

handout at  
BoS meeting  
7/29/19

**Hegarty, Teri**

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**Subject:**

FW: Wayland Conservation Commission - Selecting Members for New Terms

**Attachments:**

Memo to BOS RE-Conservation Commission Appointments.7.28.19.doc; ATT00001.htm

**From:** William Steinberg <----->

**Date:** July 28, 2019 at 15:20:22 EDT

**To:** "Miller, Louise" <[lmiller@wayland.ma.us](mailto:lmiller@wayland.ma.us)>, "Karlson, Cherry" <[ckarlson@wayland.ma.us](mailto:ckarlson@wayland.ma.us)>, "Antes, Mary" <[mantes@wayland.ma.us](mailto:mantes@wayland.ma.us)>, "Anderson, Lea" <[landerson@wayland.ma.us](mailto:landerson@wayland.ma.us)>, "Levine, Doug" <[dlevine@wayland.ma.us](mailto:dlevine@wayland.ma.us)>, "Fay, Thomas" <[tfay@wayland.ma.us](mailto:tfay@wayland.ma.us)>

**Subject: Wayland Conservation Commission - Selecting Members for New Terms**

Attached hereto are my comments to the Board of Selectmen, and the Town Administrator, with regards to the selection by the BoS of two members to the Wayland Conservation Commission. I think the memo stands on its own, but I am happy to attend your meeting at public comment at 7:00PM tomorrow evening to give it in public, if the BoS is interested. I don't want to waste your time if the written comments satisfy my points to you.

I appreciate you consideration of my thoughts as you deal with this issue.

Best regards,

Bill

*Bill Steinberg*

*Wayland, MA 01778-1722*

Memorandum

**To: Wayland Board of Selectmen**  
**From: William Steinberg**  
**Resident \_\_\_\_\_, Wayland**  
**Re: Issues Regarding the Wayland Conservation Commission**

I am writing to the Board of Selectmen to express my concerns regarding the manner by which the Wayland Conservation Commission (the "Commission") carries out its mission as an entity that represents the Town of Wayland. This is of particular concern as the Board of Selectmen are in the process of selecting members to the Commission who will serve for the next three years, as this is your chance to help solve these issues.

In terms of issues with the Commission, I will note that their "mission statement" on their web site, does not appear to be a mission statement. It is more a list of the things that they do, but it does not define their purpose. Perhaps in the coming fiscal year, that is a good place for the Commission and the Board of Selectmen to start when thinking about how that entity should function.

As the Board of Selectmen proceeds with the selection of two members for upcoming terms, there are a few key attributes that I am confident you will consider as you evaluate the candidates. Your decisions on these candidates will have a strong impact on the overall Commission. They are attributes that I think you will agree are important to all of our boards and committees in Wayland, and they are the following:

1. Do you feel that the candidates will be respectful of others as members of a board or commission representing Wayland. Whether or not the people appearing before them are residents (for or against an application), guests who are applicants or working with applicants, consultants who are presenting on behalf of applicants, or anyone else appearing before them, this is a critical skill that the members of our boards and committees must have.
2. Do you feel that the candidates have the ability to provide an open and fair process for any applicant appearing before them. Are they willing to exchange ideas and possible solutions that might provide the applicant with an ability to proceed with their proposal, while also protecting the interests of the Town and working within the laws of the Commonwealth.

Currently, Wayland's Conservation Commission has demonstrated multiple instances in which it lacks the ability to be civil and respectful and the ability to be open and fair to applicants. As someone who works in the real estate industry, I have appeared before conservation commissions in other cities and towns, and the process I have observed in Wayland is one that is frightening for an applicant. Consultants with whom I have worked have told me that their experiences in Wayland, compared to almost any other city or town, have been difficult and unpleasant. I am sure that the Board of Selectmen does not want this reputation for

## Memorandum

our Town. We must ask; how is it that other cities and towns are able to work with applicants to find solutions, while protecting the environment and working within the laws of the Commonwealth; yet Wayland is unable to provide this result for applicants, and in the end, for our community.

I have seen some of the videos from Commission meetings, and I have spoken with several people who have appeared before the Commission. The tenor of the meetings is, to say the least, disturbing. The disrespect paid to applicants is embarrassing to the Commission and the Town, and it is just plain mean. Even those on the Commission who have not been uncivil should know that they must speak up to stop that type of discourse; yet it continues.

In addition to the disrespect, the demands made of applicants are beyond the scope of unreasonableness. For instance, if we look at some of the recent applications before the Commission, some requests for plans and testing, which have already been done by third party consultants, and are made available to the Commission, have dramatically driven up the costs to those applicants. In at least two such cases, it has been the taxpayers of Wayland who have been burdened by unnecessary and unfair demands that have driven up costs, and for no apparent benefit to the Commission or the applicants. On top of that, the demands for ongoing testing and reporting, once projects have been completed, is well beyond the scope of requests on similar projects in other places. I can only think that they have been put in place in the hope that the projects will become unviable, even though they meet the laws of the Commonwealth and a reasonable resolution of any environmental concerns.

I fully support good conservation measures in Wayland. As a member of the Finance Committee, I was a strong supporter of the Town's acquisition of the lands along Lincoln Road and the Mainstone Farm acquisition. These conservation measures help to define who and what Wayland is. Protecting our drinking water is an important part of any new project in Wayland, which is why the schools have designed their new playing fields in a manner that protects our well-heads. We need good conservation, but we need it to be fair, reasonable and sometimes creative, such that the needs and desires of the community are considered at the same time as we work to protect our natural resources. I have worked on creative solutions to wetland issues on projects in other towns, to the satisfaction of those commissions. Our Commission in Wayland does not appear interested in trying to find good solutions for both parties.

The ability of the Board of Selectmen is to shape the Commission is determine who will be the members of the Commission. Let's make sure that the residents you select for this Commission are able to begin to meet these attributes, and going forward, let's make sure that future members of that Commission will also meet those attributes. Let's have a Conservation Commission that we all can be proud of in the future.