

**Plainfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of Meeting Held March 4, 2020**

Meeting was held in Town Hall. Commissioners present: Erik Burcroff, John Burns, Jack Nelson, Alice Schertle, Judith Williams (chair)

Also present: Thelma Pilgrim, Plainfield resident

This was a special meeting called to discuss and plan for a Plainfield Wetland Bylaw.

Call to Order, Judith Williams, 6:45 p.m.

Minutes of 2-26-20 were approved as presented.

Discussion of Plainfield Wetland Bylaw

Judy read some of the Sudbury wetland bylaw regarding vernal pools, including characteristics defining vernal pools to be protected. Vernal pools contain no fish, making them critical habitat and breeding sites for amphibians and invertebrate animals. ConCom feels our local bylaw should protect all vernal pools including those not associated with a WPA resource area.

Isolated land subject to flooding should be protected. We discussed defining the size of such isolated wetland areas. Some towns, such as Palmer protect areas of at least 5,000 sq. ft. Some towns include a measurement of cubic feet of water. We also need to address protection for intermittent streams above a wetland.

Jack reviewed information about limited projects such as logging of less than 50 cords for personal use. Such limited projects can be conditioned by the Conservation Commission. Work would have to be identified as a limited project or handled under the WPA.

We discussed Home Rule law in MA, which would enable Plainfield to adopt a local bylaw providing more protection, but not less protection than the Wetlands Protection Act.

Climate change, which includes an increasing incidence of violent storms, makes it necessary to address issues and protect areas not seen as vulnerable in the past. DEP will address these issues and make changes in its rules but this will take considerable time. Our bylaw efforts anticipate changes DEP will be making in recognition of climate change. The ConCom will recommend that Plainfield adopt a local wetland bylaw to provide necessary protections as soon as possible.

We discussed hiring a consultant to aid in formulating a Plainfield Wetland Bylaw. Judy will contact MACC and PVPA regarding recommendations of consultants and the availability of grants.

Next meeting 3-25-20 at 6:30 p.m. in Town Hall.

Adjourned, 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Schertle