



## Arlington Conservation Commission

Date: December 16, 2021

Time: 7:30pm

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

Attendance: Commission Members Susan Chapnick (Chair), Chuck Tirone (Vice Chair), Mike Gildesgame, Pam Heidell, Dave Kaplan, Nathaniel Stevens, David White. Associate Commissioners Cathy Garnett and Doug Kilgour. Conservation Agent David Morgan. Members of the public included Julia Hoogeboom (LEC), Gayle Namchuk, and Brad Barber (Spy Pond Committee).

Pursuant to State Legislation suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20 relating to the COVID-19 emergency, the December 16, 2021, public meeting of the Arlington Conservation Commission shall be physically closed to the public to avoid group congregation. The meeting shall instead be held virtually using Zoom.

### ***Zoom Login instructions:***

Instructions and access information for this specific meeting can be found on the [Commission's agenda and minutes page](#).

### ***Register in advance for this meeting:***

<https://town-arlington-ma-us.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlkfughpzorHtFToQaSGxJWVMxHk60btR6b>

## Agenda

1. [7:30] Administration
2. [7:45] Presentation: Proposed bylaw changes concerning cultivar vegetation
3. [8:15] Hearing: 64 Wright Road
4. [8:45] Review of Community Preservation Act funding applications
5. [9:00] Updates from the Water Bodies Working Group

### 7:30pm **Administration**

N. Stevens motioned to approve the meeting minutes from November 18, 2021, as edited. M. Gildesgame seconded. All were in favor, motion approved via roll call vote: S. Chapnick voted yes, P. Heidell voted yes, C. Tirone voted yes, D. White voted yes, N. Stevens voted yes, M. Gildesgame voted yes, and D. Kaplan voted yes.

D. Kaplan motioned to approve the meeting minutes from December 2, 2021, as edited. N. Stevens seconded. All were in favor, motion approved approved via roll call vote: S. Chapnick voted yes, P. Heidell voted yes, C. Tirone voted yes, D. White voted yes, N. Stevens voted yes, M. Gildesgame voted yes, and D. Kaplan voted yes.

*Other administrative items postponed until end of meeting.*

7:45pm  
vegetation

**Presentation:** Proposed wetlands regulation changes concerning cultivar

Documents reviewed: C. Garnett's spreadsheet of acceptable cultivars using those selected for planting at 1165R Massachusetts Avenue as a case study, and S. Chapnick and C. Garnett's suggested edits to the vegetation section of Arlington's local wetlands regulations

Associate Conservation Commissioner C. Garnett presented on the impacts of cultivar vegetation to wetland areas and proposed changes to Arlington's local wetlands regulations. Her presentation summarized the difference between the native species available in the nursery trade and those species that have been scientifically determined to support wildlife values of the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) and Arlington's local bylaw and implementing Wetlands Regulations. Within the nursery trade, only 25% of available species are native and most are cultivars. C. Garnett recommended the regulations be tailored to favor "straight species" rather than "native species" to distinguish the more favorable plants from cultivars that may not support the values of the WPA and local bylaw. The spreadsheet prepared for this presentation is the start of a list of approved species and supports the "do no harm" approach that C. Garnett suggested the Commission take—to offer a variety of plants that retain the beneficial characteristics of the straight species while offering other features that might make them more desirable or accessible to applicants. Her proposal included allowing applicants to make the case for plants that the applicant believes will uphold wetland values even if they are not straight species. One resource that provides such information on cultivars is the Missouri Botanical Garden website, used by C. Garnett for her presentation. C. Garnett proposed adding approved species to the prepared spreadsheet when applicants submit final planting lists.

S. Chapnick and C. Garnett had prepared suggested edits to the vegetation section of Arlington's local wetlands bylaw, including changes to replacement tree sizes and quantities. C. Garnett and S. Chapnick shared the proposed revisions for discussion.

C. Garnett noted the need to write a definition of "straight species" for use in the regulations.

C. Garnett discussed the need to generate a Vegetation Replacement guidance document to supplement the regulation revisions and also suggested designing educational materials, perhaps a native plant walking tour of exemplary projects in Arlington, in the new year.

8:15pm **Request for Determination of Applicability: 64 Wright Street** (continued from November 18, 2021)

The project proposes removal of three trees at 64 Wright Street in Arlington, two of which occur within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to an off-site Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW). A Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) root barrier is also proposed within the 100-foot Buffer Zone, and the Adjacent Upland Resource Area (AURA) under local Wetlands Regulations. This hearing continues the conversation from the November 18, 2021, Conservation Commission regarding discussion of types of replacement trees to be planted.

Materials reviewed: Revised Tables and Cultivar Information for 64 Wright Street, Revised Landscape Plan, e-mail summarizing changes to RDA from J. Hoogeboom to D. Morgan

J. Hoogeboom summarized updates to the planting plan at 64 Wright Street, which now includes seven native species and two cultivars deemed acceptable by the commission in terms of the suggested changes to the vegetation regulations.

J. Hoogeboom stated that the applicant had trouble sourcing trees of the right caliper size and that differing measurement standards were used by the nurseries she and the applicant had contacted. Additionally, applicant G. Namchuk reported that the caliper sizes for species on the planting list all cost between \$400 and \$700 per tree, which she felt was cost-prohibitive.

S. Chapnick suggested that smaller caliper sized trees would be acceptable to the commission given that the applicant has put together a very thorough RDA application that exceeds the requirements for replacement vegetation. P. Heidell, C. Garnett, and N. Stevens agreed. C. Garnett also indicated that she will revisit proposed revisions to the vegetation replacement section, in light of the applicant's experience with the nurseries she contacted.

N. Stevens motioned to close the hearing on the RDA, C. Tirone seconded. All were in favor, motion passed via roll call vote: S. Chapnick voted yes, P. Heidell voted yes, C. Tirone voted yes, D. White voted yes, N. Stevens voted yes, M. Gildesgame voted yes, and D. Kaplan voted yes.

N. Stevens motioned a negative determination that although there is jurisdiction, no Notice of Intent is required. C. Tirone seconded. S. Chapnick added the condition that the planting list as presented at the public meeting and the landscape plan as included in the RDA of 11/4/2021 be followed. All were in favor, motion passed via roll call vote: S. Chapnick voted yes, P. Heidell voted yes, C. Tirone voted yes, D. White voted yes, N. Stevens voted yes, M. Gildesgame voted yes, and D. Kaplan voted yes.

8:45pm **Review of Community Preservation Act funding applications**  
Documents reviewed: Draft of Mt. Gilboa CPA application

Conservation Commissioner P. Heidell indicated she received comments from D. White and N. Stevens on the draft Mt. Gilboa FY23 CPA application circulated to the Commission and went over resulting draft revisions. Discussion about the potential to remove the structures on the site ensued. P. Heidell stated that based on her read of the Arlington Historic District's regulations, the Arlington Historic District Commission would have to approve any alterations or demolition of structures. She also indicated that property cards suggest that the parcel that houses the structure is owned by the Town of Arlington, whereas other parcels comprising the Mt. Gilboa site are owned by the Conservation Commission. She offered to send the Historic District Commission's regulations for clarification.

Commission members agreed to revise the budget for the Mt. Gilboa project. N. Stevens motioned to approve the CPA application with the amendments discussed, D. White seconded. All were in favor, motion approved via roll call vote: S. Chapnick voted yes, P. Heidell voted yes, C. Tirone voted yes, D. White voted yes, N. Stevens voted yes, M. Gildesgame voted yes, and D. Kaplan voted yes.

Conservation Agent David Morgan spoke to the FY23 CPA application for a feasibility study of Cooke's Hollow. C. Tirone motioned support for the application, N. Stevens seconded. All were in favor, motion approved.

9:45pm **Updates from the Water Bodies Working Group (WBWG)**  
Conservation Commissioner D. White provided an update on matters before the Water Bodies Working Group. WBWG met last week and delegated work on the annual report. The FY23 budget is due to the finance committee in February 2022. WBWG will be issuing a new contract for aquatic management of Spy Pond and soliciting bids from several companies. D. Morgan will explore purchasing and bid

requirements for the new contract to determine the process for selecting a contractor. B. Barber requested that D. Morgan contact SePRO for guidance drafting the contract.

10:00pm

**Administration (continued)**

D. Morgan reported that many concerns about the management of Arlington360 and the Symmes conservation restriction had been referred to the town legal department for enforcement action.

D. Morgan has forwarded Myra Schwartz's application to become an associate commissioner to the town manager's office for recommendation and approval by the select board.

P. Heidell mentioned the Zoning Working Group is discussing revisions to the Zoning Bylaw and that in this context, she is preparing a memo on potential zoning revisions that address flooding resilience. She plans to seek input on an initial draft and N. Stevens agreed to look.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:05PM