

Conservation Administrator's Report

Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator

September 2018

The Conservation Office had a very busy summer.

The Heating Oil Spill Cleanup down slope and across the street from Page Hilltop will be starting in early October. The Conservation Commission 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. The Conservation Agent has been working with both effected land owners and the cleanup company to ensure that land owner interests and wetland resource areas are both protected as the cleanup gets underway.

Infrastructure work on Woodland Way in the Pingry Hill subdivision has fallen behind schedule for completing stormwater structures. The basins that are complete or partially complete are functioning and there is a very small risk that stormwater will impact wetlands on the site. An Enforcement Order with Cease and Desist was issued, and subsequently cleared, for a lot on Woodland that had an unpermitted drain installed on it. The site as a whole is stable and weekly site visits by the Conservation Agent continue to be important in maintaining this stability.

Pingry Hill delivered nine Requests for Amendment and two new Notices of Intent to the Commission in September. The Commission agendas have been long and the office has been consumed by the processing of Orders for this development.

Pond Weed Control: The pond weed treatments for 2018 concluded this month with the last treatment for lily pads. The Commission will be assessing the treatments at the end of the summer and making a decision about how to approach the pond treatments for next year.

Conservation Fund: The Commission voted to accept the final draft of the Policies and Procedures document for the Conservation Fund at the July 26 business meeting. The Commission received a grant from Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) to create a map of priority conservation parcels which could be acquired using the Conservation Fund. The MRPC will be coming to Town Hall to give a presentation on their progress next month.

A Certificate of Compliance (COC) is the document issued on behalf of the State by the Conservation Commission that clears the Order of Conditions (OOC) from a property's title. The Request for COC Form is received by the Conservation office and a site inspection is conducted to ensure that what was permitted by the OOC was built or that the OOC expired without the project being completed. Banks, other lenders, and title companies have been requesting COCs for projects at an increased frequency. Many of these requests are for projects that have closed multiple times in the past.

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. An Open Space Residential Development has been proposed for property behind Shaker Mill Pond. The Commission's concerns about this project are brought to the Land Use Team by the Agent for discussion.

As a way to keep up with Commission projects, the Conservation Commission hears applications for permits on the first meeting of the month, and reserves the second monthly meeting for Commission business. There is, of course, some flexibility with this schedule.

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!