits
 - Space/Time limits
- Commissioners generally agreed that shotgun and bow hunting was acceptable, but rifle hunting was too dangerous.
- Commissioners were divided on the merits of trapping.
- More information is needed on the relative safety of primitive firearms.
- Other land uses need to be considered, including walking/hiking, biking, and X-country skiing.
- Commissioners developed a long list of items for public input:
 - Weapons limits
 - Permits/registration/residency
 - Species limits
 - Spatial constraints
 - Time constraints
 - Allow motorized vehicles?
 - Fishing
 - Boating
 - Tree cutting
 - Camping and open fires?
 - Preventing dumping, pollution
 - Violations/fee schedule
 - Abutters encroachment
 - Bicycles
 - Horses
 - Pets – Ayer has a leash law
 - Prohibiting the abandonment animals
 - Paintball, pellet guns
 - Walking, hiking
 - Consumption of alcohol on public land
 - Prohibit glass containers?
- CA will mail the meeting/hearing announcement to abutters.



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- **CA Updates**
 - DPW survey: DPW chief Dan Nason prepared a Needs Assessment for Town boards to complete.

- **10:00 – Adjourn Meeting**
 - GB moved to adjourn; JG 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.