

HOPKINTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Thursday, October 10, 2019 at 7 PM

TOWN HALL

I. Meeting was called to order at 7: Harvey Buford, Gary Marsh, John Pennypacker, and Lydia Lanphear, quorum present. *Deborah O'Leary arrived late.

II. The minutes of the September meeting were approved with minor corrections.

III.Featured items

Town Council Wind Hearing Decisions of 10-7-19

Discuss How Solar and Wind Fit Our Mandate Going Forward. At this time, wind turbines are not not allowed and a Town Council majority has discouraged wind energy project applications. Farmer's need to be successful. Wind is the top choice to provide ongoing benefit to large farms. We discussed other ways that may help improve and preserve our farms. Growing other types of crops such as Hemp. Eco-tourism was mentioned. Also to allow raised solar panels beyond the town ordinance height limit of 12 feet so that some plants could be cultivated beneath them and animals can graze. Solar arrays can also utilize tracking panels which make them more efficient.

State Changes to Wetlands Regulations Public Comment Period Submittal Harvey sent a letter indicating some streams overlooked by DEM as public comment.

IV.Officer Reports / Project Updates (5 minutes each, oldest first)

Planning Board / Zoning Board Report (John) PB held a solar workshop prior to their last meeting. Focus at PB meeting was on the cost of a reforestation plan for a 60 acre project.

Legislation and meetings watch (Deb) Legislature is not in session.

V.Old business

Farm Viability Ordinance Draft Changes Members to re-read our two-year old draft ordinance to be circulated by Deb. Questions about growing medical cannabis as a new revenue stream.

Producing Maps and Kiosk Posters All lumber and materials have been purchased. Gary Marsh offered barn space to store materials.

Hopkinton Outdoors – Develop a Schedule and Budget for Webpage: John will resend our latest list of trails and maps.

VI.New Business

A. RIDEM Grant Funds for Stream Habitat and Stormwater Projects There is 1 million dollars in funds available to upgrade stream crossings. Harvey will share the information with Town Manager, Bill McGarry.

VII.Other

VII.Public Forum A member asked if we had any roads in town designated as “scenic” Harvey explained no, there was an unsuccessful effort to do so years back.

VIII.Identify topics for next meeting

IX.Review and assign action items1. John P. Please resend the Hopkinton outdoors trail maps etc to all members for review.

2. All members review John's email!

3. Harvey to send RIDEM stream and stormwater grant information to Hopkinton Town Manager.

3. Deb to email Kassi Archambault about future wetlands regulation hearings/meetings.

4. Deb to email copies of proposed Farm Viability Ordinance revisions.

XI.Adjournment was at 9:00 pm