

Conservation Administrator's Report

Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator

June 2018

Spring finally arrived, followed by the heat of summer, all in a short time! The Conservation Office remains busy with applications for Wetlands Permits and site visits, both important undertakings in upholding the requirements of the Wetlands Protection Act here in Ayer.

The Heating Oil Spill at Page Hilltop clean-up has progressed to a Notice of Intent filed by the Licensed Site Professional (LSP) for Diesel Direct, the heating oil company that delivered the oil which spilled into the wetland resource area. The Conservation Commission has engaged the services of EcoTec, Inc. to assist in conducting a review of the permit application and of the clean-up and restoration work proposed in the application.

Infrastructure work on Woodland Way in the Pingry Hill subdivision continues according to the agreed schedule for completing stormwater structures.

Pond Weed Control: The third and final herbicide treatment of the summer is scheduled Friday, July 13th. Signs will be posted around the ponds and information about the treatment will be posted online. The 2017 round of treatments was very successful, and the plan for 2018 is to build on that success.

Conservation Fund: The Commission submitted their final draft to Town Counsel for review. Policies and Procedures will help the Commission consider parcels for purchase by providing a framework for evaluation using a set of criteria. The criteria will ensure that the Commission's goals are met when acquiring conservation property. The Commission hopes to vote to accept the Policies and Procedures at July 26th business meeting.

Chapter 91 Dock Licenses: Sandy Pond is one of few Great Ponds in Massachusetts that is also in an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Issuing dock licenses on behalf of the State has become a complicated and nearly impossible task. The Commission had a lengthy discussion with Town Manager Robert Pontbriand at the April 26th business meeting. The conservation administrator is in contact with DEP about how to proceed.

Land Use Team: The Land Use Team continues to meet weekly. Staff keeps current with each other's projects and offers insight, information, and advice. This meeting is an excellent way for the staff involved in land use issues in Ayer to connect with both large and small projects.

MRPC (Montachusett Regional Planning Commission) grant has been awarded to the Town! The MRCP planner is working on making a series of maps to help the Commission prioritize conservation land purchases. The next meeting of the working group has been rescheduled to a date yet to be determined.

As a way to keep up with Commission projects, the Conservation Commission will now hear applications for permits on the first meeting of the month, and reserve the second monthly meeting for Commission business.

Please contact the Conservation office at 978-772-8249, by email at concom@ayer.ma.us, or drop by with any questions or concerns. Thank you!