



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

730 Massachusetts Ave.
Arlington, MA 02476
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ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

March 1, 2019

RE: Town Warrant Articles 18 and 19

Dear Town Meeting Members,

Among the Warrant Articles that will be under consideration for this Spring's Town Meeting are Articles 18 and 19 which propose changes to the Floodplain and Inland Wetlands Overlay Districts of the Arlington Zoning Bylaws.

Recently, the Arlington Conservation Commission has received a number of inquiries regarding these proposed amendments and has heard concern expressed that the proposed zoning bylaw changes may weaken important provisions that have been in place for many years to protect Arlington's wetland resource areas.

The Conservation Commission would like to stress that the proposed zoning bylaw changes would not impact the Conservation Commission's administration of the MA Wetlands Protection Act and Arlington's Wetland Protection bylaw and wetland regulations. The Conservation Commission does not administer the Town's zoning bylaws.

Moreover, the Conservation Commission's Wetland Protection Regulations are ever evolving to tackle important matters like climate change resilience. These rules provide more stringent protection of wetland resource areas and their adjacent upland areas than the state Wetland Protection Act.

The Floodplain and Inland Wetlands Overlay Districts provisions in the zoning bylaws do not modify the separate Wetland Protection Bylaw and Regulations administered by the Conservation Commission; some say they instead complement them.

At the request of the Arlington Redevelopment Board and Department of Planning and Community Development, the Conservation Commission has noted inconsistencies between the language in these sections of the zoning bylaw and the wetlands laws of the Commission. While the Conservation Commission is pleased to serve as a resource to our fellow Arlington residents and Town Boards and Departments, the Commission is neutral on matters of zoning administration and these proposed zoning amendments.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel Stevens (ES)

Nathaniel Stevens, Chair
Arlington Conservation Commission