

Town of Mansfield  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
Meeting of 18 February 2015  
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building  
**MINUTES**

*Members present:* Aline Booth (Alt.), Joan Buck (Alt.), Robert Dahn, Scott Lehmann, Grant Meitzler, Michael Soares. *Members absent:* Neil Facchinetti, Quentin Kessel, John Silander. *Others present:* Jennifer Kaufman (Wetlands Agent).

**1.** The meeting was **called to order** at 7:32p by Dahn. Alternates Booth and Buck were designated voting members for this meeting.

**2. Packet delivery.** Kaufman asked whether the Commission would agree to members' receiving the packet for each meeting via e-mail only. Several members said that they much preferred getting hard copies; some have no printer at home. It was therefore agreed that members will continue to receive the packet by snail-mail.

**3.** The draft **minutes** of the 21 January 2015 meeting were approved, with the first clause of the initial sentence of item 7 altered to "Booth reported having promoted dark skies in the Zoning Focus Group, as well as clustered development in limited areas where feasible."

**4. IWA referrals.** No IWA referrals were listed on the agenda, though the minutes of the 02-03 February 2015 IWA meeting indicate that W1547 and W1424 were referred to the Commission. Lehmann asked for clarification. Kaufman explained that W1424 concerned a modification of an existing wetlands permit, that the applicant had agreed to adjust the proposal to increase distance to wetlands, and that Kessel had thought that it did not need review by the Commission. W1547 concerns a septic and driveway repair, which Kessel also thought routine. Meitzler observed that septic system failure is a public health issue and requires prompt attention. A special meeting of the Commission would have been required to comment on these applications in advance of the IWA's meeting of 17 February 2015. Nonetheless, Booth expressed misgivings about the irregular treatment of these applications; she hopes that in the future care will be taken to insure that review by the Commission is not bypassed.

**5. Meadow Brook LLC Property, Puddin La.** Kaufman reported that the Town is preparing an application for a DEEP Open Space & Watershed Acquisition Grant to purchase a 61-acre parcel on the north side of Puddin La. This forested parcel on the west side of Sawmill Brook contains the trailhead for the western arm of the Nipmuck Trail in Mansfield. {An informal trail on this parcel diverges from the Nipmuck a short distance from Puddin La and proceeds north to reconnect with the Nipmuck at the parcel's northern boundary, permitting a nice loop walk from Puddin La.} Acquiring this parcel, which abuts Town open space to the west and north, would help consolidate open-space holdings in this area. The land meets many of the criteria proposed for acquisition of open space in the current draft Plan of Conservation and Development (Mansfield Tomorrow). The Commission unanimously agreed (**motion:** Lehmann, Booth) to support, strongly and enthusiastically, purchase of this parcel.

**6. Mansfield Tomorrow.** Pursuant to discussion at the Commission's regular meeting of 21 January 2015 and special meeting of 10 February 2015, Soares prepared a detailed 8-page memo on Mansfield Tomorrow's draft Plan of Conservation and Development and circulated it to Commission members on 16 February 2015 by e-mail.

Booth would like to see more on wetlands in the memo, particularly since advising the IWA is a big part of the Commission's work. There is a lot on the need for better protection of aquifers, not much on the importance of wetlands and need for continued vigilance in protecting them.

Buck asked about the basis for objecting to a moratorium on scenic road designation (comment on p. 9.8). Soares argued that a road deserving of scenic road status should be so designated; the designation need not preclude bike paths or sidewalks, if such projects don't sacrifice features (such as over-arching trees) that make the road scenic.

Lehmann suggested endorsing the deer management recommendation of the draft PoCD (2.34, Goal 2.3, Strategy B, Action 5), noting that in addition to over-browsing forests, over-abundant deer can severely damage residential plantings and agricultural crops (such as Christmas trees), and constitute a hazard on Town roads.

Soares was warmly thanked for drafting the memo. He was authorized to refine it in light of the discussion and other comments communicated to him and to submit a final version on behalf of the Commission to PZC in advance of the 02 March 2015 public hearing on the draft PoCD. The Commission also agreed (**motion:** Booth, Buck) to endorse comments dated 16 February 2015 on the draft from the Open Space Preservation Committee.

**7. Adjourned** at 8:32p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 18 March 2015.

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 19 February 2015; approved 15 April 2015.