



TOWN OF HARPSWELL
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
 NOVEMBER 4, 2020 **2:30- 3:30 PM**
MINUTES

Members Present: D. Strachan, W. Batson, P. Ciesielski, M. Nahf, S. Vachon, T. Bachman, J. Zagariello, Nancy West
and Planner: M. Eyerman **Absent:** S Whittaker

Open Meeting: Started 2:36pm

- **Minute Taker Today:** Deirdre
- **Approval of Minutes:** Accepted
- **Announcements: Update on Climate Resiliency Task Force.** Mary Ann met with the Selectmen Oct 29 to propose the creation of a Climate Resiliency Implementation Task Force. The Selectmen were open to the proposal but were concerned about the use of staff time to assist, especially the time of Mark Eyerman and Paul Plummer. Mary Ann proposed a holding a Workshop on **Nov 10 at 3 pm** to discuss the proposal in more depth and consider the staffing needs. The meeting will be in person so the participants will be limited to Mary Ann Nahf, Monique Coombs, Ken Oehmig, and Deirdre Strachan. Our proposal is to set up eight Working Groups which each have tasks to do and the Climate Resilience implementation Task Force that will meet four times a year to review the recommendations of the Working Groups. HCC will assist with the administration of the CRITF and be active on a number of the Working Groups.
- **Shoreline Zoning Ordinance Changes:** We reviewed and discussed the proposed changes to the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance regarding non-conforming structures, the clearing of trees and shrubs and LID. We also talked about how educating homeowners about low impact development might help us meet the challenge of extensive tree and vegetation clearing in Harpswell.

Mark explained that Shoreline Zoning is regulated by state requirements in the 250' shoreline zone and around high and moderate value wetlands. He explained we need to change our Harpswell ordinances to be consistent with the state zoning. DEP updated guidelines to mandate that towns must be in compliance as of 2015.

The requirements include the following: **a) Enlargement of non-conforming structures.** Our current Town use standard allows owners to expand a structure by 30% volume. The new guidelines require that the total footprint of the structure expand only by a maximum of 30% and that there is a cap on the height of existing building. This requirement will reduce the current scale of tear downs and rebuilds in Harpswell . **b) Performance standards:** The 2015 guidelines Include three performance standards: 1) a do good amendment that allows removal of invasive species and shoreline restoration; 2) standards for removal of diseased and damaged trees and 3) a requirement that owners must replant vegetation if their cutting exceeds standards in the ordinance.

Permit Requirements: Mark suggested that the current standard could follow the DEP guidelines, but the Town should create a system to require a permit if an owner plans to cut trees.

Planning Board: HCC agreed with Mark's suggestions.

- **Tree Cutting in the Non-Shoreline Zone:** Currently, no ordinance exists for cutting in the non-shoreline zone area, except along streams. We discussed how to deal with this issue as a lot of clear cutting seems to be happening during the last few years in Harpswell. We noted the following:
 1. **Timber harvesting** in the non-shoreline zone must meet rules forestry rules.
 2. **Blow downs.** Extreme weather events are causing blow downs. When many trees are removed, the existing trees are more vulnerable.
 3. **Goals:** What are the goals for protecting trees from being cut down. a) habitat preservation for wildlife b) erosion and surface water control c) impact of trees on climate change d) aesthetic impact of clear-cutting e) protection from high winds.
 4. **Issue:** People do not want to be told what to do. Need to persuade homeowners of the wisdom of limiting tree cutting with education.
 5. **Possible Ordinance:** Marks suggest that the Town could create ordinance how much cleaning is allowed when building a house in the non-shoreline zone. A permit could be required for cutting on a house lot.
 6. **Low Impact Development:** Mary Ann suggested we could do more education about LID to control run off. Use land to hold water on property especially with shallow soils and steep slopes. Trees do a good job. Mary Ann contacted the State and identified a person (name?) to come and talk to us at Zoom meeting. Schedule for next meeting. Need a series of questions for person
- **Picture Post Update:** The following sites now have new platforms: Bethel Point Road and Basin Point Road. Long Point Road is pending. Wendy's marker does not fade....so far.

Adjourned: 3:30 pm

Next Meetings: 2:30pm on Nov 17, Dec 2, Dec 16

Scribe: Deirdre Strachan