

TOWN OF NEEDHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 10, 2023

Under Governor Baker's Act "Extending Certain COVID-10 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency", extending the "Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §20," issued June 16, 2021, and in effect until April 1, 2022, meeting of public bodies may be conducted virtually provided that adequate access is provided to the public.

LOCATION: Zoom Virtual Platform – the meeting was held virtually per Governor Baker's Emergency Order.

ATTENDING: Dave Herer (Chair), Peter Oehlkers (Vice Chair), Sue Barber, Alison Richardson, Fred Moder, Polina Safran, Reade Everett, Deb Anderson (Director of Conservation), Clay Hutchinson (Conservation Specialist)

D. Herer opened the public meeting at 7:00 p.m.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS –

1. Minutes

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 27, 2023; May 11, 2023; May 25, 2023; June 8, 2023; June 22, 2023; July 13, 2023; and July 27, 2023, by P. Safran, seconded by S. Barber, approved 7-0-0.

2. Enforcement & Violation Updates

C. Hutchinson explained that Conservation, and DPW Staff were on site with the applicant at 311 Dedham Avenue. Erosion controls have been fixed. A dewatering area has been set up on site and appears to be successful. The next step will be to install a sump pit.

OTHER BUSINESS

D. Herer noted that the Commission could consider establishing its own Code of Conduct, similar to the Select Board. The Code of Conduct would describe how the Commission conducts its business. R. Everett volunteered to draft a Code of Conduct document for the Commission to review for possible adoption at its next meeting.

D. Herer asked the Commission to review how it operates its meetings. There was previously consensus to remain meeting remotely, but the Commission could reconsider this at any time.

D. Anderson explained that the Commission can decide to remain fully remote or meet in a hybrid fashion. The current Governor's order lasts until 2025. If the Commission would like to meet in a hybrid session, there would need to be at least one Commissioner in person. Staff would likely also need to be in person.

S. Barber stated that she would like to meet in person, but only if all Commissioners and Staff were to attend in person. D. Herer noted that the Commission would not be able to mandate that applicants and presenters be there in person.

P. Oehlkers explained that there is a benefit to the efficiency of meeting remotely.

A. Richardson stated that it can be more rewarding to meet in person, especially when dealing face-to-face with applicants. However, if all Commissioners, the applicant teams, and the public are not meeting in person at the same time, this benefit may be lost. F. Moder agreed that a hybrid meeting may not work as well overall.

The Commission agreed to take an anonymous, informal poll on this topic.

C. Hutchinson explained that he spoke with DEP regarding the Commission's special conditioning in riverfront areas. He will draft a stock condition for riverfront area mitigation to be used into the future. He also noted that Commissioners could consider working with Staff to hold educational or recreational programming.

HEARINGS/APPOINTMENTS

49 GREEN STREET (DEP FILE #234-911) – NOTICE OF INTENT

Motion to continue the hearing for 49 Green Street (DEP FILE #234-911) to August 24, 2023, at 7:30pm by P. Safran, seconded by P. Oehlkers, approved 7-0-0.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn the meeting, by R. Everett, seconded by S. Barber, approved 7-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING:

August 24, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. location to be determined.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*