

Wakefield Conservation Commission (Commission) – Minutes – October 29, 2020

Attendance: Chairman Jim Luciani, Vice Chairman Bob Romano; Teresa Belmonte; Peter Miller; Ken Alepidis; Silvana Bouhlal  
Elaine Vreeland, Judy Green  
Absent: Frank Calandra

### Light Pollution Seminar

Jane Slade, lighting specialist and presenter from Speclines Outdoor Lighting and Paul Mellor, co-founder of were present.

Ms. Slade reviewed the effect of excessive outdoor lighting on wildlife habits and patterns. Over lighting as well as extended periods of outdoor lighting at night can disorient and distract animals and thereby change travel patterns. This can draw animals into roadways causing traffic hazards and fatal strikes. Birds suffer the most impact from over lighting. Plant life is also adversely impacted. Leaf development, leaf fall and its timing in autumn as well as root growth can all suffer. All animals as well as humans depend on regular intervals of light and darkness for proper function of behavioral, reproductive and immune systems.

Effective interventions that can reduce these impacts was also outlined.

- Establishing a model lighting ordinance.
- Utilizing controls to reduce the number of lighting hours at night as well as providing the right amount of light.
- Avoiding triggering wavelengths.
- Utilizing window coverings.
- Incorporating dark sky compliant fixtures.
- Designing for specific applications.

Mr. Luciani asked how existing subdivisions could be adapted to incorporate controls.

Ms. Slade stated that standards could be regulated through lighting ordinances.

Mr. Romano asked if it was preferable for outdoor lighting to be off between the hours of midnight and 6AM.

Ms. Slade stated that this is preferable and would have a positive impact.

Bronwyn Dellavolpe expressed her enthusiasm for the seminar. She felt that it was important for the public to see how this problem affects everyone.

Jennifer Kallay asked if there was new highway off-ramp lighting that could be used in order to decrease spillover.

Ms. Slade stated that there was. She added that a lighting ordinance could also be modeled to suit the Town's needs. Built-in controls would allow problems to be addressed as they arise rather than replacing the entire light.

Ms. Dellavolpe would like to see the Commission take on this issue more broadly.

Mr. Romano noted that the Commission has been discussing directional lighting with applicants over the last several years.

Ms. Slade suggested actions that could be implemented immediately:

- Warmer, softer lighting;
- Directional lighting;
- Limiting lighting hours.

Ms. Bouhlal asked if there were any federal lighting regulations and whether retrofitting these changes would be costly. She also asked if reducing light at night could compromise safety.

Ms. Slade stated that there are currently no federal lighting regulations however on the State level several bills have been proposed. She noted that too much lighting can actually create safety issues.

Ms. Kallay noted that light spillage from signs are a large source of light pollution as well.

Town Councilor Ed Dombrowski asked if the conversion of street lights to LED bulbs has created brighter lighting.

Ms. Slade stated that the use of LED bulbs has increased as they are very efficient. She noted that lighting regulations could help rein in wattage used.

Paul Mellor of Speclines stated that it is difficult to institute universal lighting mandates as each city and town has unique needs. He noted that street lights could be dimmed following peak traffic hours.

Ms. Belmonte made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Luciani made a second to the motion. After polling the Commissioners, the motion passed unanimously.