

MINUTES
Wetland and Shoreland Committee

of the Conservation Commission

9:00 a.m. Upstairs Conference Room – Town Hall

December 15, 2022

Committee Members Present

Emily Friedrichs, Planning Board representative

Sally Needell, former Conservation Commission chair

Paul Rasmussen, Planning Board representative

Neil Slepian, Conservation Commission representative

Dwight Trueblood, Conservation Commission representative

Michael Behrendt, Town Planner

The members of the new committee introduced themselves. Michael said their purview is to review the Wetland Conservation Overlay District (WCOD) and the Shoreland Protection Overlay District (SPOD) in the Zoning Ordinance and make recommendations to the Conservation Commission for changes. The committee can make any recommendations that it sees fit. Michael said he looked at the WCOD and thought it was actually quite good.

It was suggested that the committee look at ordinances in other towns. Neil asked whether the committee should go through the ordinance section by section or look at it as a whole. Sally suggested that special criteria for the downtown might be needed. Paul said we need a process that is not arbitrary. Paul said he didn't see anything specific offhand that was way out of line. Sally suggested looking closely at the purpose statement. Emily said the committee should look at wildlife corridors and buffers on rivers. Dwight asked what the purpose of different setbacks was. Dwight pointed to the goals in the 2015 Master Plan and asked if this reflects current thinking. He said there is ambiguity in the current parameters.

It was noted that the Gerrish Drive project checked the boxes, but the commission could not look at other things that it wanted to evaluate. Sally asked what role there might be for the GIS. She asked if the wetlands and shorelands are shown on the GIS. It was noted that having a large natural resources map in color would be helpful. Michael said they could print off a large color map if we can identify one that is useful.

Emily asked whether most wildlife corridors occur along the shore. She asked what width of buffer would be appropriate. Sally asked the difference between wildlife corridors and greenways. Paul asked if greenways are covered in the ordinance. Michael said only if they are part of the shoreland overlay district. Michael said the Town could create a greenway overlay district if desired. Paul said it is the rear setbacks on property that is more relevant to wildlife corridors rather than in the front or on the sides of property. Emily said it is important to have wildlife crossings at roads.

The committee decided to meet biweekly with the next meeting on Thursday, December 29, at 9:00 am. They can then report back to the Conservation Commission. The committee members' homework is to look at the purpose statement and the master plan goals under the Natural Resources Chapter. Dwight will look for information about greenways and wildlife corridors. Sally will update the information on the Google documents. The committee adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted.

Michael Behrendt, Town Planner