

Town of Maynard

Wetlands Administration Bylaw

See also: Maynard Wetlands Protection Regulations

Maynard Conservation Commission

Original Bylaw Approval: May 1996
Bylaw Amended: May 2001
Bylaw Amended: May 2002
Bylaw Corrected (AG's 1996 corrections): February 2003
Bylaw Amended: May 2004

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this bylaw is to maintain the quality of surface water, the quality and level of the groundwater table and water recharge areas for existing, or potential water supplies; to protect the public health and safety; to protect persons and property against the hazards of flood water inundation; to protect the community against the costs which may be incurred when unsuitable development occurs in wetland resource areas; and to provide for the reasonable protection and conservation of certain irreplaceable natural features, resources and amenities for the benefit and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the Town of Maynard.

Accordingly, this bylaw protects the wetlands, related water resources, and certain adjoining land areas in the Town by providing for prior review and control of activities deemed to have a significant or cumulative adverse effect upon wetlands values. Collectively, the wetlands values protected by this bylaw, include but are not limited to the following: protection of public and private water supply; protection of groundwater supply; flood control; erosion and sedimentation control; storm damage prevention; avoidance of water and soil pollution; protection of fisheries, wildlife habitat, rare species habitat including rare plant species; protection of agriculture and aquaculture; and recreation values, deemed important to the community. This bylaw is intended to utilize the Home Rule authority of this municipality to protect additional resource areas, for additional values, with additional standards and procedures to augment those of the Wetlands Protection Act, G.L Ch. 131, §40 and Regulations thereunder, 310 CMR 10.00.

Section 2. Jurisdiction

In accordance with this purpose no person shall remove, fill, dredge, build upon, degrade, pollute, discharge into, or otherwise alter the following resource areas:

- vegetated wetlands (including marshes, wet meadows, bogs, and swamps); vernal pools; banks; reservoirs; lakes; ponds; rivers; streams; creeks; lands under water bodies; lands subject to flooding; and lands within 100 feet of any of the aforesaid resource areas;
- isolated lands subject to flooding and lands within 25 feet of isolated lands subject to flooding; or
- riverfront areas

without a permit from the Conservation Commission or as is provided by this bylaw. No permit application shall be required for the maintenance of legally existing structures or landscapes within the jurisdiction defined above.

Section 3. Conditional Exceptions

The application and permit required by this bylaw shall not be required for maintaining, repairing, or replacing, but not substantially changing or enlarging, an existing and lawfully located structure or facility used in the service of the public to provide electric, gas, water, telephone, telegraph or other telecommunication services, provided that written notice has been given to the Commission prior to commencement of work, and provided that the work conforms to performance standards and design specifications in regulations adopted by the Commission.

The application and permit required by this bylaw shall not be required for work performed for normal maintenance or improvement of land which is lawfully in agricultural use at the time the work takes place, provided that written notice has been given to the Commission prior to the commencement of work, and provided that the work conforms to performance standards and design specifications in regulations adopted by the Commission.

The application and permit required by this bylaw shall not be required for emergency projects necessary for the protection of the health and safety of the public, provided that the work is to be performed by or has been ordered to be performed by an agency of the Commonwealth or a political subdivision thereof; provided that advance notice, oral or written, has been given to the Commission prior to commencement of work or within 24 hours after commencement; provided that the Commission or its agent certifies the work as an emergency project; provided that the work is performed only for the time and place certified by the Commission for the limited purposes necessary to abate the emergency; and provided that within 21 days of commencement of an emergency project a permit application shall be filed with the Commission for review as provided by this bylaw. Upon failure to meet these and other requirements of the Commission, the Commission may, after notice and public hearing, revoke or modify an emergency project approval and order restoration and mitigation measures.

Other than stated in this section, the exceptions provided in the Wetlands Protection Act, G.L. Ch. 131 §40, and Regulations, 310 CMR 10.00, shall not apply under this bylaw.

Section 4. Applications for Permits and Requests for Determination

Written application shall be filed with the Commission to perform activities affecting resource areas and buffer zones protected by this bylaw. The permit application shall include such information and plans as are deemed necessary by the Commission as specified in the bylaw regulations to describe proposed activities and their effects on the resource areas protected by this bylaw. No activities shall commence without receiving and complying with a permit issued pursuant to this bylaw.

Where this bylaw and the Wetlands Protection Act, G.L. Ch. 131 §40, and Regulations, 310 CMR 10.00 have concurrent jurisdiction the Commission shall accept the Notice of Intent and plans filed under the Wetlands Protection Act as the permit application and plans under this bylaw for those parts of the project where precise overlap exists, provided all pertinent areas and activities subject to the jurisdiction of this bylaw and all information required by bylaw regulations are addressed.

At the time of the permit application, the applicant shall pay a filing fee according to the schedule in the associated "Maynard Wetland Protection Regulations".

This fee is not refundable. The fee is in addition to that required by the Wetlands Protection Act, G.L. Ch. 131 §40, and Regulations, 310 CMR 10.00. Town, county, state, and federal projects are exempt from the filing fee. The fee for an application for a modification of a permit will be the fee as calculated in the "Maynard Wetland Protection Regulations".

Any person desiring to know whether or not a proposed activity or an area is subject to this bylaw may in writing request a determination from the Commission. Such a Request for Determination (RFD) shall include information and plans as are deemed necessary by the Commission.

Upon receipt of a permit application or RFD, or at any point in its deliberations, the Commission may deem it necessary to obtain expert engineering or other outside consultant services in order to reach a final decision on the application. The specific consultant services may include but are not limited to resource area survey and delineation, analysis of resource area values, including wildlife habitat evaluations, hydrogeologic and drainage analysis, and environmental or land use law.

Section 5. Notice and Hearings

Any person filing a permit application with the Commission shall within seven (7) days after such person is informed of the date and time of the hearing thereon, give written notice by certified mail (return receipt

requested) or hand delivered, to all abutters at their mailing addresses shown on the most recent applicable tax list of the assessors, including owners of land directly opposite on any public or private street or way, including any in another municipality or across a body of water. The notice to abutters shall have enclosed a copy of the permit application or request, with plans, or shall state where copies may be examined and obtained by abutters. An affidavit of the person providing such notice, with a copy of the notice mailed or delivered, shall be filed with the Commission. When a person requesting a determination is other than the owner, the request, the notice of the hearing, and the determination itself shall be sent by the Commission to the owner as well as to the person making the request.

The Commission shall conduct a public hearing on any permit application or RFD, with written notice given at the expense of the applicant, five business days prior to the hearing, in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality.

The Commission shall commence the public hearing within 21 days from receipt of a completed permit application or RFD unless an extension is authorized in writing by the applicant.

The Commission shall issue its Determination of Applicability in writing within 7 days of the close of the public hearing thereon unless an extension is authorized in writing by the applicant.

The Commission shall issue its permit in writing within 21 days of the close of the public hearing thereon unless an extension is authorized in writing by the applicant.

The Commission shall combine its hearing under this bylaw with the hearing conducted under the Wetlands Protection Act, G.L. Ch. 131 §40, and Regulations, 310 CMR 10.00 in instances of concurrent jurisdiction.

With the consent of the applicant the Commission shall have authority to continue the hearing to a certain date announced at the hearing, for reasons stated at the hearing, which may include receipt of additional information from the applicant or others deemed necessary by the Commission in its discretion, or comments and recommendations of the boards and officials listed in §6. In the event the applicant objects to a continuance or postponement, the hearing shall be closed and the Commission shall take action on such information as is available.

Section 6. Coordination with Other Boards

As appropriate the Conservation Commission may choose to solicit the advice and opinions of other Town boards and officials in the course of its deliberations. Town boards and officials shall be entitled to file written comments and recommendations with the Commission at or before the public hearing. The Commission shall take any such comments and recommendations into account but shall not be bound by them. The applicant shall have the right to receive any comments and recommendations, and to respond to them at a hearing of the Commission, prior to final action.

Section 7. Permits and Conditions

The Commission, after a public hearing, shall issue or deny a permit for the activities requested within 21 days of the close of the hearing. If it issues a permit, the Commission shall impose such conditions as it deems necessary or desirable to protect those values, and all activities shall be done in accordance with those conditions. The Commission shall take into account the cumulative adverse effects of loss, degradation, isolation, and replication of protected resource areas throughout the community and the watershed, resulting from past activities, permitted and exempt, and foreseeable future activities.

The Commission is empowered to deny a permit for failure to meet the requirements of this bylaw; for failure to submit necessary information and plans requested by the Commission; for failure to meet the design specifications, performance standards, and other requirements in regulations of the Commission; for failure to avoid or prevent unacceptable significant or cumulative effects upon the resource area values protected by this bylaw; and where no conditions are adequate to protect those values.

Lands within 100 feet of wetlands resource areas are presumed important to the protection of these resources because activities undertaken in close proximity to wetlands and other resources have a high likelihood of adverse impact upon the wetland or other resources, either immediately, as a consequence of construction, or over time, as a consequence of daily operation or existence of the activities. These adverse impacts from construction and use can include, without limitation, erosion, siltation, loss of groundwater recharge, poor water quality, and harm to wildlife habitat. The Commission therefore may require that the applicant maintain a strip of continuous, undisturbed vegetative cover in part or all of the 100-foot area and set other conditions on this area, unless the applicant provides evidence deemed sufficient by the Commission that the area or part of it may be disturbed without harm to the values protected by the law.

A permit shall expire three years from the date of issuance. Any permit shall be renewed for additional one year periods if a request for renewal is received in writing by the Commission at least thirty (30) days prior to expiration of the permit, and providing the Commission finds that (1) good cause has been shown for such extension and (2) such extension will not have significant adverse effects, immediate or cumulative, upon any of the wetland values protected by this bylaw. Notwithstanding the above, a permit may contain requirements which shall be enforceable for a stated number of years, indefinitely, or until permanent protection is in place, and shall apply to all owners of the land.

The Commission shall, after receiving a written request for a Certificate of Compliance, inspect the resource area and buffer zone where any activity governed by a permit issued under this bylaw was carried out. If such activity has been completed in accordance with said permit, the Commission shall within twenty-one (21) days after such a request issue a Certificate of Compliance evidencing such determination, which may in an appropriate case be combined with a Certificate of Compliance issued under the Wetlands Protection Act. A Certificate of Compliance may specify conditions in the permit, which will continue to apply for a fixed number of years or permanently and shall apply to all owners of the land.

Violations of this bylaw, submission of false or erroneous information, or new information that substantially alters the likely impact of the project on wetlands resources or values may cause the Commission to revoke or modify a permit or determination issued under this bylaw after notice to the public, abutters, and town boards, pursuant to §5 and §6, and a public hearing.

The Commission in an appropriate case may combine the permit or determination issued under this bylaw with the Order of Conditions or Determination of Applicability issued under the Wetlands Protection Act, G.L. Ch. 131 §40, and Regulations, 310 CMR 10.00.

No work proposed in any permit application shall be undertaken until the permit issued by the Commission with respect to such work has been recorded in the registry of deeds, or, if the land affected is registered land (in the registry section of the land court for the district wherein the land lies) and until the holder of the permit certifies in writing to the Commission that the permit has been recorded. Such certification shall include the book and page or instrument number and date.

Section 8. Regulations

After the public notice and public hearing, the Commission shall promulgate reasonable rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this bylaw. Failure by the Commission to promulgate such rules and regulations

or a legal declaration of their invalidity by a court of law shall not act to suspend or invalidate the effect of this bylaw.

At a minimum these regulations shall define key terms in this bylaw not inconsistent with the bylaw and procedures governing the amount and filing of fees.

Section 9. Definitions

The following definitions shall apply in the interpretation and implementation of this bylaw.

The term “alter” shall include, without limitation, the following activities when undertaken to, upon, within or affecting resource areas protected by this bylaw:

- (a) Removal, excavation, or dredging of soil, sand, gravel, or aggregate materials of any kind;
- (b) Changing of preexisting drainage characteristics, flushing characteristics, sedimentation patterns, flow patterns, or flood retention characteristics;
- (c) Drainage, or lowering of water level or water table;
- (d) Dumping, discharging, or filing with any material which may degrade water quality;
- (e) Placing of fill, or removal of material, which would alter elevation
- (f) Driving of piles, erection, or expansion of buildings or structures of any kind;
- (g) Placing of obstructions or objects in water;
- (h) Destruction of plant life including cutting of trees;
- (i) Changing temperature, biochemical oxygen demand, or other physical, biological, or chemical characteristics of any waters;
- (j) Any activities, changes, or work which may cause or tend to contribute to pollution of any body of water or ground water;
- (k) Incremental activities that have or may have a cumulative adverse impact on the resource areas protected by this bylaw.

The term “bank” shall include the land area which normally abuts and confines a water body; the lower boundary being the mean annual low flow level, and the upper boundary being the first observable break in the slope or the mean annual flood level, whichever is higher.

The term “existing” as used in this bylaw shall mean existing as of May 1996.

“Intermittent stream”: a stream shall be considered intermittent if it is observed not flowing for four days in a consecutive 12-month period and the absence of flow is not due to a period of extended drought, withdrawals, impoundments, or other man-made flow reductions or diversions.

The term “isolated land subject to flooding” shall include an area, depression, or basin that holds at minimum one-eighth acre-foot of water and at least six inches of standing water once a year. Not included are swimming pools, artificially lined ponds or pools, or constructed wastewater lagoons. The buffer zone for isolated land subject to flooding shall be 25 feet.

The term “person” shall include any individual, group of individuals, association, partnership, corporation, company, business organization, trust, estate, the Commonwealth or political subdivision thereof to the

extent subject to town bylaws, administrative agency, public or quasi-public corporation or body, this municipality, and any other legal entity, its legal representatives, agents, or assigns.

The term “pond” shall include any open body of fresh water with a surface area observed or recorded within the last ten years of at least 5,000 square feet. Ponds shall contain standing water except for periods of extended drought. Not included are swimming pools, artificially lined ponds or pools, or constructed wastewater lagoons.

The term “rare species” shall include, without limitation, all vertebrate and invertebrate animals and plant species listed as endangered, threatened or of special concern by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife regardless of whether the site in which they occur has been previously identified by the Division.

The term “200-foot riverfront area” shall mean that area of land situated between a river or perennial stream’s mean annual high-water line and a parallel line located two-hundred feet away, measured horizontally from the river’s mean annual high-water line.

The term “river” or “perennial stream” shall mean a naturally flowing body of water that empties to any ocean, lake, or other river and which flows throughout the year. The Commission may by regulations set criteria for determining whether a particular stream or section of stream flows throughout the year.

The term “stream” shall mean any body of running water which moves in a definite channel in the ground due to a hydraulic gradient. A portion of a stream may flow through a culvert or beneath a bridge. Streams may be perennial (see river) or intermittent (see intermittent stream).

The term “vernal pool” shall include, in addition to that already defined under the Wetlands Protection Act, G.L. Ch. 131 §40, and Regulations thereunder, 310 CMR 10.00, any confined basin or depression not occurring in existing lawns, gardens, landscaped areas, or driveways which, at least in most years, holds water for a minimum of two continuous months during the spring and/or summer, contains at least 200 cubic feet of water at some time during most years, is free of adult predatory fish populations, and provides essential breeding and rearing habitat functions for amphibian, reptile, or other vernal pool community species, regardless whether the site has been certified by the Massachusetts Division of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Except as otherwise provided in this bylaw or in regulations of the Commission the definitions of terms in this bylaw shall be as set forth in the Wetlands Protection Act, G.L. Ch. 131 §40, and Regulations, 310 CMR 10.00.

Section 10. Security

As part of a permit issued under this bylaw, in addition to any security required by any other municipal or state board, agency, or official, the Commission may require that the performance and observance of the conditions imposed thereunder (including conditions requiring mitigation work) be secured wholly or in part by a proper bond or deposit of money or negotiable securities or other undertaking of financial responsibility sufficient in the opinion of the Commission, to be released in whole or in part upon issuance of a Certificate of Compliance for work performed pursuant to the permit.

Section 11. Enforcement

No person shall remove, fill, dredge, build upon, degrade, or otherwise alter resource areas and buffer zones protected by this bylaw, or cause, suffer, or allow such activity, or leave in place unauthorized fill, or

otherwise fail to restore illegally altered land to its original condition, or fail to comply with a permit or an enforcement order issued pursuant to this bylaw.

Where the Commission deems it necessary to carry out its duties under this bylaw by entering privately owned land it shall do so with the authority of the property owner and shall be subject to the limitations imposed by the applicable federal and state laws. With the authority of the property owner or his/her designee the Commission may make or cause to be made such examinations, surveys, or sampling as the Commission deems necessary.

The Commission shall have authority to enforce this bylaw, its regulations, and permits issued thereunder by violation notices, administrative orders, and civil and criminal court actions. Any person who violates provisions of this bylaw may be ordered to restore the property to its original condition and take other action deemed necessary to remedy such violations, or may be fined, or both.

Municipal boards and officers, including any police officer or other officer having police powers, shall have authority to assist the Commission in enforcement.

Any person who violates any provision of this bylaw, or regulations, permits, or administrative orders issued thereunder, shall be served with a Notice of Violation enumerating the alleged violations. If after ten business days the Commission has not received what it deems to be either (a) sufficient evidence demonstrating that no violations have occurred, or (b) a filing that will remove the violations along with evidence that sufficient progress is being made to correct the violations then the violator shall be punished by a fine of \$100 per offense. Beginning ten business days after the date of the Notice of Violation each day or portion thereof during which a violation continues, or unauthorized fill or other alteration remains in place, shall constitute a separate offense, and each provision of the bylaw, regulations, permits, or administrative orders violated shall constitute a separate offense.

Section 12. Burden of Proof

The applicant for a permit shall have the burden of proving by a preponderance of credible evidence that the work proposed in the permit application will not have significant or cumulative negative effect upon the resource area values protected by this bylaw. Failure to provide evidence that in the judgment of the Commission is adequate to support this burden shall be sufficient cause for the Commission to deny a permit or grant a permit with conditions.

Section 13. Appeals

A decision of the Commission shall be reviewable in the Superior Court in accordance with G.L Ch. 249, §4.

Section 14. Relation to the Wetlands Protection Act

This bylaw is adopted under the Home Rule Amendment of the Massachusetts Constitution and the Home Rule statutes, independent of the Wetlands Protection Act, G.L. Ch. 131 §40, and Regulations, 310 CMR 10.00, thereunder.

Section 15. Severability

The invalidity of any section or provision or phase of this bylaw shall not invalidate any other section or provision or phrase thereof, nor shall it invalidate any permit or determination which previously has been issued.