Recommendation

Issue: Should Springfield provide greater protection for some wetlands?

Overview: One of the early questions to be resolved by the Wetlands Committee was the need to provide greater protection for some wetlands. McDaniel's Marsh was always a part of this discussion and it is treated differently that all others with a 660-foot buffer. However, it was thought that there could be some wetlands in Town that deserve enhanced protection because of:

- Richness of habitat
- Diversity of species
- Unique flora or fauna
- Contribution to water quality
- Enhanced recreational offerings

The Wetlands Committee also discussed the use of the state Prime Wetlands designation to provide the greater protection that some wetlands may need. The difficulty of the state-dictated process caused this option to be discarded.

To obtain the enhanced protection desired (without the Prime Wetlands problems) the Wetlands Committee borrowed a process from a sister community – the creation of a classification of wetlands known as "Special Wetlands".

Recommendation: Create a process for enhanced protection for "Special Wetlands".

Reasoning:

- A wetlands inventory in our Town does not exist. This process is the responsibility of the Conservation Commission and its completion is constrained by the cost for professionals and available volunteer time
- Maximum flexibility is afforded through the vetting process
- Control is maintained at the Planning Board level
- Provides a tool to address the need for enhanced protection

Specification: Amend Section 4.12 Wetlands Buffers to add buffer and Article XIII. Definitions to add "Special Wetlands" - see Draft Ordinance with Changes