

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
TOWN OF WALLINGFORD**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**Friday, June 27, 2014, 4:30 p.m.**

A Special Meeting of the Wallingford Conservation Commission was held in the field at Cooke Road, "Field 5A", on Friday, June 27, 2014, 4:30 p.m. for the purpose of assessing field conditions.

**Present:** Chair Mary Heffernon, Carl Arsenault, Tom Pietras, Dianne Lendler, Dianne Saunders, Jeffrey Borne, Environmental Planner Erin O'Hare, and Anthony Zemba, Certified Ecologist, HRP Associates

Chair Heffernon convened the Special Meeting at 4:35 p.m. noting as a Special Meeting matters discussed would be restricted to site conditions at the Farmland lease Properties Program, Field 5A. She welcomed Anthony Zemba, Certified Ecologist, and thanked him for assisting (pro bono) the Commission with management suggestions for this property. He visited the site recently with Commissioner Saunders and also a few years ago during preparation of a grassland bird conservation study he had completed for the Commission for this field among other Town-owned areas.

Commissioner Saunders handed out and then reviewed a revised proposed lease document for Field 5A that included suggested revisions relative to recent communications from Mr. Zemba with regard to management of the non-cultivated areas on the site, termed "Management Buffers" - labeled and color-coded, MB-1, MB-2, MB-3, and MB-4.

Commissioner Saunders would like the lease to require the lessee to mow (to 6 inches in height) the roadside vegetation from pavement edge of Cooke Road to 20 feet in (termed MB-1), to provide a grassy area allowing the lease area to be open to view. Ms. O'Hare reminded the Commission that the Town would not take on the liability for a private party working in the Town Right-Of-Way land. Commissioner Borne felt that the Town R.O.W. hedgerow should not be mowed to the ground. He said those sections of the R.O.W. that are currently open should be mowed, the invasive plants growing there (Autumn olive and multi-flora rose) should be selectively removed, and the mature trees should be left therein.

Commissioner Saunders reviewed the remaining recommendations, some of which were: no lessee management of the wetland area located between the four mature trees on the western side of the site and this area not to be included in the lease; the abutting wetland area to the south and west, MB-4, would be mowed once a year to control woody growth (which the lessee has done in the past) but no mowing between March 30 and June 30 due to amphibian activity there; the area around the big pond, MB-1, would be mowed late winter or early spring with the mower set on high; area to the east of the pond in front of the stream, MB 3, would have specified mowing

requirements to promote bird conservation; MB-2, a perpetually wet vegetated area located between the pond and the stream, would be allowed to succeed to a mixed shrub swamp habitat mowed only if the Commission requested, with 3 months notice provided, and the Commission could enter the land and remove the Autumn olive growing there selectively.

Ms. O'Hare suggested the Town removing the Autumn olive prior to leasing to stop its spread.

All present proceeded to walk from the road across the field – where the last lessees' s winter rye cover crop is growing in the cultivated area - to the pond area and then to the east. Weeds were growing vigorously in this area. *Commissioner Arsenault will report back regarding a sample plant taken for identification by CT Ag Station of an unfamiliar legume growing profusely south of the pond. Commissioner Pietras will report back on what appeared to be a single purple loosestrife plant observed in the field.*

Mr. Zemba explained that providing a gradation in height in a transition area between cultivated area and woods is best for habitat diversity, providing the early successional stage, and not mowing annually encourages diversity too. He discouraged fall mowing as vegetation provides food during bird migration, dragonfly migration and butterfly migration. November is sparrow migration. Mowing in winter or early spring is therefore best.

Limit of mowing area around the pond was discussed and the proposed wording was revised accordingly. The restricted mowing area was agreed to be 45 feet from the pond edge to promote conservation with native shrubbery (sumac, elderberry, alder) by pond edge should not be mowed to provide bird forage area, buffer for pond birds, shelter, and nesting areas.

Commissioner Saunders pointed out some areas not cultivated in the recent past and indicated that any areas designated for cultivation that a lessee does not cultivate must be mowed as per the lease.

All present walked back to the road.

*Commissioner Saunders will type up the revisions discussed and email to Mr. Zemba for his final review. She will present the final proposal for approval at the July 10 Meeting.*

The Commission thanked Mr. Zemba for his assistance.

Chair Heffernon adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O'Hare,  
Environmental Planner