

**Ashfield Conservation Commission
March 23, 2016**

Members Present: Lester Garvin, Chair (LG) Brian Clark (BC) Janet Clark (JC) Anne Madocks (AM) Phil Lussier (PL)	
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1. LG called the meeting to order at 7:38 PM.
2. Reviewed minutes 3/9/16. JC moved to accept; PL seconded; unanimous.
3. PL Would like to see Eversource's Yearly Operating Plan (YOP) and see what was included. On Bear Swamp Road at "positively no trespassing" sign- What is the plan on the west side of Bear Swamp Road Road to cross those wetlands? The west side is a clear "before" road alteration. Eversource has been in there cutting on their easement.
4. PL reported on a snowmobile Q&A from Bernardston hosted by DEP's Mark Stinson. "Protection over process" – If you can achieve the same level of protection without an NOI, do an RDA. Even a new bridge could be an RDA: must be on a section of bank without BVW; anything under 6' wide could be handled as an RDA; anything in place now, no need for retroactive permitting, although if we are aware of one that is a bad culvert crossing (perched), the Commission should consider getting it removed and replaced. Not aware of any culvert/bridge crossings in Ashfield. What is the responsibility of the Club to deal with bridges that do washout. PL would like to have Commission adopt a policy for snowmobile bridges. Full bank full width so it could escape high water mark. DEP wants clubs to work with the Commission's before the bridge is installed so we all collectively seek the best location and best construction for the bridges.

Jurisdictional wetlands versus non-jurisdictional: wetlands at the headwater of a stream, where the stream flows out of the wetland, but not in or through it, is not jurisdictional. If a stream flows into a wetland and nothing flows out of the wetland, neither are jurisdictional. If a stream flows through a wetland, it is jurisdictional.

PL visited Rowe state forest and there is a lot of trail building including bridges. Would be a good idea for Ashfield to open communication with the Rowe Con Comm about how bridges were permitted and built.

DRAFT POLICY:

Snowmobile and hiking bridges may be constructed with a RDA under the following conditions:

- a. Must span bank to bank, and not have BVW on either side; and,
- b. The bridge should be no more than 6' wide. No restriction on length of bridge as long as it spans bank to bank.
- c. Any bridge that is in place now does not need retroactive permitting, unless the bridge is constructed on top of a culvert that is perched and creating a barrier to stream flow. A bridge in this condition should be re-constructed to allow for unimpeded stream flow and fish passage in both directions.
- d. Stabilization of the bridge on the bank should minimize restriction of the stream channel and displacement of the flood zone causing reduction of flood storage capacity from fill. Substantial

amount of fill would trigger a Notice of Intent filing. The amount of fill becomes substantial when it displaces the flood storage capacity of any bordering land subject to flooding.

5. 8 Bronson Ave and corner of Buckland Road – JC made a site visit regarding how to protect the yard from loss into brook. Property owner has filed a building permit to reconstruct the portion of a house proposed to be re-built, possibly expanded, on the roadside of the lot. Land owner wanted a recommendation for their sinking back yard being lost to the brook. Non-conforming lot. Past projects bordering the lake have required an RDA. Noted in online building permit that owner should contact CC for possible RDA.
6. Email from Alan Rice, FRCOG has funds for Ashfield Open Space and Recreation Plan update. Anne Madocks will attend the first meeting as a liason to the Conservation Commission. Some issue with Declaration of Restriction for properties on West Road, rather than Conservation Restriction. Planning Board reviewing issue and considering options.
7. Peter Corins, Beldinville Road, Solar Array Online Building Permit – PL noted in permit that the applicant should consult the Commission to discuss the project as it appears to be proposed 160' from the river (within Riverfront Area). Not clear from site plan exactly where the array is planned.
8. IT Committee is in the process of turning over IT management to a company to contract with. They are standardizing management software and buying antivirus software. PL thinks we should look over what is on the Town Hall office computer to make sure there isn't anything of value that the Con Comm needs to save before it is decommissioned. PL will evaluate the computer in the next week.
9. JC motion to adjourn; unanimous 8:45.