

## West Newbury Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

**Meeting date & place:** 7:30 pm, April 25, 2022, Annex to Town Offices.

**Members Present:** Chair Judy Mizner, Molly Hawkins, Kathy Feehery, and Tom Atwood. Also present, Conservation Agent Michelle Greene and interested townspeople.

**1. Request for Determination of Applicability (continued): 102 Moulton Street – Maple Crest Farm, John Elwell, Re: hand removal of invasive plants, installation of material to slow invasive plant growth, planting of native plants**

Ms. Mizner noted that the Commission had conducted a site walk. Based on that as well as the applicants' submission, she moved, Ms. Hawkins seconded, and the Commission voted unanimously to issue a Negative Determination of Applicability conditioned on removal of invasive vegetation by hand with no heavy machinery, erosion controls consisting of a silt fence to be inspected and approved by the Conservation Agent prior to the start of work, leaving of stumps of cut trees or shrubs in place, and removal of debris from the buffer zone and resource areas.

**2. Wetlands Bylaw Update: Public outreach and question & answers on proposed Wetlands Bylaw**

The Commission began with a slide show that graphically explained existing requirements under state law and new requirements under the proposed bylaws.

Commenters raised a number of issues, such as

- The breadth of the regulatory scope and discretion applied by the Commission, particularly as concerns roadside swales
- The effective date and potential grandfathering of existing conditions
- Perceived differences in enforcement from property to property
- The large percentage of West Newbury properties that would be impacted
- The enhanced requirements relating to vernal pools
- The difficulty townspeople have in understanding the rules and knowing where wetlands lines are

Commissioners noted that many of the concerns (such as those pertaining to roadside swales) are currently regulated under state law and regulations and that many of the changes are modifications of existing rules. They also said that many neighboring towns have bylaws similar to those being proposed for West Newbury. They observed that West Newbury is under increasing development pressures and the wetland bylaws will provide protections in that respect.

3. **Informal Discussion:**
4. **Community Input:**
5. **Next Meeting:** May 2, 2022

**Adjournment** 8:29 pm

### **Meeting Documents**

Presentations and records associated with each matter identified, as included in the Conservation Agent's files.

Respectfully submitted