



TOWN OF PALMER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 18, 2018 – 6:30 PM

LOCATION: Town Administrative Building Meeting Room

Donald Blais, Chair
David Cotter, Vice Chair
Peter Izyk
Nicholas Zeo
Brenda Cole
Dorothy Lawrence

Angela Panaccione, Agent
Jeff Stanhope, Clerk

Members Present: Donald Blais, Jr.
Peter Izyk
Nicholas Zeo
Brenda Cole
Dorothy Lawrence
Angela Panaccione, Conservation Agent
Jeff Stanhope, Conservation Assistant

Also Present: Ray Croteau, 244 Burlingame Road, Palmer
Nancy Bisnette
Lucas G. E. McDiarmid, 2026 Maple Street, Three Rivers
Julia Sterns, AECOM I90 Ramps
Robert Natarro, MassDOT I90 Ramps
Joe Biagioni, Amherst Railway Society (ARS)
Carlton Rohmer., Amherst Railway Society (ARS)
Bob Marshall, Amherst Railway Society (ARS)

1. **Call to Order:** 6:44 PM – Donald Blais, Jr. (Chair)

2. **Chair, Member & Committee Reports:**

a. Interested New Member – Lucas McDiarmid

The interested new commissioner, Lucas G. F. McDiarmid, was present at tonight's meeting. Lucas is pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Administration at Norwich University. He grew up in the Town of Palmer and currently resides in Three Rivers, Massachusetts.

b. 2018-2019 Interns

The Agent & Assistant are in the interviewing phase of selecting potential interns. The opportunity was open to students at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst studying Natural Resources Conservation or Environmental Science.

3. **Review Phone/Mail/E-Mail Messages:**

a. DCR Letter – Changes to Forest Cutting Practices Act

The Conservation Commission received an official letter from DCR for the Conservation Commission's records outlining the changes to the Forest Cutting Practices Act (FCPA). The previously received letter was from the DEP, but this time it is from the DCR. The letter highlights the new memorandum of agreement is between the DEP & DCR. The most important amendment was the change of use clause, which no longer requires "formal plans."

b. MACC Fall Conference Registration Form

Fall Conference 2018 – MACC Academy. Saturday, October 20, 2018. DoubleTree by Hilton, Leominster, MA.

4. Public Inquiries:

Ray Croteau of 244 Burlingame Road in Palmer introduced himself to the Conservation Commission. He has concerns with the amount of stormwater ending up in the wetlands on his property from Circle Drive. Ray alleged there's a temporary storm drain that drains onto his property that was put in as part of an approximately 50 year old development that was never completed in the current general area of Aspen Circle. The original development plans called for a detention pond to be put in for stormwater, but because the development was never built (the developer abandoned the project), the detention pond does not exist. Ray stated he owns 13 acres of land, of which less than an acre is usable, therefore approximately 12 acres are wetlands. The wetlands of his property are currently flooded because of the high amount of precipitation during this summer season of heavy rainfall events. Ray feels that he should not be paying taxes on the percentage of flooded wetlands because he alleged that the Town of Palmer is using as their watershed program. He mentioned his basement floods all the time and that there is a mold problem in his basement where he has a recreation room. Ray alleged the water levels have increased drastically since the work was done at Aspen Circle. He asked for the Conservation Commission's take on the situation and their opinion on the specific stormwater issue he has brought up during tonight's meeting.

Ray wants the problem dealt with and would like to know who he should speak with next in regards to his stormwater complaints. He alleged there is a 4 inch pipe culvert on his property line that is clogged and anytime DPW digs it out it is filled up again soon after by beaver. Ray alleged that his house is now 23 feet from the corner of the water and the water used to be approximately 100 feet away when he first purchased the property, and that the water is rising and rising as time goes on. He does not feel he should be paying taxes on the flooded wetlands because it is land he cannot use it or walk on/check out. Ray would like the culvert cleaned again, fixed, or updated/replaced by the town because he alleged it is an outdated culvert. He wants the culvert to do a better job of draining the water on his property because currently it is not draining effectively. Ray alleged there is a temporary storm drain from the Town of Palmer dumping water onto the wetlands on his property. Ray is concerned about the alleged cost he is incurring from the basement flooding, mold mitigation, ruined furniture, and sub pumps. Ray is requesting that the Conservation Commission performs a site visit of his property as well as provides him with written response on their stance on his complaints.

The Agent stated the development was done in 1969, therefore it is hard to go back approximately 50 years and hold someone responsible for a sub division that was never completed. She also stated Aspen Circle is not an officially accepted town road. The wetlands maps show that the wetlands are approximately 10-feet from his property and that his property is approximately 90% wetlands. Ray never had the wetlands delineated before building an addition on his property in 2006, which if he had done so, it would have set a baseline for where the wetland line is. The wetlands delineation was never done by Ray and no permit was ever issued to him to build the addition, but he built it anyway. According to the USGS stream stats and topographic maps, Aspen Circle does not drain onto Ray's property, which he alleged earlier, and only a small portion of Laurel Drive actually drains onto it. The development that put the temporary storm drain in is grandfathered in because it is approximately 50 years old and predates the establishment of the Conservation Commission. The development cannot be held responsible for that reason, as well as because the statute of limitations is 2 years for the Wetlands Protection Act, therefore there is nothing the Conservation Commission can do in their power for something that is approximately 50 years old. The laws that the Conservation Commission operated under only have a 2 year statute of limitations.

The Agent stated she could give Ray a letter to the assessor's explaining that 90% of his property is wetlands and undevelopable, and help him get a lower tax rate to be taxed on non-usable land, but that is the extent of it. The Conservation Commission cannot take jurisdiction on matters that were created before the laws were created, but we can have the culvert cleaned out by his house on Burlingame Road.

Nicholas Zeo asked Ray if the Conservation Commission is the first board that he has brought up this issue with. Nick stated that what he is asking about is that since Ray's cellar is full of water, has Ray called or contacted someone in town like the DPW, the Town Council, or the Town Manager to make them aware of the issue of the water in his cellar at all. Ray responded that no he has not talked with any of the above from the town about the issue of his cellar flooded with water, and that he has always just dealt with it. Nick asked if that means he just pumped it out and gone through a sub pump and Ray answered with yes that he put a sub pump in and cut all around his basement, put trap rock in, and piped it, but that water is still coming up on the other side of the basement from the sub pump. Ray alleged that he has called the Town of Palmer DPW on multiple occasions to have the culvert cleaned out, but that every time they clean it out it is not effective enough because it does not last long and shortly goes back to being filled and clogged again.

Brenda Cole asked the Agent if it is within the Conservation Commission's jurisdiction to respond to Ray in writing. The Agent does not feel comfortable giving Ray a letter because the subdivision predates any of the environmental laws that the Conservation Commission enforces, and that the subdivision was never reviewed nor approved by the Conservation Commission, but rather it was only reviewed and approved by the Planning Board. The Agent explained that the Planning Board is the board that Ray would have to discuss his concerns with. Ray questioned again if the Conservation Commission would provide him with a letter in writing and Brenda answered it's not within our jurisdiction because it predates it. Nick stated that he believes if Ray were to receive a letter from the Conservation Commission it would not be in his favor, especially because Ray's concern precedes the Wetlands Protection Act. Nick added that the letter would go against Ray because he is asking for relief from a Conservation Commission that was not even in existence when the temporary storm drain was put in. The Agent mentioned that Ray has more of a violation on his property because he had an unpermitted addition built within the Wetlands Buffer Zone because work occurred within 100 feet of it.

The Agent stated if Ray wants an official response from the Conservation Commission then he can submit a Request for Determination and specifically fill out the form on what he wants the Commission to determine.

5. Approval of Minutes:

a. August 21, 2018

Motion made by Brenda Cole to approve the minutes from August 21, 2018 as amended.

Motion seconded by Nicholas Zeo.

Dorothy Lawrence Abstains.

No further discussion – 4-0-1 – Motion Carries.

6. Approval of Payables:

a. SCA – AmeriCorps: \$7,600.00

Motion made by Brenda Cole to approve the payable to SCA AmeriCorps in the amount of \$7,600.00, for the First Street Trail Cost Share, from the Trail Grant Account.

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk.

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries.

b. Palmer Paving: \$481.56

Motion made by Peter Izyk to approve the payable to Palmer Paving in the amount of \$481.56, for the First Street Trail Hardpack Gravel from the Trail Grant Account.

Motion seconded by Dorothy Lawrence.

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries.

c. John S. Lane & Son: \$282.49

Motion made by Peter Izyk to approve the payable to John S. Lane & Son in the amount of \$282.49, for the First Street Trail Stone Dust, from the Trail Grant Account.

Motion seconded by Dorothy Lawrence.

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries.

d. Angela Panaccione – Mileage: \$309.56

Motion made by Brenda Cole to approve the payable to Angela Panaccione in the amount of \$309.56, for Mileage Reimbursement (Month of August), from the Conservation Commission Ordinance Account.

Motion seconded by Dorothy Lawrence.

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries.

e. Angela Panaccione – Home Depot: \$139.94

Motion made by Nicholas Zeo to approve the payable to Angela Panaccione in the amount of \$139.94, for 2 Saw Blades from Home Depot, from the Trail Grant Account.

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk.

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries.

f. New England Outdoors: \$12,773.00

Motion made by Peter Izyk to approve the payable to New England Outdoors in the amount of \$12,773.00, for the First Street Trail Gazebo, from the Trail Grant Account.

Motion seconded by Brenda Cole.

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries.

g. Mass TreeLeaf Trust Fund – DCR: \$130.00

Motion made by Dorothy Lawrence to approve the payable to Mass TreeLeaf Trust Fund in the amount of \$130.00, for Jeff Stanhope’s DCR Tree Steward Training, from the Conservation Commission General Expense Account.

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk.

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries.

7. Signing of Documents (DOA, OOC, COC, Ext, Etc.):

a. Ratify Emergency Permit: Western New England Environmental – Gas Spill

The Agent stated that a gasoline truck flipped/tipped over at the corner/intersection of Old Warren Road & Peterson Road, causing the discharge of gasoline right in that corner. Western New England Environmental went in to remove the sediment; they essentially dug up 10 cubic yards of wetlands in order to remove the gasoline. They removed the gasoline from the roadway with vacuum excavation.

Motion made by Nicholas Zeo to ratify the Emergency Permit issued on September 10, 2018.

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk.

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries.

8. Schedule of Public Hearings:

a. Request for Determination (RDA) 1130 South Main Street (Map 54-15):

The applicant is requesting a determination to see if the work associated with the installation of 1000-foot-long, 1 foot wide miniature railroad track is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act and the Town of Palmer Wetlands Ordinance.

The location of the proposed project is 1130 South Main Street, Palmer, MA 01069. The description of the area is a relatively flat, grassy area of land, or essentially a well-maintained and mowed lawn located beyond the edge of the paved area on the property. The work description is the placement of an approximate 12-inch-wide miniature railroad track (7 ½ inch rail to rail on wood ties) on 2 inch – 4 inch stones. Total length to be approximately 1000 feet of track.

The presenter/speaker on behalf of the Amherst Railway Society (ARS) was Joe Biagioni from the Board of Directors of ARS. Joe stated that what they are proposing to do is a garden railroad. The society has O Scale and G Scale railroad experience, the latter being the garden design (G Scale) for this miniature railroad project. The distance rail to rail is 7 ½ inch, which sit on 12-inch-wide 2 x 4 wooden railroad ties. They would lay weed resistant fabric down first on the lawn surface, followed by ¾ inch stone, or ballast, and that will serve as the base for the railroad track. The railroad maximum height is not expected to exceed 4 inches from the ground at grass level even with the ¾ inch ballast rock filled in around the 2 x 4 railroad ties. The general location of the miniature railroad track is behind the clubhouse building located at 1130 South Main Street in Palmer, across from the end of Stone Street. The ARS owns the property associated with the clubhouse.

The project is designed to not cause any storm water runoff or erosion down slope, as the perimeter of track is within the generally flat mowed lawn area bordered by woods, where the topography does not change much aside from a few minor dips. The track would require 10 tons of fill, ¾ inch ballast, per every 100 feet of track, therefore a total of 100 tons per the 1000-foot total length of the entire track. The track is designed to prevent storm water from puddling. No earth disturbance/erosion or tree removal will occur during the construction of the miniature railroad track. ARS would be willing to put down erosion and water controls as well, such as straw wattles, if deemed necessary.

The Conservation Commission would need to make a determination that the work associated with the railroad track would not impact resource areas. This area has a 25-foot river front and the Agent stated that the scale of the current plans makes it hard to tell the proximity of the track to the river front area. Therefore, the Conservation Commission has requested that we receive a revised plan that is too a more

appropriate, fully-inclusive scale of the project area and adjacent land. ARS will flag out the proposed location of the track on the lawn and members of the Conservation Commission will perform a site visit prior to the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 2, 2018. The Agent needs to be sure that the track will be 25 feet away from the river front area, prior to making any determinations.

The Agent stated that the main concern is to get the plans in the full-size scale, so that they can determine if it's potentially in the riverfront area, because we only know that it's in a resource area. The project is believed to be outside of the 25-foot riverfront area, but we need to be absolutely sure. It is definitely well outside of any floodplains area, which thus far makes the project doable. If it happens to be within the 25-foot river front area, then the ARS will have to revise the plans to back the track up to an appropriate and approval, legal distance from the river front area.

Motion made by Brenda Cole to continue the public hearing to the next meeting date scheduled October 2, 2018.

Motion seconded by Nicholas Zeo

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries

9. Requests for Certificate of Compliance:

- a. DEP #256-0189: Maple Leaf Distribution – 14 Third Street
- b. DEP #256-0233: Maple Leaf Distribution – 14 Third Street

The Agent did the site visit today and both are being tabled until the 2nd of October because there were some issues that Maple Leaf Distribution will have to take care of. A lot of trash in the wetlands needs to be removed. None of the basins have been mowed since they were put in during 2006. They will remove trash from and mow basins 2 & 3, as well remove sediment from the back of basin 2. They will be in contact with the Agent when those pieces of work are completed, which should be before the next Conservation Commission meeting that they will be attending.

There were some deviations from the original 2 site plans at Maple Leaf Distribution. They were supposed to have a concrete access road along the southern side of the building, which they never put in. There was also supposed to be a ramp down there that was never put in. The paved road was supposed to have a grass swale, but that was not put in because the road was not paved. Instead they put a row of boulders to delineate the limits of the area. The reasoning for not putting in the swale is since the access road was not paved, there is essentially more vegetation in the area between the building and the basin than there would have been if it was paved with a grass swale. They were supposed to put an addition on the southerly side that was never completed. The road was not completed, therefore the drop inlet that was supposed to be on the road to go into basin 1 was not put in.

The Agent stated that where the road was supposed to go and the basins are, there is not a lot of water going into there, but instead all of the water is going into basin 2 that they have to clean the sediment out of and mow. Infiltration basins and detention basins are supposed to be mowed twice a year, as well as be grassy without woody vegetation because the woody vegetation undermines the integrity of the slopes. They have a lot of woody vegetation growing because they never did any preventative or regular maintenance to those basins. One of the basins that was put in with the original plan, from 2000, is essentially just turned into a fully functioning wetland. The Agent is not having them touch anything there because although it is not a typical basin, it is a functioning wetland with wetland vegetation.

c. DEP #256-0318: Andrew Golas – 3233 Foster Street

The Commission received a Request for a Certificate of Compliance from the property owner at 3233 Foster Street in regard to the construction of a single-family house with septic. Everything was constructed to plan, with the exception of the first 5 feet of the driveway being paved, which does not apply to us.

Motion made by Peter Izyk to issue a complete Certificate of Compliance for DEP #256-0318 with ongoing special conditions 39, 41, and 42.

Motion seconded by Nicholas Zeo.

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries.

10. Project Monitoring:

a. DEP 256-0324: Upper Bondsville Dam

The Agent did a pre-activity site visit on Monday, August 20th at the Palmer and Belchertown sites. She observed that the erosion controls had been put in, the DEP sign had been put up, and the turbidity curtain was installed. She gave the authorization to start work and Belchertown did as well. The majority of their staging is across from the trail on the Belchertown site side. Per the Agents request, they will keep a spill kit and add extra erosion controls at the Palmer site in necessary areas. They must contact her once everything is set up before they start de-watering, so that she can check the flow rates.

The Conservation Commission received an Upper Bondsville Dam Report on Construction Activities dated September 7, 2018 prepared by William K. Fay P.E. (Project Engineer). It includes photographs with detailed descriptions of the tasks that have been started and/or completed for the dam project.

b. River Road Solar

The previous land use of this site location was an old gravel pit. Now that it has become the location for a solar project site, there has been serious issues with flooding and storm water runoff during days of high amounts of precipitation. The storm water management issue is believed to be caused by the loaming and compaction/grading of the loam, then seeding with solar seed mix, which was done in preparation for the installation of the solar panels at a later date. The footings that the solar panels will sit on have been installed already, but the panels themselves have not been installed yet. The Agent stated that once the solar panels are put in place, it will cause increase the velocity of storm water to a much higher speed and cause problematic water channelization to occur between the arrays. The scheduled time line for the installation of the solar panels is in approximately 2 weeks, so hopefully the problem can be addressed and resolved prior to that. If something significant is not done within the new few months, then it is going to turn into a much worse issue in the winter.

When the site was an old gravel pit the sand that existed on the land was quite porous and the site was well-drained even during heavy rainfall events because of the easy infiltration of water into the ground. The last severe rain storm has caused storm water to run off of the compacted loam at a high velocity and the water is washing over 4 layers of silt fences & straw wattles as well. The storm water is running completely off site and into the catch basins on River Road that outfall directly into the Ware River, therefore putting dirty water into the river. The Agent has a site visit scheduled with the solar site contractor on Thursday, September 20th in order to go over the storm water management issue, as well as the concern of the dirty water from their site flowing into the Ware River. She is meeting with the environmental engineers and the civil engineers on Monday, September 24th with the planning board as well. The Agent believes a solution to the issue is to require them to put in a 4-foot-deep detention basin (dug back down to the sand level) along their access road to trap all of the storm water and hold it.

11. Violations & Enforcement

a. DEP #256-0312: Mass DOT Toll Booth Removal:

The Agent received their June report, still waiting on July & August. They did end up using gabion baskets, which do a much better job of holding the rocks and slope in place. So far it has held up very well. The Agent has not looked at it since she looked at it after the large rain storm at the end of July. They finished the slope stabilization, but have not cleaned the sediment out of the wetlands or restored the channel yet because construction is having issues with getting ahold of the property owner, which is Lizak. They were going to come to tonight's meeting, but got called into another emergency. They will attend the September 18th meeting to update the commission.

Julia Stearns, AECOM I90 Ramps Mass DOT Consultant, was present at tonight's meeting. She did the construction monitoring for the slope. She went down there today and there were no issues; it looks the same as from the last report with the photos. It's very stable. The only issue at the top of the slope on the north side is that the vegetation has not completely filled in.

Robert Natarro, Mass DOT I90 Ramps Environmental Engineer, was present at tonight's meeting as well. He stated that they have not yet secured access to the wetlands. They are a small percentage of the south side that they do not have approved access to yet. The Agent asked if they contacted the property owner Lizak. Robert is not sure who the actual property owner is of where they need to gain approved access to. They currently have access on north side and 60% of the south side, but the other percentage of the south side they do not have access to as of now.

The Agent recommended they contact the woman who brought up this initial complaint to the Conservation Commission, because she owns the property where they need to gain approved access. At this point Robert would like to close this out because the slope is well secured, but they are just missing one key element, which is the necessary access to the wetlands, and that is what is holding them back from being able to close this out with the Conservation Commission. The Agent asked if he would be interested in having her write a letter to the landowner, but he stated that he cannot recommend that. The Agent said she could make a phone call and have the landowner e-mail a letter to Mass DOT by the end of the day to allow them to do the work. Robert said he cannot recommend that the Agent do anything in regard to getting in touch with the landowner. Mass DOT is in the process of getting the landowners approval to do the work, but it could take months, as the one roadblock is the issue with not yet having gained access to the property needed to complete the sedimentation removal and restoration.

The Agent asked if the Conservation Commission requests to perform a site visit or wants to wait until the work is completely done. They will wait to perform a site visit because if one were to happen soon it would not expedite the closing of this violation whatsoever. The Agent requested for Julia to send her the most recent and updated report from today to her immediately so that she can look it over, as well as share it with the Conservation Commission.

b. Camp Ramah Retaining Wall:

The filing was due August 7th, but the Agent still has not received anything yet. She tried to call, but Don was on vacation, so she will try to contact him again this week.

Don Frydryk finally got a sketch from Camp Ramah of exactly what they are proposing to do, therefore he performed a site visit. Don will work on the plans and submit them to the Agent as soon as possible.

c. 96 Rondeau Road:

The Agent will do a site visit next week because the property owner had a question about the restoration planting work. The owner was wondering about whether or not to rip up the area and restore it using non-native seed mix. The concern is that the area has already shown much natural revegetation and it does not seem productive to remove the well-established advanced regeneration. The issue with non-native seed mix is that it has the potential to introduce invasive or competitive species that will fight against the natural species that are trying to become established there.

No Update. The Agent has not been up there since the last Conservation Commission meeting, but she will do a site check in either later this week or sometime in the next upcoming week.

12. New/Old Business

a. Administration of 2017 MA Trails Grant: Discuss project to date & develop plan for remainder.

The Boy Scouts will return for a 3rd work day on Saturday, September 29, 2018 @ 7:00 am. The 3rd work day will mainly consist of laying down the stone dust. There will be a volunteer work day this week with the Conservation Commission to assemble and install the trash receptacles and benches on either Friday or over the weekend. The current layer on the trail needs to be leveled out and compacted, especially at the border edges, prior to the layering of stone dust.

b. LAND Grant Updates

We will be going in from the Midura parking lot, for an approximately 7-mile hike, led by Dave Cotter. The purpose and importance of the site visit with EEA is to show good examples of land stewardship, as well as discussing other relevant land steward practices. Nicholas Zeo recently did a walk through and noticed that both fields had been mowed very well and any dangling loose limbs and branches had been cleaned up, which looks much better than before.

We plan to apply for the MassWildlife Habitat Management Grant for the Midura Conservation Land.

c. DCR Urban & Community Forest Grant: Community Wood Bank

Jeff Stanhope is working on the Massachusetts DCR Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grant. The Intent to Apply Application is due by October 1st. The project idea is a single allotment Community Wood Bank targeting Environmental Justice (EJ) populations within the Town of Palmer. The goal is to strive for the 75-25 matching grant that which environmental justice projects qualify for. Jeff is currently in the research phase of the grant and is looking into other well-established community wood banks throughout New England hoping to learn a lot from those examples. He has also been reading publications regarding existing wood banks, which are serving as a perfect guide to starting and running a community wood bank.

Jeff attended the Urban & Community Forestry Challenge Grant workshop on Friday, September 14th. The info session was hosted by Julie Coop & Mollie Freilicher of the Department of Conservation & Recreation at the Wachusett Regional DCR Headquarters in West Boylston, Massachusetts. He was one of two total attendees, the other being the Tree Warden for the Town of Arlington. It was a very informative as well as thorough session including a detailed PowerPoint presentation, which we were sent home with physical copies of too.

Jeff got the approval to apply for a combination of two different grant project categories because the community wood bank limit is 2k, therefore there is 5k leftover of the 7k total limit to apply for. With the remaining 5k available, we will be targeting the category of securing professional staff. More

specifically, we will utilize the funds to seed a Tree Warden position in the Town of Palmer. The money would be used towards certified training and professional certifications. He also got the approval for the 75-25 matching grant for the community wood bank because we will be targeting the two environmental justice neighbors within our community the Town of Palmer.

The intent to apply is October 1, 2018. Jeff is currently in the process of completing the intent to apply form, which includes a brief project description. In terms of the community wood bank, we will use the 2k towards acquiring and purchasing log/wood splitter, a chainsaw, and personal protective equipment (PPE) for proper/safe chainsaw operation and use. If there are any extra funds, they will go towards purchasing waterproof/water resistant tarp-like covering for the hand-crafted pallet crates designed to hold ½ cord each. This will ensure that the split firewood stays dry from precipitations conditions from above, as well as allow enough air flow to speed up dry time so that the firewood seasons at a faster rate.

Jeff has begun drafting a policy for the community wood bank that highlights things such as how a volunteer work day will function, voucher eligibility, and how to apply for/where to receive vouchers, as well as how those with a voucher can pick up their ½ cord portions of firewood. The Town of Palmer Wood Bank Policy will also go over the location of the community wood bank, which will be at the Town's Compost Pit off of Old Warren Road, across from the entrance to Burleigh Park. The Town of Palmer Compost Pit is the perfect location to store the ½ cord portions of firewood because it is entirely fenced in, as well as gated and locked at the entrance, therefore can only be unlocked by DPW personnel who have access to a key and permissible access to the property.

d. MVP Grant Updates

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant. The grant money comes out of the climate change office and is used to develop a municipal vulnerability preparedness plan. The plan would address climate change and reveal all of our climate change vulnerability areas and how to address them, as well as improve our storm water management plans. Communities that have received the MVP Grant get additional points on other future grant applications.

The Agent met with Pioneer Valley Planning Coalition (PVPC) last Monday to go over the contract and everything else necessary to proceed. They are finalizing up their part of it and doing a breakdown of budget and cost. The Agent and PVPC discussed dates and times for the community building workshops and decided to do a one-day 6-hour workshop, or talked about the potential for two half day workshops. The two-day option could offer breakfast both days, but a full day option could have a nice lunch provided halfway through the day, as well as a light breakfast in the morning before the start of the workshop. The community building workshop would be with key stakeholders in order to identify areas impacted by climate change as well as areas of climate change resiliency, and the research and infrastructure behind it is an important element.

The implementations grants will be announced in December. We can apply for one up to 300k to implement our plan that will be developed as part of the MVP plan that will be formulated, which is a great way to put it to the test. Examples of plans would be upgrading our storm water management systems and protecting cold water fisheries.

We have finalized our contract with Pioneer Valley. On October 5th there is a workshop in Boston for the new MVP communities for the lead person (Angela) to go to. It is essentially a brief training for the lead people of each town. We did receive the \$25,000 grant award and did finalize our contract with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC). There was a leftover portion for us to use (\$1,400) that the Agent was hoping would fund an intern, but there has not been enough interest expressed. Instead she will utilize the extra funds for Jeff Stanhope to hang flyers and notifying people about the upcoming Town of Palmer MVP workshop. The plan is to have 1 full day workshop on a Saturday in November.

e. Culvert Grant Updates

The Culvert Grant Award Announcement Ceremony will be Thursday 10:00 am, held by the Department of Ecological Restoration (DER) at First Street in Bondsville. Ceremony will be followed by a visit to the culvert on Route 181.

The Agent received the notice to proceed today with the Route 181 culvert restoration project. Her grant was the #1 best written grant application and the DER wants to use it as an example for future grants.

Site Visit to the 181 culvert Wednesday, September 26, 2018 for the Agent and the DPW specifically.

f. FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Grant

As part of the grant money from the MVP Grant, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) will help us apply for and implement the FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Grant, which closes on April 4th.

13. Upcoming Events, Conferences & Trainings:

14. Office Closed: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 (MSMCP Invasive Plants).

15. Set Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 2, 2018 @ 6:30 pm.

16. Meeting Adjourned: 9:47 PM

Motion made by Dorothy Lawrence to adjourn at 8:19 PM.

Motion was seconded by Nicholas Zeo.

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries.

Sincerely Submitted,

Jeff Stanhope
Palmer Conservation Assistant