

**TOWN OF STURBRIDGE, MA**  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
ADDENDUM to Meeting Minutes of Thursday, May 5, 2016  
*Approved 11/6/2018*  
Sturbridge Center Office Building, 2nd Floor

**Meeting Called to Order: 6:00 – 6:55 pm** The Commissioners working session for a continuation of review of the Bylaws

**7:00 pm** Reconvene Meeting for Regular Business

**Meeting Adjourned: 6:55 pm: (Bylaw working session)**

**Quorum Check:** Confirmed

**Members Present:** Ed Goodwin (EG), Chairman  
Steve Chidester (SC)  
Steve Halterman (SH)

**Absent:** David Barnicle (DB), Vice Chair  
Joe Kowalski (JK) (was later present for regular meeting)  
Applicants and/or Audience Members: No one present.

**Others Present:** Glenn Colburn (CG), Conservation Agent

*\*Conservation Clerk was not present; Minutes were done via video recording.\**

**Agenda:** Continue to review and work on the Regulations portion of the Bylaw. Tonight's discussion is about intermittent streams.

- Kept current definition in Chapter 2: Stream
- Made minor modifications to current definition in Chapter 2: Intermittent Stream
- Currently, intermittent streams are regulated by restricted activity within a 200-ft buffer zone, similar to a swamp or wetland; a change in status to perennial stream would change the buffer zone to an actual resource area, with considerably greater restriction. This change would affect many Sturbridge land/homeowners in a negative manner.
- **BACKGROUND:** This commission has been considering and discussing the possibility of changing the current Sturbridge Bylaw Regulations regarding the treatment of Intermittent Streams. The leaning of this commission as they began this discussion was towards a decision to change the bylaw, and classify all intermittent streams in town as if they were perennial streams. This reclassification would be significant. Commissioners have been exploring several options and discussing among professional colleagues to gather information to assist in this discussion. *(This background information is the basis of the following detailed meeting discussion).*

**Discussion Summary:**

All Commissioners are concerned with protecting the water resources in town. Many of these intermittent streams feed our lakes and wetlands. Big Alum has a very slow recharge rate, and the nearby streams are critical to its health. Hobbs Brook is fed by small streams coming across Hall Road, and weep from the ridge of Fiske Hill. All Commissioners are concerned about unintentionally imposing hardships on town residents.

Commissioners discussed the following:

- Intermittent streams are often “treated lightly (remove)” by residents and contractors. Some have grass (mowed lawn) right up to the edge of the water.
- Sturbridge has a significant number of important intermittent streams due to the geological structure.

- Commissioner SH discussed this issue with colleagues in two other towns: They identified “intermittent streams of concern” as those which are tributaries to major streams. They also cautioned against applying new and more restrictive regulations.
  - Commissioners agreed to review the existing Intermittent Streams on the map; discuss what is known about the stream, what resource it may be protecting, what hardships may result in a change of status, and visit the site if felt necessary for clarity.
  - Commissioners suggested establishing a new classification of “Special Intermittent Stream.”
  - Commissioners suggested the following as possible wording for the regulation, to be reviewed and modified as discussion progresses:
    - “The following listed Special Intermittent Streams are significant to the health of the lakes and watersheds in Sturbridge, and shall have increased protection as follows:
      1. 0-50 no disturb /undisturbed vegetation zone, (mowing, brush cutting, tree cutting, will not be allowed without a permit)
      2. 50-100 allowable disturbances of 5,000 sq. ft. or 10% for the “riverfront area”
  - Conclusion is to meet for a short special meeting on Wednesday May 18th to review a USGS map to begin review of existing mapped Intermittent Streams.
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## **CHAPTER 5 – Resource Areas, Values, etc.**

### **5.5 Riverfront Area:**

**5.5.3 Presumption:** Glenn noted that he had restored some text previously deleted.

**5.5.4 Gen Perf Standards:** Glenn noted that he had restored some text previously deleted.

- 2nd paragraph, added “federally-listed.”

*(Chapter 5 Sec 5.6 Vernal Pools through the end were reviewed at June 2nd meeting).*

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- **Commissioners were given Bylaw Regulations Chapter 9 on Forestry:** Glenn explained that he had summarized the content of the DCR Best Management Practices Manual, and made reference to this publication in the text, instead of pulling data from it, because it is updated every several years. Commissioners will review this Forestry section in preparation for discussion/review at our next meeting, May 19th.