

## **Conservation Administrator's Report**

**Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator and Agent**

**April 2020**

**The state of emergency** instituted with the arrival of Covid-19 has brought a new set of operating procedures to the Conservation Commission. Because of the virus, Commissions suddenly could not meet in person, could not issue permits that would be recordable at registries of deeds, and could not take site walks for proposed projects. Weekly Zoom calls set up by the Massachusetts Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals (MSMCP) included DEP, town counsels, the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, and agents across the state for brainstorming new ways of working that would move projects forward in a new regulatory landscape.

**The April 23<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting** was held via the Zoom software platform. The meeting was limited to action items only and included continuing several open public hearings.

**The High Street drainage improvement project**, overseen by the DPW, was started.

**Ayer's local wetland protection bylaw** was approved by the Attorney General's office. Posting in publicly accessible places and printing in the newspaper are the next two steps in the process.

**Enforcement Orders** have been issued for work at 0 Central Avenue, including tree clearing and paving in the buffer zone to an intermittent stream. The Commission continues to work with the land owner on resolving these enforcement issues.

**A peer review contractor** was chosen for the Ayer Solar IIB Notice of Intent. EcoTec, an environmental consulting practice in Worcester, was chosen jointly by the Commission and the applicant's representative. Work on this review will begin when the contract has been signed.

**A weed treatment contractor** was chosen for this season's ponds' treatments. Solitude Lake Management will again provide this service for Ayer's ponds.

The Commission will keep up with its twice monthly meetings providing public participation through the Zoom platform. During the state of emergency, the Commission has sole discretion to open public hearings. Please contact the Conservation Office with any questions or concerns at 978-772-8249 or at [concom@ayer.ma.us](mailto:concom@ayer.ma.us).