

Report of the Conservation Commission

The Commission administered the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, the Town Wetland Protection Bylaw and the Town Stormwater Bylaw. Regular public meetings were generally conducted bi-weekly and numerous site inspections were held during the year. Many sites were reviewed and approved for building permit application sign-offs by the Conservation Commission Agent. The Intermunicipal Agreement with Northbridge to share the agent's position was renewed. The following major projects were reviewed and permitted: Projects under construction monitored by the Commission in 2019 included: the Crosswinds subdivision located between Plain and Station Streets, Rockwood Meadows over 55 development on East St, Town roadway re-paving work, the Hartford Ave N water main project, Hopkinton Rd gas line project, Upton Ridge over 55 development off Hartford Ave S, and the Hartford Ave S sewer line & pump station project. Four (4) individual house lots were also reviewed and permitted. The Commission resolved several violations of the Wetland Protection Act and/or the town wetland bylaw. No enforcement orders were required and no fines were levied.

Metacomet Land Trust granted the Commission a Conservation Restriction (CR) on the Blue Conservation Area, a parcel owned by the trust on Crockett Rd. The Commission was also donated a trail easement off Chestnut St. which provides access to a landlocked Upton State Forest parcel. The Commission signed a MOU with the Hopkinton Area Land Trust to monitor CRs at Rockwood Meadows. CRs held by the Commission at Fivefork Farm (formerly known as Sweetwilliam Farm) and on West River Road were monitored. The Commission voted to name the open space protected as part of the Crosswinds Subdivision the "Center Brook Conservation Area".

Applications/Requests received:

- Notice of Intent (NOI) = 13 (including 0 withdrawn & 2 amended)
- Requests for Determination (RDA) = 13
- Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) = 1
- Request for Certificate of Compliance (COC) = 9
- Order of Conditions (OOC) Extensions = 2

Decisions/Actions issued by the Commission:

- Order of Conditions (OOC) issued = 11 (no denials)
- Determinations = 10
- Order of Resource Area Delineation (ORAD) = 1
- Certificate of Compliance = 9 (including 1 partial)
- Order of Conditions Extension = 2
- Enforcement Orders = 0

The Commission with the Board of Health administered town funds allocated for beaver control. Funds were expended to maintain existing pond levelers to regulate the water levels at several locations and to trap beavers at Southborough Road.

The Commission has been monitoring Pratt Pond Ice-Out as an indicator of climate change since 2010. Pratt Pond Ice out is defined as first day in spring when no ice is visible in the pond from a vantage point near the intersection of School Street and North Main Street. In 2019, the pond was ice free on January 1, 2019 and froze a few days later and was ice free for the season on March 24.

Respectfully Submitted,
Conservation Commission

Christine Scott, Chairperson
Mike Penko, Vice-Chairperson
Sandra Lajoie, Treasurer
Scott Heim, Member
Thomas Jango, Member
Alan Miano, Member
Marcella Stasa, Member
Mary Overholt, Associate member
Denise Smith, Administrative Assistant
David Pickart, Conservation Agent