

TOWN OF NEEDHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 22, 2025

Under Governor Healey'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 March 2023, 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), Reade Everett, Polina Safran, Fred Moder, Deb Anderson (Director of Conservation)

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

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

1. Minutes

None at this time.

2. Enforcement Orders

None at this time.

OTHER BUSINESS

26 GEORGE AGGOTT ROAD (DEP FILE #234-820) – CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE REQUEST

D. Anderson stated that this project included an addition to the garage, expansion of a driveway, and an addition of two decks. The applicant was supposed to infiltrate through a CULTEC system but found the groundwater was too high. The Commission later gave them permission to tie into the Town system, which they have done. The project was signed off by the Town Engineer. She recommended a full Certificate of Compliance.

Motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 26 George Aggott Road (DEP File #234-820), by F. Moder, seconded by R. Everett, approved 4-0-0.

311 DEDHAM AVENUE (DEP FILE #234-892) – CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE REQUEST

D. Anderson stated that this project's approval was appealed by DEP based on the riverfront regulations. Staff met with DEP and revised plans were submitted. The jurisdiction was given back to the Commission. As part of the filing, 1,100 s.f. of mitigation area was required. According to the signed off plans, the edge of lawn on the east and west sides of the house were

installed 1'–1.5' from the approved lawn line and on the south side of the house, this is up to 11' away from the approved lawn line. This leads to a total of approximately 682 s.f. reduction in mitigation area. The wetlands consultant was going to speak with the owner about this issue.

Saumya Prasad, owner/applicant, explained that 252 s.f. is the improvement he has made by reducing the walkway and another structure. There is also a staircase that he has tried to reduce. D. Anderson stated that other deviations made to the original plan will need to be documented on the engineer's certificate. This item also already went through DEP and so will need to be in compliance with that review.

R. Everett noted that a sheet was included that listed many non-native species that are not appropriate for the site. D. Anderson stated that she will seek additional information from the wetland consultant on this item as well.

The Commission agreed that this item should be continued in order to seek additional information.

INTRODUCTION: WELLESLEY CONSERVATION LAND TRUST

Andrea Dannenberg, Secretary of the Board of the Wellesley Conservation Land Trust, explained that the Land Trust is looking to make better contact with Needham, as there are considerable land holdings in Needham.

Michael Tobin, President of the Wellesley Conservation Land Trust, made a brief presentation and the Commission thanked him for his time.

TOWN OF NEEDHAM – ALDER BROOK PROJECTS OVERVIEW

Gabby Queenan, Sustainability Manager, stated that both projects being presented on are in the design phase and construction funding has not yet been identified for either project. Julie Wood, Climate Resilience Director for the Charles River Watershed Association, presented on the Alder Brook Phase I 50% Engineering Design project. Needham is a member of the Charles River Climate Compact, which is a regional partnership of 28 watershed towns and cities focused on climate resilience, founded in 2019. The scale of flooding for the watershed under climate change conditions is quite large. This means that the response also has to be large and aggressive. A prioritization method for projects was created. Project ideas were compiled. The Alder Brook area was determined to be a prioritized project.

G. Queenan stated that the goal for the DeFazio parking lot project includes trying to develop a Best Management Practice (BMP) to reduce phosphorus load, improve water quality, and reduce localized flooding. This engineering portion of this project was grant funded. Public outreach has been completed.

Chris Brainard, BETA, stated that 50% of the design for this project was achieved in late April. As part of the overall project goals, the parking lot will be regraded to direct the flow to one area with a bioretention/rain garden. An emergency overflow has also been included in the design.

The proposed changes in parking should not have any impact due to the existing flooding that occurs.

D. Herer asked about the capital costs for this project. G. Queenan stated that cost estimates are a final component of the grant. The project closes out June 30th. C. Brainard stated that the estimated project cost is approximately \$180,000.

Laura Krause, BETA, stated that the second portion of the project deals with the Alder Brook stream restoration. A portion of the stream currently flows through a 36" RCP pipe. There is also existing invasive vegetation. There are opportunities for wildlife habitat and flood storage improvements. An existing culvert will be removed and the stream bed restored. The project will daylight a portion of Alder Brook. Phil Paradis, BETA, explained that the existing culvert is subject to flows that can be instantaneous and intense. Removal will help control the velocity. The bank of the area will be regraded to make sure the existing concrete channel will overflow before it hits capacity. The existing pipe will be used as a bypass for the channels being created. A substantial amount of clearing will be needed, but there is a substantial restoration plan proposed. L. Krause reviewed the proposed restoration plan.

F. Moder asked how much additional capacity the project will allow for. P. Paradis stated that some intensive stormwater control features will be needed to help with the flooding. There is more work that needs to be completed downstream of this area. Kim Donovan, Needham Compliance Coordinator, stated that each project will compound the results of the next. Over time, each small project will make an overall significant difference.

Justin Savignano, Assistant Town Engineer, explained that the intention is to reclaim some of the natural bank and the natural wetlands to add BMPs and help with flooding capacity. This project will hopefully help to lead to additional ones down the road for the Town.

G. Queenan stated that the second project's design was funded through the Charles River Watershed Association.

D. Anderson stated the extensive vegetation, including trees, will need to be removed. She noted that there is a 2:1 replacement policy for trees. L. Krause stated that the number of trees within the restoration plan is based on that ratio. Any native trees will be used as deadfall and snags can be considered.

The Commission thanked the group for the presentation.

F. Moder noted that there will be a Tree Preservation Planning Committee public listening session meeting on June 4th at 7pm.

D. Anderson stated that Town Counsel issued a letter to the new owner of the Foster property discussing the trail situation and access to the conservation property for the public. The new owner is not interested in discussing this at this time.

D. Anderson stated that the Conservation Specialist position had been advertised, and 75 applications were received. An interview team will be put together to further review them,

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn the meeting, by F. Moder, seconded by P. Safran, approved 4-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING:

June 12, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. virtually.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*