

Town of Ayer Conservation Commission

Town Hall * One Main Street * Ayer, MA 01432 * 978-772-8249 * 978-772-8208 (fax)
Minutes for **02/24/11** – Approved 3/10/11

Location: Ayer Town Hall, 1st Floor

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

APAC taped: Yes

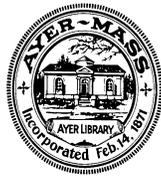
7:09 PM – Open Meeting

- **Pledge of Allegiance**

- **Confirmation of Agenda**
 - GB moved to approve agenda as written; TT 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.

- **Meeting Minutes Approval**
 - GB moved to approve the minutes from 2/10/11; TT 2nd.
 - After discussion, correction made to use spelling of ‘Flanagan Pond’ henceforth.
 - With correction, motion approved unanimously.

- **Public Hearing: NOI: Kohler Place, Wright Road, Sandy Pond Investment Trust**
 - Scott Smyers of Oxbow Associates, Inc., Jesse Johnson of David E. Ross Associates, and Ed Cornelier, of Sandy Pond Investment Trust, were present.
 - TT recused himself from discussion and voting.
 - Mr. Smyers summarized the proposed Kohler Place subdivision.
 - The subdivision plan is for 4 single-family houses on the end of a cul-de-sac that will extend from Wright Road.
 - Mr. Smyers said the proposed plan includes grading associated with the building lots and avoids any work done within the 100-year flood zone.
 - CA confirmed flood zone elevation has remained the same since last surveyed.
 - Limited clearing of trees within the buffer zone will be done on lots 1 and 2 only.
 - The closest work to the 100-ft. buffer zone (approx. 10 ft.) involves a stormwater basin; the closest any proposed structure comes to the buffer zone is 64 ft.
 - JG asked about whether the nearby stream running through the wetlands would affect the designation of the buffer zone as a riparian buffer zone (200 ft.) rather than wetland buffer zone (100 ft.).
 - BD said this would be one of the questions to be looked into during a site walk.
 - JG suggested the developer investigate whether their proposed 22-acre CR abutting the wetlands might allow for the construction of a floating boardwalk to allow the applicant’s families access to Sandy Pond and a temporary dock (for which the applicant previously obtained a license).
 - The next step is for the Conservation Commission to schedule a site walk after sufficient snow has cleared to make visible wetland conditions and topography on the ground.



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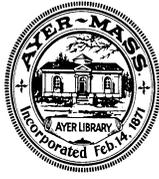
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- Prior to the site walk, BD asked that two corners of each proposed house be staked, along with the center of the roadway/cul-de-sac and the lower corners of the stormwater basin closest to the wetland.
- Mr. Cornelier will contact the Commission when conditions have improved.
- The Planning Board has already signed off on this project as of 12/18/09.
- DB asked when the wetlands were last reviewed and flagged.
 - Mr. Smyers said this was done in 2004 or 2005, but that he was out at the site last year to confirm that flags were still in place and confirm their accuracy in relation to the wetlands.
- GB moved to continue the Public Hearing to 3/10/11; DB 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.

- **Meet and greet: Cara Sanford, Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA)**
- Cara Sanford introduced herself to the Commission.
 - Ms. Sanford is an Americorps volunteer working with NRWA and specializing in issues related to open space and land protection.
- Ms. Sanford offered her help to the Commission in dealing with related issues, and mentioned she knew the Town of Ayer was updating its OSRP (Open Space and Recreation Plan).
- Ms. Sanford said she could also help with volunteer recruitment.
- Ms. Sanford is planning an outreach networking event between regional conservation commissions (Ayer, Groton, Lunenburg, Townsend, Pepperell, Littleton, and Shirley).
 - A breakfast/discussion meeting is being arranged for late March or early April for those interested in attending.
 - Some of the discussion topics being considered include how individual towns manage town-owned land and draw up conservation by-laws.
 - Ms. Sanford said she hopes that the initial meeting serves to instigate an ongoing tradition, with members from regional commissions continuing to meet on their own three or four times a year to discuss shared or overlapping concerns.
 - DB suggested an additional discussion topic: helping towns get started with initiating proper land stewardship (including baseline surveys) of conservation lands.

- **Discussion: Beth Suedmeyer, Ayer Greenway Committee**
 - Ms. Suedmeyer updated the Commission on various issues, including the Town's OSRP.
 - The Town needs to do a complete new update of its OSRP, which expired at the end of 2010, in order to formulate a new 5-year plan.
 - From the audience, Ms. Sanford said that the Town of Shirley is currently updating its OSRP with help from students from the Conway School of Design, and that this might be an option for Ayer to consider.
 - Ms. Suedmeyer said this was a good option but noted that it might be possible to use CPA (Community Preservation Act) funds for this purpose as well.
 - Ms. Suedmeyer had questions for the Commission about content planned for the information kiosk being put together by the volunteer Ayer Greenway Committee.
 - She said the Greenway Committee plans an anticipated installation in the spring.



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- The Commission okayed the use of an abbreviated version of its 2010 land-use regulations for Pine Meadow Conservation Land, to be posted on the front of the kiosk, with the full regulations posted on the back.
- Also on the back of the kiosk will be state hunting information, information on ticks and poison ivy, a calendar of events for Ayer Greenway Committee, volunteer opportunities (e.g. trail maintenance), and acknowledgement of the contributions of the Eagle Scouts (eg. the Long Pond Dam bridge).
- It was confirmed that the correct name for the town conservation land is “Pine Meadow Conservation Land.”
- Ms. Suedmeyer said the trail map for the area is nearing completion.
 - The Greenway Committee has some preferred trail names already in place (i.e. Science Trail).
 - BD asked if there was some way to recognize Mr. Tooker, from whom several acres were purchased in 2009 that added onto the conservation parcel and extended the trail network. A sign at the entrance or the designation of the new trail section as the ‘Tooker Trail’ were mentioned.
 - The map will have inset an Ayer “locus map” of the larger area, and will also highlight other recreational areas in Ayer -- specifically the Town Beach, Pirone Park, the Long Pond Dam Trail, and the Nashua River Rail Trail.
 - The final draft of the trail map will be shown to the Commission before it goes into production.
- **CA Updates**
 - DB would like to have a discussion of Commission members’ access to the now-locked file cabinets when the CA is not in the office, perhaps with a spare key available elsewhere and a sign-out process.
 - BD was dubious about storing a spare key securely elsewhere in Town Hall.
 - BD also noted the CA has responsibility for the legal security of the files and suggested this discussion continue at a future time.
 - GB suggested Mr. Moulton be prompted to move forward on the land donation to the Town related to the Stratton Hill development.
 - GB sent out the Commission’s Annual Report but needs an accounting of Commission rulings for the year 2010.
 - JG said she would get those numbers to the CA on the following day.
 - JG reiterated TT’s reminder from the last meeting that the Commission needs to move forward on considering issuing an RFP for pond weed control if it is to be done this year.
 - BD will distribute a copy of the last RFP for discussion at the 3/10/11 meeting.
- **9:11 PM – Adjourn Meeting**
 - GB moved to adjourn; TT 2nd.
 - Motion approved unanimously.