

**Minutes**  
**Conservation Commission**  
**August 15, 2023**

**Attendance:** David Miller, Chair, Ann Storer, Martha Hoyt, Zeke Nims, Reed Pugh, Elaine Vreeland, Administrator.

**Minutes:** The minutes of July 25 approved.

**Kiosks in Town Forest:** Discussion.

Leo Arone, Eagle Scout Applicant. Kiosks are proposed at the North Gateway and West Chardon Road entrances, which will be visible from the road. David noted that neighbors should be notified. The work is proposed to be finished by October and will be funded by Leo. He will be using the Conservation Commission kiosk template and posting conservation area regulations. Pressure treated wood will be used for the posts and supported with packed gravel. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to grant permission for two kiosks to be constructed within the Town Forest.

**Wedge Pond:** Discussion.

Rep.: Nick Cacciolfi, Director, Recreation Department. David said that the Commission generally supports the use of Borregaard Beach, and asked Nick what he anticipates for future of the pond and surrounding area, considering the herring run, pesticides, herbicide treatments, and aeration.

Nick stated that his department has many responsibilities yet is required raise its own money to fund programs. His 5-year plan will focus on programs which will return money to the department, and the beach rates low in facility repair. He would like to see it used for some summer programs, but not swimming. Other projects will need to rely on private funds. Elaine noted that the town has appropriated \$35,000 for a study of conditions in the pond plus recommendations. David asked if assistance from the Commission would be needed, and it was determined to wait until after the study is released, when there will be a wider discussion. Nick did say that the annual herbicide treatment will continue.

**Lynch School:** Continued Public Hearing, Notice of Intent

**Representatives:**

- Michelle Callahan, Nitsch Engineering,
- Ti Johnson, Warner Larson, Landscape Architects

Information Presented:

- LEC Environmental Wildlife Habitat Evaluation
- Updated landscaping and construction plans
- Final Engineering Department Memorandum
- Lighting strategy Memorandum
- Wildlife Habitat Evaluation

It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to open the public hearing. It was confirmed that the proposed pedestrian bridge would not impair the bank. The Engineering Department approved the engineering design and stormwater report. The lighting plan recommended lighting focused toward the bridge and the use of motion sensors. Some light will spill into the brook, but there is a need for safety. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to close the hearing. The draft Order of Conditions was reviewed, modified, and approved. It was also noted that the contractor will return to the Commission to discuss means and methods before the commencement of work for two items: 1.) installation of the pedestrian bridge, and 2.) demolition of the school. The Town Inspection, Operations and Maintenance Plan was adopted for stormwater structures. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to approve an Order of Conditions.

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**18 Sunset Road:** Continued Public Hearing, Notice of Intent. It was moved, seconded, and approved to continue the public hearing to September 12, 2023.

**6 Pocahontas Drive:** Discussion re Modification.

Representative: Dan Dragini, PE

Information Presented: Revised Site Plan, dated Aug. 2, 2023.

Mr. Dragani noted that the stormwater system has been installed according with the proposed plan. A permeable paver driveway was installed, with a berm to prevent water from draining to the neighbor's yard, although some gaps will need to be closed. He does not know if it was installed correctly, but it appears to be functioning. The property owner would like to install a permeable paver system around a proposed pool, with pool equipment to be placed under the deck. As it would constitute more than 500 SF of area, it is under review by the Engineering Department. He also noted that some work had taken place within 25' of the wetland area, and that the landscaper had been notified and will be installing wetland plants and a conservation seed mix. A new erosion control line has been installed 25' from the wetland area. The Engineering Department will review the driveway conditions. Pool drainage was also discussed, and Mr. Dragani will send a copy of the MADEP Pool Guidance document. David

recommended that the Commission wait for full review by the Engineering Department and the hearing was continued to September 12, 2023.

**Wright-Locke Farm- Miyawaki Forest:** Discussion.

Representatives:

- Prassede Calabi, Grow Local,
- Raja Abdelmalek
- Walter Kittredge

Information Presented:

- Conservation Restriction
- Photolocation Map

Prassede discussed project benefits, including that it will be a new native species forest which will grow in 1/3 of the usual growing time; that it will restore agricultural land to forest increasing conservation value; that it will increase in ecosystem function including habitat and carbon absorption; that there will be an increase moisture and a decrease in temperature. These were not discussed or confirmed by the Commission. There would also be an educational component promoting understanding and appreciation of forests. She described her previous meetings with the Commission and Wright-Locke Farm and gave a description of the plant species to be installed, which have been selected to be water and heat tolerant. She noted that she had taken soil samples and the underlying soil is moist to wet, and that she is preparing a Notice of Intent. The estimated cost is \$24,000. It is hoped that the forest will become available for research regarding diversity of insect and other animal life. Elaine read the Conservation Restriction, which allows work promoting open space preservation, public access, water quality, sustainable agroforestry, protection of wildlife habitat, and education. The area where the forest is proposed specified preservation of natural conditions and wildlife habitat. As the area is not bordering on a water body and is less than a quarter acre foot, the Notice of Intent will be filed under the bylaw only.

**Upper Mystic Lake:** Discussion.

Herbicide treatment. Request for an Extension Permit. DEP File No. 346-379. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to extend the Order of Conditions for three years with the condition that this will be final extension. As the original Order had been issued in 2008, members felt that a new Notice of Intent would ask new questions and give a fresh perspective. It was noted that signs had been posted, abutters notified, and notice had been placed in the paper.

**34 Leslie Road:** Discussion.

Request for Partial Certificate of Compliance. The Certificate would comprise the home location, grading, and stormwater installation, but would exclude landscaping. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to issue a partial Certificate of Compliance, with a notation that the next property owner must return to the Commission with a landscaping plan.

**Community Preservation Act:** Discussion.

David reported that the Select Board had discussed the Act, which would establish an Community Preservation Fund based on a surcharge of the tax levy against real property. The state will provide matching funds. The Select Board has moved to create a study committee led by a working group to regularly update the Select Board and report to Fall 2023 Town Meeting with the next steps leading to a Spring 2024 article on the Town Meeting Warrant. Money from the fund could be used to preserve open space and historic sites, and to contribute to affordable housing.

**Climate Week:** Discussion.

September 24 to September 30. Members discussed another cleanup day, or a presence for an event on the Town Common. Plans will be developed, and the subject was continued to September 12, 2023.

**Herring Mortality and the Mystic Dam:** Discussion.

The Commission was requested to write a letter to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), noting the excessive fish predation during the herring migration, and requesting that the DCR construct a method of protecting those fish that fall over the spillway. David stated that he would write the letter on behalf of the Commission. [Follow-up: David subsequently communicated with John Kilborn on the matter. There were two points. One, there was no particular trigger for the letter to be written at this time. Two, John was appreciative of our interest in providing a letter but recommended we wait until there was a response to the letter he had sent, perhaps providing some guidance to our effort.]

Submitted by:

Elaine Vreeland

