

Conservation Commission Meeting
Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at 6:30 PM
Town Hall: Second Floor Meeting Room, 173 Main Street Groton, MA
OPTION TO JOIN REMOTELY

Present: Bruce Easom, Chair; Larry Hurley, Vice Chair; Olin Lathrop, Peter Morrison

Absent: Kim Kuliesis, Clerk; Alison Hamilton, John Smigelski

Others Present: Charlotte Steeves, Conservation Administrator

6:30 PM Bruce Easom, Chair called the meeting to order.

1. APPOINTMENTS AND HEARINGS*

6:30 PM- Continued Public Hearing- Notice of Intent- Off Worthen Drive- DEP#169-1278

Applicant: Jodi Gilson, Representative: Frank Mcpartland, Dillis & Roy Civil Design Group

The applicant requested a continuance.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to continue the public hearing to the next scheduled meeting on July 8, 2025.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

6:32 PM- Continued Public Hearing- Notice of Intent- 63 Gratuity Road- DEP# 169-1281

Applicant: Routhier & Roper Gratuity Road LLC; Representative Matthew Waterman, Landtech Consultants

Mathew Waterman attended the meeting via Zoom and reported that a floodplain study had been submitted, which included updated FEMA flood maps. Based on this new information, he stated that no significant flooding issues were identified on the property.

O. Lathrop noted that he had reviewed the floodplain study and expressed concerns about the assumptions used to model the 100-year storm event. He emphasized the need to clearly outline the conditions and parameters used in the analysis.

M. Waterman responded that the original stormwater calculations were likely based on 7.3 to 7.4 inches of rainfall over a 24-hour period. Desheng Wang clarified that those figures are outdated, and that current standards define a 100-year storm as 8 inches of rainfall in 24 hours. He also confirmed that his report was based on FEMA maps.

O. Lathrop recommended incorporating historical data, including photographic evidence from specific storm events—such as 4.08 inches of rain on 12/8/2023 and 2.8 inches on 1/10/2024. One photo showed the culvert and a three-foot elevation from the brook to the road. He suggested using these events to help validate the model's accuracy.

The Commission unanimously agreed that a peer review of the floodplain study should be conducted. C. Steeves asked which organization should be selected for the review and whether the peer reviewer should use D. Wang's report as a basis.

After brief discussion, the Commission agreed that the peer review should evaluate the methodology and conclusions of D. Wang's report and determine whether it is adequate or if a new analysis is needed.

D. Wang had no objection to Nitsch Engineering conducting the review. The Conservation Administrator confirmed she would contact Nitsch Engineering to request a quote.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was: Voted
to obtain a peer review quote from Nitsch Engineering based on the report by Desheng Wang. **The motion**
passed unanimously. 4-0

Abutter Adam Burnett requested a copy of the peer review once completed. He provided the 2024 flooding photographs related to 63 Gratuity Road and noted that such flooding is common during minor winter storms. He mentioned conducting an independent analysis using Stream Stats, which suggested the watershed requires approximately 3.5 to 4 feet of elevation above the channel to convey flow. D. Wang added that in some areas, the bank height from the channel bottom is only about 2.5 feet.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was: Voted
to continue the public hearing to the next scheduled meeting on July 8, 2025. **The**
motion passed unanimously. 4-0

6:40 PM- Continued Public Hearing- Request for Determination of Applicability- 14 Rustic Trail

Applicant: Anthony Hauck, Representative: Charles Hogan

The applicant requested a continuance.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was: Voted
to continue the public hearing to the next scheduled meeting on July 8, 2025. **The**
motion passed unanimously.

6:45 PM- Request for Certificate of Compliance- 110 Boston Road- DEP# 169-1013

Applicant: Groton Community School, Representative: Tom Delaney, Trustee

Tom Delaney, representing Groton Community School, reviewed the pre-construction and post-construction conditions and confirmed that no changes had occurred. He noted that the as built plan reflects the reported edge of the wetland.

O. Lathrop noted an inconsistency in the drawings related to the fence placement.

B. Easom requested an updated plan with the limited area of work be identified.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was: Voted
to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 110 Boston Road, MassDEP#169-1013, contingent

upon receiving an updated plan.
motion passed unanimously. 4-0

The

6:50 PM- Continued Public Hearing- Notice of Intent -16 West Main Street DEP# 169-1282

Applicant: Donovan Billings, Representative: Matt Marro, Environmental Consulting

Matt Marro informed the Commission that the applicant has hired a qualified team to address their concerns regarding the filled-in stream. GPR is determining which areas are jurisdictional and would be submitting a revised plan with the 50-foot and 100-foot buffer zones clearly delineated. The applicant is also considering altering the pool design to move it further outside the buffer areas. M. Marro requested a continuance at this time.

Tom Delaney reported that, according to discussions with other staff, a steel pipe was replaced with plastic approximately five years ago to address a clog. He noted that the entire pipe had been underground at one point.

O. Lathrop presented historical imagery from Google Earth showing that the stream appeared to have been filled in around 2021. Based on GIS data showing upstream wetlands, he believes the area is jurisdictional.

B. Easom stated that he reviewed USGS maps, which did not show the stream.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:
to continue the public hearing to the second meeting in July scheduled on July 22, 2025.

Voted

The

motion passed unanimously. 4-0

7:00 PM- Continued Public Hearing- Notice of Intent - Squannacook River Dam- DEP#

PENDING

Applicant: Haley & Aldrich, Representative: Town of Groton, Tom Delaney

The applicant requested a continuance.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:
to continue the public hearing to the next scheduled meeting on July 8, 2025.
motion passed unanimously. 4-0

Voted

The

7:05 PM- Public Hearing- Request for Determination of Applicability- 74 West Main Street

Applicant: Robert Dunn

The homeowner was present to propose the installation of a temporary pool.

P. Morrison noted that the proposed location is a previously disturbed area that currently contains a hollow depression used for an enclosed trampoline.

B. Easom inquired whether a concrete pad would be installed. R. Dunn responded that the pool would sit directly on the ground.

O. Lathrop inquired about the distance between the proposed pool and the wetland. He noted that, unlike the existing trampoline which is pervious, the proposed pool would be an impervious structure. C. Steeves confirmed that the pool installation would be located outside the 50-foot buffer zone.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to issue a Negative 3 Determination under the conditions: 1. No permanent structure is to be installed underneath the pool.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

7:15 PM- Public Hearing- Notice of Intent- 401 Old Ayer Road- DEP# PENDING

Applicant: Michael Doucette, Representative Matt Marro

Matt Marro was present to propose the installation of a replacement septic system. He explained that the current system is failing and discharging. The existing leach field would be abandoned in place, and the old tank would be removed and replaced with new 3,000-gallon tanks. Erosion controls, including staked wattles, would be installed. The project is currently awaiting DEP approval.

The Commissioners expressed satisfaction with the revised plan, particularly the relocation of the replacement septic system outside the 50-foot buffer zone.

P. Morrison asked what type of machinery would be used to dig the trench for the main line. M. Marro responded that the equipment used would depend on the contractor performing the installation.

O. Lathrop noted the presence of two wells on the property and inquired whether both were in use. M. Marro was uncertain but suggested that one may potentially be used for irrigation.

Upon a motion by L. Hurley, seconded by P. Morrison, it was:

to continue the public hearing to the next scheduled meeting on July 8, 2025.

Voted

The

motion passed unanimously. 4-0

7:25 PM- Request for Certificate of Compliance- 37 Boathouse Road- DEP#169-1222

Applicant: Bryan Gannon

The applicant explained that the property was in poor condition, with a significant amount of debris that had to be removed from the resource area. He noted that substantial improvements were necessary to restore and enhance the site.

The Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the extensive restoration work that had been completed.

O. Lathrop noted that the existing Orders of Conditions only permit the installation of a seasonal dock. B. Gannon acknowledged the comment and confirmed that he fully understands the restriction.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 37 Boathouse Road, MassDEP#169-1222.

The

motion passed unanimously. 4-0

7:35 PM- Minor Change Request- 78 Maplewood Ave- DEP# 169-1274

Applicant: Paul Benoit

The applicant was present with a revised drawing from the engineer, requesting permission to extend the driveway to allow for a safe turnaround. It was noted that no additional trees would be removed as part of the proposal.

O. Lathrop asked whether the driveway would be paved. P. Benoit responded that the driveway would remain unpaved.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to accept the minor change on the plan dated 02/07/24 for 78 Maplewood Ave, MassDEP#169-1274.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

Approve Order of Conditions- New England Power Company Transmission Line 326- DEP# 169-1284

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to issue the Order of Conditions for the New England Power Company Transmission Line 326, MassDEP#169-1284.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to issue the Orders of Conditions under the Groton Wetlands Protection Bylaw for New England Power Company Transmission Line 326, MassDEP#169-1284. **The**

motion passed unanimously. 4-0

Approve Order of Conditions- 71-75 Shenandoah Road- DEP# 169-1280

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to issue the Order of Conditions for 71-75 Shenandoah Road, MassDEP#169-1280.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to issue the Orders of Conditions under the Groton Wetlands Protection Bylaw for 71-75 Shenandoah Road, MassDEP#169-1280.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

Approve Order of Conditions- 150 Kemp Street- DEP# 169-1283

Upon a motion by P. Morrison seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to issue the Order of Conditions for 150 Kemp Street, MassDEP#169-1283.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to issue the Orders of Conditions under the Groton Wetlands Protection Bylaw for 150 Kemp Street, MassDEP#169-1283.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

2. GENERAL BUSINESS

2.1. General Discussions/Announcements

Parcel 248-4.11 Crystal Springs Conservation Restriction

C. Steeves reported that she looked into the two concerns regarding the Conservation Restriction (CR). First, she confirmed that the CR extends behind the lots. Second, upon reviewing the document, she noted that while it names the Town of Groton as the guarantor, no representative from the Town had signed it.

B. Easom emphasized the importance of having the appropriate signatories to validate the Town's acceptance of the agreement. The Commission requested that C. Steeves follow up with the Town Manager to address the issue with the Town Council.

Update: 309 Boston Road

C. Steeves reported that the magistrate ruled in favor of the Conservation Commission on June 12th upholding the citation. She summarized a letter from the Town Council, which was read into the record, recommending that the Commission continue issuing daily fines. If the property owner remains noncompliant, the matter may be escalated to Superior Court, or the citation may be sent to collections.

Town Manager Mark Haddad also expressed support for issuing daily fines. The next ticket would be \$100 per day.

The Commission briefly discussed that the property owner is aware of the enforcement order and the validity of the fines, and considered options for proceeding.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was: Voted
to authorize the Conservation Administrator to send a letter, delivered by constable, to the property owner of 309 Boston Road. The letter shall notify the owner that the Conservation Commission expects to receive a plan showing the location of the removed trees, as required by the Enforcement Order dated February 11, 2025. If the plan is not submitted to the Conservation Administrator by the close of business on Monday, July 7, 2025, the Commission will consider issuing daily fines at its next scheduled meeting on July 8, 2025.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

2.3. Committee Updates

L. Hurley expressed concern about open trenches being left unattended at Sargisson Beach during the excavation of the trenches and inquired on who is responsible for the work being completed. C. Steeves responded that the Department of Public Works is conducting the work and that she had been informed the trenches would be covered at the end of each day.

O. Lathrop reported that the Invasive Species Committee recently held a successful educational talk on the Lingering Ash Trees. He also noted that Groton Channel produced a video on the Nipmuc Meadows Controlled Burn, which was shown during the meeting.

B. Easom reported that the Sustainability Commission submitted a grant request to the Commissioners of Trust Funds to hire two high school students to conduct a pollinator study. The students, Danielle Delaney and Tegan Gagney, are assessing the status of pollinators in Groton and developing a strategy to connect existing pollinator gardens through ecological corridors. The student's final presentation will take place at the Senior Center this coming Thursday at 7pm and is to be recorded by the Groton Channel.

B. Easom noted that the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is scheduled to meet on June 30th to discuss the FY26 new project liaison assignments and C. Steeves would be in attendance.

2.4. Land Management & Acquisition

Whitney pond road waiting on appraisal

Schedule Mowing at Nipmuc Meadows

O. Lathrop recommended that the edges of the field be sprayed prior to mowing. The Commission requested that C. Steeves contact John Smigelski to determine his availability to mow the field.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to provide Olin Lathrop permission to spray the Black Swallow-wort at Nipmuc Meadows.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

2.5. Approve Meeting Minutes

None

2.6 Approve Invoices

Upon a motion by L. Hurley, seconded by P. Morrison, it was:

Voted to approve and pay the invoice from the Groton Herald in the amount of \$127.50.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

Upon a motion by L. Hurley, seconded by P. Morrison, it was:

to approve and pay the invoice from the MACC for the annual dues for the seven Conservation Commissioners in the amount of \$760.00.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

Voted

3. Open Session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting*

4 Executive Session pursuant to MGL Ch. 30A, Sec. 21(6): * "To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body."

Unnecessary

5. Adjournment

8:46 PM

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:
Voted to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed unanimously. 4-0

APPROVED: 7/8/2025