



**Conservation Commission Meeting**  
Wednesday, November 11, 2025 at 6:30 PM  
Town Hall: Second Floor Meeting Room  
173 Main Street Groton, MA  
**OPTION TO JOIN REMOTELY**



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Present: Chair: Bruce Easom, Larry Hurley, Kimberly Kuliesis, Olin Lathrop, Ben Wolfe, Peter Morrison, John Smigelski

Chairman Easom opened the meeting at 6:30 PM. The meeting was recorded and will be available for viewing on the Groton Channel.

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## **1. APPOINTMENTS AND HEARINGS**

### **6:30 PM: Continued Public Hearing – Notice of Intent, 63 Gratuity Road –**

#### **DEP# 169-1281**

- **Proposal:** Installation of a water line at 63 Gratuity Road.
- **Presentation:** The applicant's representative appeared on behalf of Routhier & Roper Gratuity Road LLC and provided an update on work completed since the last hearing in late August. He reported that a joint site walk was conducted with Nitsch Engineering on 09/05, an updated flood study was submitted on 10/14, and Nitsch Engineering issued a second peer review letter on 10/31. The applicant stated that the site walk was helpful in reviewing cross sections and culvert crossings. The project hydrologist indicated that responses to the peer review comments have been prepared and will be submitted.
- **Discussion:**
  - Commissioners discussed the use of Manning's coefficients and if the watershed used in the model fully captures drainage to the site. The project hydrologist stated that adjusting coefficients caused only minor changes to the modeled flood elevations, as most of the flow remains within the main channel.
  - Commissioners agreed that a clear list is needed to complete the review and identified the following outstanding items:
    - Confirmation of the watershed used in the flood model, including known culverts and drainage paths.
    - Finalization of Manning's roughness coefficients, with direction to use a value of 0.13 for both overbank areas.
- The Chair confirmed that the 53G account is at zero. There was conversation about providing additional funds if additional peer review is required and that the applicant

expressed a want of moving toward a decision and therefore that they would be willing to provide additional funding.

- **Motion:** A motion was made and seconded to continue the public hearing to November 25, 2025.
- **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Outcome:** The public hearing was continued to November 25, 2025. The applicant will address the identified list items.

### **6:50 PM: Continued Public Hearing – Notice of Intent, Off Worthen Drive (Shared Driveway) – DEP# 169-1278**

- **Proposal:** Construction of two single-family homes and a shared driveway at Off Worthen Drive, continued review.
- **Presentation:** The public hearing notice was read into the record. A representative of Dillis & Roy appeared on behalf of the applicant and provided an update since the previous meeting. He stated that revised plans were submitted following the Commission's prior comments, including removal of the wetland replication area and the addition of a slope stabilization detail. He also reported that the project was reviewed by the Erosion and Sedimentation, Earth Removal, and Stormwater Advisory Committee, which resulted in one additional change: a small paved turnout added midway along the driveway.
- **Discussion:**
  - Commissioners reviewed the updated plans and noted that the recently added turnout is located outside the buffer zone.
  - Members stated they had no further questions or concerns and appreciated the revisions made.
- **Motion:** A motion was made and seconded to close the public hearing.
- **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Outcome:** The public hearing was closed.

### **7:00 PM Continued Public Hearing – Notice of Intent, Squannacook River Dam – DEP# Pending**

- **Proposal:** Repairs to the Squannacook River Dam.
- **Presentation:** The continued public hearing was opened. It was noted that no new information or updates had been received from the applicant since the last meeting.
- **Discussion:**
  - Commissioners agreed that without new materials to review, the hearing would need to be continued to the next meeting.
- **Motion:** A motion was made and seconded to continue the public hearing for the Squannacook River Dam to November 25, 2025.

- **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Outcome:** The hearing was continued to November 25, 2025.

### **7:01 PM: Continued Request for Determination of Applicability – 828 Martins Pond Road**

- **Proposal:** Grading work along the side of an existing barn to stabilize the exposed foundation.
- **Presentation:** The applicant appeared and explained that some soil was moved closer to the barn foundation to protect exposed stone and stabilize the structure. He stated that the work was limited to the area around the barn and that no work occurred within the wetland. Photos of the work were submitted prior to the meeting.
- **Discussion:**
  - Commissioners discussed confusion regarding the status of the filing and noted that the RDA review had not been completed and that now it looks like there has been some work occurring on site.
  - Members stated that the Commission had previously requested measurements showing the distance of the work from the wetland, which had not yet been provided.
  - Commissioners agreed that a site walk is needed to clarify what work has been completed, what work remains, and where the wetland boundary is located.
  - The applicant agreed to a site walk on November 22, 2025.
- **Motion:** A motion was made and seconded to continue the matter to November 25, 2025.
- **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Outcome:** The matter was continued to November 25, 2025. A site walk will be scheduled to review the location of the work relative to the wetland boundary.

### **7:15 PM: Request for Determination of Applicability – Groton School Lower Playing Fields**

- **Proposal:** Request for Determination of Applicability regarding the construction of a small building partially within the buffer zone.
- **Presentation:** A representative for the applicant appeared and stated that the proposal had been discussed extensively at the prior meeting. He reported that the plans were revised to include infiltration trenches to capture roof runoff and allow it to infiltrate on site rather than discharge to the stormwater system. He explained that the project was

refiled as an RDA due to site topography, noting that the wetland is upgradient. He acknowledged that the structure is partially within the buffer zone but stated that there is no feasible alternative location. He also noted that several trees would be removed as part of the work and that he would replant them.

- **Discussion:**
  - Commissioners discussed the project location, noting that the structure is partially within the 100-foot buffer and that permanent structures are generally discouraged under the bylaw.
  - Members acknowledged the applicant's explanation regarding site constraints, access needs, and safety considerations.
  - Members agreed to replace the removed trees with oaks and cherry trees and allow the area within the 50-foot buffer to naturalize.
- **Motion:** A motion was made and seconded to issue a Negative 3 Determination, finding that the work is within the buffer zone but will not alter areas, subject to the following conditions:
  - Trees removed shall be replaced with two oak trees and two cherry trees.
  - The area within the 50-foot buffer zone shall be allowed to naturalize.
- **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried unanimously. JS recused himself for this vote.
- **Outcome:** A Negative 3 Determination was issued with conditions.

### **7:30 PM: Unpermitted Work off Old Ayer Road (Groton Hil Music Center)**

- **Presentation:** A conversation was had regarding unpermitted work near James Brook. The property owner appeared and explained that the work involved clearing diseased trees, removing stumps and invasives, regrading the slope, and creating a temporary berm to control runoff. He stated that erosion controls have been installed and that the intent is to push material back up the slope and stabilize the area for future agricultural use. He acknowledged that work began prior to appearing before the Commission.
- **Discussion:**
  - Commissioners discussed concerns about the proximity of the work to James Brook and the potential for sediment runoff during winter storms.
  - Members noted that while the land is APR-protected agricultural land, erosion controls and sequencing of work remain serious concerns near the resource area.
  - Commissioners discussed if a formal filing is needed and agreed that, at minimum, a site walk is necessary to better understand distances, current conditions, and next steps.

- o The property owner granted permission for Commissioners and staff to access the property to observe conditions and take photographs.
- o Members agreed that debris removal above the berm could continue, but that the berm and erosion controls should remain in place for now.
- o Additional discussion was held regarding replacement of a stone wall within the buffer zone near James Brook.
- o Members agreed that an after-the-fact Request for Determination of Applicability should be filed for work done on a stone wall in the area as well, just to clarify jurisdiction.
- o The Commission agreed that work may continue provided erosion controls remain in place and are inspected through a site walk.
- **Next Steps/Outcome:**
  - o The property owner will submit an after-the-fact RDA for the stone wall work.
  - o A site walk will be conducted prior to the next meeting and members will inspect erosion controls on site.
  - o The property owner will return to the November 25, 2025 meeting for continued discussion.

### **7:40 PM: Continued Public Hearing – Notice of Intent (Under By-Law) – 500 Main Street**

- **Presentation:** The applicant’s representative appeared on behalf of the applicant and provided an update following the Commission’s prior request for additional information. He reviewed revised plans and a letter dated 11/05, which included updated comparative plans showing existing versus proposed disturbance and impervious areas within the 50-foot and 100-foot buffer zones. He stated that the revised plans demonstrate a net reduction in the overall disturbance and impervious surface area compared to existing conditions. He also reviewed proposed constructed stormwater wetlands and explained that certain areas of new disturbance are associated with stormwater management features or do not drain toward the wetland. He also reviewed a revised lighting plan, noting that all fixtures are dark-sky compliant and downward-facing.
- **Discussion:**
  - o Commissioners discussed the revised plans and agreed that the project represents an overall environmental benefit, including reduced impervious area and improved stormwater management.

- o Members discussed concerns regarding lighting impacts on wildlife, particularly amphibians, and requested that perimeter light fixtures include shielding on the wetland-facing side. The applicant agreed.
- o Commissioners discussed invasive species monitoring for the constructed stormwater wetlands and noted that existing conditions addressing invasive species would remain in effect.
- **Motion:** A motion was made and seconded to close the public hearing.
- **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Outcome:** The public hearing was closed.

### **7:50 PM: Discussion on Change to Approved Shed – 352 Nashua Road**

- **Presentation:** It was explained that the homeowner requested a minor change to an approved Request for Determination of Applicability to relocate and slightly enlarge a previously approved shed. It was noted that the shed would be moved closer to the house and that the revised location results in less area within the riverfront zone than previously approved. The homeowner appeared and confirmed that the proposed change would reduce the footprint within the protected area.
- **Discussion:**
  - o Commissioners discussed the request and noted that the shed remains well below the 5,000 square foot threshold allowed within the riverfront area.
  - o Members stated that the proposed change does not increase impacts and appreciated that the homeowner brought the request back to the Commission for review.
- **Motion:** A motion was made and seconded to authorize the Conservation Administrator to issue a letter approving the revised shed location.
- **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Outcome:** The Conservation Administrator is authorized to issue a letter approving the minor change.

### **7:55 PM: Request for Certificate of Compliance – 124 Raddin Road**

- **Presentation:** It was reported that no applicant was present. Commissioners noted that a site visit was conducted prior to the meeting. Before and after photos were reviewed, showing that the shed previously on site has been removed and the area has been stabilized.
- **Discussion:**

- o Commissioners stated that the site appears to be well stabilized.
- o Members noted that remaining materials should be removed as part of final cleanup.
- **Motion:** A motion was made and seconded to issue a Certificate of Compliance, contingent upon the Conservation Administrator inspecting the site and confirming that erosion controls and stabilization are satisfactory.
- **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Outcome:** A Certificate of Compliance will be issued following staff inspection.

**8:00 PM: Request for Certificate of Compliance – Florence Roche Elementary School – DEP# 169-1227**

- **Presentation:** There is a request for a Certificate of Compliance. Commissioners reviewed site conditions and photos and noted that erosion controls remain in place and that additional cleanup is needed before the site can be considered compliant.
- **Discussion:**
  - o Commissioners expressed concerns regarding extensive erosion controls still present on site, areas of turf and grass clippings placed within the wetland, and general trash remaining in the buffer area.
  - o Members stated that the site is not ready for a Certificate of Compliance at this time and that cleanup and removal of erosion controls must occur prior to approval.
  - o Commissioners discussed granite bounds installed around the track to delineate the protected area. Members agreed that the granite bounds currently in place are consistent with what was approved and are sufficient for delineation purposes.
  - o The applicant explained that erosion control removal is underway and expected to be completed by the end of the week.
  - o Commissioners discussed that grass clippings and turf placed in wetland areas must be removed prior to issuance of a Certificate of Compliance and noted that future dumping by others would be addressed separately.
- **Next Steps/Outcome:**
  - o Erosion controls will be fully removed and remaining trash, turf, and grass clippings will be removed from wetland areas.
  - o A site walk will be conducted prior to the next meeting to review site conditions and confirm completion of cleanup.

- o The request for a Certificate of Compliance was continued to the November 25, 2025 meeting.
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## **2. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **2.1 GENERAL DISCUSSIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **CPA Funding – Consider Obtaining Letters of Support**

- **Discussion:**
  - o The Commission discussed a request for \$300,000 in CPA funding for FY2026–FY2027. As part of the application process, letters of support will be requested from other town boards, organizations, and individuals. Staff noted that the final CPA application is due in December.
- **Next Steps:** The Conservation Administrator will begin soliciting letters of support. Commissioners offered assistance with outreach as needed.

### **2.2 COMMITTEE UPDATES**

#### **Stewardship Committee**

- The Committee reported on recent activity, including a site walk at the Hayes Conservation Area. Members reviewed the general condition of the property and noted that the turtle nesting area appears to be in good condition. Photos were shared showing the nesting area at installation and its current condition, and members expressed satisfaction with how it has held up over time.
- While in the area, the Committee observed possible encroachments in the area. There appears to be newly constructed work located close to the cattail area. Another large structure across the street may be within the 100-foot buffer zone. The Committee noted that these concerns were brought to their attention by a nearby resident. No action was taken at this time.
- Commissioners noted that a mowing plan is still in progress. Staff indicated that work on the plan is expected to continue into next year.

### **2.3 LAND MANAGEMENT & ACQUISITION**

#### **Review & Approve Stewardship Management Plan for Gibbet Hill**

- The Commission discussed review and approval of the stewardship management plan for Gibbet Hill. It was stated that the item will be placed on a future agenda, as edits are still needed following comments received from DCR.
- Commissioners discussed ownership recognition and noted that everyone should be acknowledged in any related correspondence.
- **Discussion:**
  - Commissioners reviewed draft language and noted several areas needing clarification or revision, including property naming conventions and references to ownership.
  - Members discussed unclear references to trail measurements and agreed that the language should be revised for clarity.
  - Commissioners raised concerns about draft language stating that the Conservation Commission would be responsible for bi-annual brush hogging. Members agreed that the Commission should retain the right to perform maintenance if needed, but should not be obligated to do so.
- **Outcome:** Review of the stewardship management plan was continued to a future meeting to allow staff to incorporate revisions and feedback.

### **Review & Accept Conservation Restriction Agreement for Florence Roche Elementary School**

- The Commission briefly discussed the draft conservation restriction associated with Florence Roche.
- **Discussion:**
  - Commissioners noted that while much of the draft appears acceptable, the map depicting the extent of the conservation restriction is incorrect.
  - Members stated that the shaded area shown does not reflect the full extent of the intended restriction and overlooks areas included in prior plans.
  - Commissioners expressed concern that approving the document as drafted would result in a significant loss of protected land.
  - Members agreed that the conservation restriction map must be revised to reflect the full restricted area shown in earlier materials before moving forward.
- **Outcome:** Further review of the conservation restriction was deferred to a future meeting pending correction of the mapping issues.

### **Mowed Parcels Update**

- **Presentation:** It was reported that access permission for the Priest Parcel had been arranged. The field was fully mowed during a recent visit. The mowing was completed in a single pass and no downed trees were encountered. Members noted that there is significant poison ivy on site, but overall the field remains in good condition.

### **Fisheries and Wildlife**

- **Presentation:** It was reported that staff has been in contact with Anne Gagnon from Massachusetts Fisheries & Wildlife, but she was unable to attend this meeting. She has expressed interest in meeting with the Commission and is available to attend the November 25, 2025 meeting.
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### **OTHER**

- A member of the public noted that the Conservation Commission website still lists “Shattuck Homestead,” which has been renamed Nipmuc Meadows. Staff acknowledged the need to update the website.
  - It was also reported that the Nipmuc Meadows working group recently met and is planning to install a plaque at the site in Fall 2026. The group will follow up with the Commission to coordinate details, including funding.
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### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- **Motion:** A motion was made to enter Executive Session. as the Chair declared that an open meeting could have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body, and not to return to open session.
- **Vote:** All in favor. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Outcome:** The Commission entered Executive Session.

APPROVED: 2/10/26