Recommendation

Issue: Should Springfield broaden protection of its wetlands to include naturally occurring vernal pools?

Overview: Springfield is rich in natural resources and vernal pools are an integral part of the our ecosystem. We should protect them because:

- Vernal pools provide habitat that is critical to the survival of certain wildlife species
- Amphibians and reptiles such as frogs, toads, salamanders, and turtles use them for mating and breeding
- The vernal pool is a unique microhabitat in which a number of wildlife species prosper. Some species are so well adapted to this environment that they are not able to successfully reproduce elsewhere
- Vernal pools provide a breeding environment free of predatory fish
- Vernal pools are used by nearly all amphibian species in Springfield
- Our rarest amphibians, the Spotted and Jefferson's salamanders, use only vernal pools for breeding
- The loss of a single vernal pool can impact the amphibian population for up to a quarter mile in all directions
- The small size and unimpressive appearance make vernal pools especially vulnerable to casual destruction during road building and construction

Recommendation: Include protection for naturally occurring vernal pools, regardless of size, and provide for a 50-foot "no disturb" buffer

Reasoning:

- See Appendix D – NH Fish & Game Dep't - Vernal Pool Protection

- See Appendix B – Vernal Pools

Specification: Amend Section 4.11 Wetland Conservation Overlay District Boundaries to include Vernal pools - see Draft Ordinance with Changes