

## Planning Board Meeting

June 26, 2018

By Karen Mattern

**MAMAKATING**—All five applications before the planning board on Tuesday May 26 involved timber harvests, and all five were considered to be silviculture, which is defined as the practice of managing the growth, composition, health, and quality of forests to meet diverse needs and values.

The first proposal was to mainly harvest hemlocks from 25 acres on Mount Vernon Road. A number of these trees are dying from a fungal disease, and the logging operation is expected to be beneficial for the growth of the new seedlings coming in.

On 40 acres off of White Tail Trail, the owner plans a selective harvest of pine trees in order to increase the percentage of hardwoods. The town forester said that white oaks and other varieties of oak are more likely to survive the projected climate changes.

A third timber harvest calls for 42 acres on Painter Hill Road to be logged. The fourth and fifth applications are for two adjacent parcels: one on Fire House Road, and the other on Depot Road, for a total area of about 126 acres.

All five timber harvest applications were granted conditional approval by the planning board.

At the end of the meeting, one of the foresters present brought up the issue of the cost of the logging permit process, which currently runs to about \$2,000 plus whatever it costs for the town forester to do his work. These fees may be prohibitive to some property owners who want to cull trees on their land, and who may then resort to doing the work without the required permits.

It was also noted that a few years ago, the fees for a permit only amounted to about \$300. Planning board chairman Mort Starobin asked the two town foresters at the meeting to put together some recommendations in order to streamline the permit process. However, any changes to the code must wait until after the new comprehensive plan for the town is finally approved by the town board, probably towards the end of this year.