

CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

April 10, 2019

PRESENT: Bob Boynton, Chairman, David McTigue, Vice Chairman, Karen Miller, Michael Bara, Matt Oliveira, Bert Hamill (Selectmen's Liaison), Lori Rautiola, Secretary

ABSENT: Jack Messe

The meeting was called to order at the Town Office on April 10, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.

The minutes of the March 13, 2019 meeting were reviewed and the following corrections were made: Replace "TV" with online map in the first paragraph. Under water resources, second paragraph, second sentence, replace the word "selective" with "selected" and remove the words "with shallow dug wells". Replace "Center" village with "Central" throughout the minutes. Remove the word "the" in the last paragraph, last sentence. Bob made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. David seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Committee Reports: Bob reported he would submit the annual surveys for the Johnson Property, Nussdorfer, and the Williams Property to the Monadnock Conservancy.

The Board discussed the "after the fact" wetlands permit that was filed by the DPW for the culvert on Timbertop Road. Bob stated he received a call from the DPW Director, Peter Goewey asking if the Commission could sign the wetlands permit as the permit was not filed with the state prior to the installation of the culvert, and the culvert that has been installed is too small. He continued stating he received a call from NHDES regarding the culvert/stream and that it connected to Tophet Swamp which is a prime wetland. The State is now requesting the Town replace the culvert with the correct size. There was discussion on whether or not someone from the DPW should take a course/training in order to be able to identify wetlands and know when a wetlands permit would be needed. Bert noted the Town may want to have someone who is interested and has a technical background in this field, adding the Planning Board has funds set aside for these purposes.

Bob noted the Town has a database of all the culverts in town and there is approximately 405 culverts in town. Bob noted preventative maintenance is less expensive than reactionary maintenance and the DPW would benefit from training courses that give all the parameters for streams, wetlands and drainage. He continued stating the Commission should request to the Selectmen that the DPW plans ahead and starts filing for wetland permits ahead of time.

Karen stated the Boards and Commissions need to communicate better on a regular basis (not just the DPW) and they should be able to define their acronyms for a common understanding. She continued stating she was thrilled to have Bert with the Commission as a liaison. Karen also suggested Bob have the agendas posted a couple days ahead of time so members can ponder items for discussion before arriving at the meeting and be more prepared so the meeting will go more smoothly.

Bob mentioned the email Karen had sent a couple weeks ago and that he did in fact receive it; however, he did not think there were any outstanding questions, adding he likes to discuss such things at the meetings so it gets into the record and not through email if possible. Karen mentioned she was only looking for clarification on the WHPA program.

Matt suggested to bring forth the issue of the DPW needing training for the wetlands permits and Bob agreed. Bert would mention it the Selectman at the next meeting.

Water Resources: Bob mentioned a groundwater study the Conservation Commission had accomplished about 20 years ago in the Central Village area. It was noted some of the wells in that area were tested and had been determined they had harmful bacteria. The results were passed onto the Selectmen but nothing was ever accomplished.

Bob stated the Commission would like to test the groundwater in the Central Village area again and have decided to send out a survey to the homeowners regarding their wells. Bob continued stating the Commission would select several residents and offer a free well water test. The Commission would then report the results to the Selectmen. He noted there could be a public safety issue depending on the results.

Karen stated the Commission should assist and hold some events for residents in order to make them aware of the groundwater and the water in their wells. Bob stated it is not in the Commission's purview to educate the public on their wells. Karen stated she knows it is the Commission's job to protect the groundwater and the natural resources and not peoples well; however, it would be helpful to residents if we could educate them on how activities on their property affect the groundwater in general, which then affects their drinking water. She continued stating she is willing to take the challenge on herself as a member, and assist in educating the public. Bob noted it should be the Health Officer's job to educate the public on drinking water.

Bert asked the Commission to consider the consequences before they send the survey. Bert questioned whether or not it would be the Town's responsibility to provide drinking water to the residents if the Commission found their wells to be contaminated. There was discussion on whether or not the Commission should move forward with the groundwater study. Bert suggested Bob reach out to the Town attorney before moving forward. Bob agreed to get a legal opinion and noted he would report back to Bert.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Rautiola