



# Town of Arlington, MA Conservation Commission

## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Thursday, November 20, 2025 — 7:00 PM

**Location:** Conducted by Remote Participation

Pursuant to State Legislation suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20, the meeting was held in a virtual format using Zoom.

**Members Present:** Chuck Tirone (Chair), Susan Chapnick (Vice Chair), Nathaniel Stevens, David White, Mike Gildesgame, Brian McBride, Sara Alfaro-Franco (Associate Member), Eileen Coleman (Associate Member)

**Members Absent:** David Kaplan

**Arlington Staff Present:** David Morgan, Jackie Anderson

### 1) Hearings.

a) DEP#091-0372: Notice of Intent: 40 Park Avenue (Continued from 11/6/2025).

The Conservation Commission held a public hearing to consider a Notice of Intent to repair a loading dock at 40 Park Ave in Arlington. Areas proposed to be altered include the Riverfront Area and the Buffer Zone/Adjacent Upland Resource Area associated with Bank to Mill Brook. This was a continued hearing originally opened on 10/9/25.

Nick Skoly, representative from VHB, explained the changes to the plan. As requested by the Commission, additional plantings were proposed, with high-density plantings to help prevent invasive species and improve habitat value in restoration planting area. A list of plant species was provided. M. Gildesgame asked if the permanent parking barrier is in place. Richard Vallarelli stated that

the permanent parking barrier has not been installed, pending the proposed work. S. Chapnick asked if the Enforcement Order plan could be shown over the Notice of Intent Plan. N. Skoly said that it had been on a revised plan submitted and drew the restoration planting areas over the plan to show the areas on screen, demonstrating that the restoration area for the Enforcement Order does not overlap with the Notice of Intent restoration area. D. Morgan stated that the plant mix proposed contains grasses and all plants are native to the northeast. D. Morgan recommended including the native seed mix in the Enforcement Order restoration area, as well. N. Skoly and R. Vallarelli agreed. D. Morgan confirmed that the Enforcement Order had required boulders to be placed between the planting area and the parking area, and suggested using a sufficient amount to prevent cars from entering the planting area.

- i) *Motion to close the hearing for DEP#091-0372*: N. Stevens.
- ii) *Seconded*: S. Chapnick
- iii) *Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote*: C. Tirone – yes; S. Chapnick – yes; N. Stevens – yes; D. White – yes; M. Gildesgame – yes; B. McBride – yes

C. Tirone suggested including the requirement for boulders to be installed between the restoration area and parking area, and for the seed mix to be also cast over the Enforcement Order restoration area as special conditions. S. Chapnick stated that three years of monitoring reports for the plantings with 100% survival of trees and 80% survival of other vegetation would also be required, as a standard condition for restoration plantings. R. Vallarelli agreed that the monitoring reports will be provided annually.

N. Skoly reported that the Town approved the stormwater permit with conditions. He shared the conditions with the Commission, as requested by S. Chapnick. S. Chapnick had no issue with the stormwater permit conditions.

- iv) *Motion to issue an Order of Conditions for DEP#091-0372 with standard conditions and the special conditions as discussed:* N. Stevens.
- v) *Seconded:* D. White
- vi) *Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote:* C. Tirone – yes; S. Chapnick – yes; N. Stevens – yes; D. White – yes; M. Gildesgame – yes; B. McBride – yes

2) Administrative.

a) Review Meeting Minutes.

- i) Draft minutes from 11/6/25 were revised by N. Stevens and S. Chapnick.
  - (1) *Motion to approve minutes from 11/6/25 as edited:* N. Stevens
  - (2) *Seconded:* D. White
  - (3) *Motion passed by roll call vote with 5 in favor and 1 abstaining:* C. Tirone – yes; S. Chapnick – yes; N. Stevens – yes; D. White – yes; M. Gildesgame – abstain; M. Gildesgame – yes; B. McBride – yes

b) Correspondence Received.

- i) All correspondence is available to the public. For a full list, contact the Conservation Agent at [concomm@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:concomm@town.arlington.ma.us).
- ii) Enforcement Order sent to Arlington Catholic High School (ACHS) at 0 Mystic Street dated 11/6/25:

D. Morgan stated that painter's tape had been used to cover the perimeter drains rather than filter fabric, as listed in the Enforcement Order. D. Morgan and N. Stevens visited the site today to check on the condition of the tape and take photos. Rolls of old field grass turf were being taken away at that time. Most of the rubber infill seemed to be staying on the site, no more infill was migrating off the field than previously observed. The tape was in good condition but had some gaps and breakage at points, but was otherwise preventing debris from getting into the drain system. The removal of the rolled

up field turf is an issue, because the materials are being taken up over the berm onto Summer Street, and the rubber infill was falling out as the turf rolls were stacked onto the truck trailer. There was a tarp under the truck and trailer at the loading site on Summer Street. The mat was rolled up after the truck and trailer left, but it seemed likely that the infill would be falling off the truck as it drove away. S. Chapnick stated that this may be an issue with Town Engineering even if not a Conservation Commission issue. D. Morgan offered to write an email requesting protection of the storm drain on Summer Street. N. Stevens presented photos of the rolled-up turf on the truck and the tape over the drains. D. Morgan stated that there appeared to be approximately one more truckload worth of field left when he and N. Stevens left the site. The area where turf was removed had gravel underneath. Commissioners discussed sending an email and/or updating the Enforcement order. C. Tirone recommended requiring ACHS to install a silt sack and sweep the street each day. B. McBride recommended requiring reasonable notice so that a Conservation Commission member can be present when the new field is being installed.

Commissioners decided to update the Enforcement Order requiring a silt sack on the Summer Street storm drain adjacent to the field and requiring street sweeping daily during work. Also added was a requirement for notice to the Commission when the new field will be installed. D. Morgan will update the Enforcement Order and send an email to ACHS.

- (1) *Motion to update the Enforcement Order with the aforementioned 3 requirements:* N. Stevens
- (2) *Seconded:* B. McBride
- (3) *Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote:* C. Tirone – yes; S. Chapnick – yes; N. Stevens – yes; D. White – yes; M. Gildesgame – abstain; M. Gildesgame – yes; B. McBride – yes

3) Discussion.

a) Enforcement Order: 66-66R Dudley Street/993 Massachusetts Avenue.

D. Morgan stated that Evelyn LaRusso and the engineer Al Gala are not present at this meeting. They had asked for clarification on the amount and location of fill to be removed, which D. Morgan and N. Stevens discussed with them during a site meeting this morning. D. Morgan requested a full plan for the December 4th Conservation Commission meeting. N. Stevens stated that the large trees the Commission likely will want to preserve are now marked on the plan. The idea is to remove the fill, remove the plantings on the berm, lower the berm along the river, and provide a replacement planting plan in the new floodplain.

D. Morgan asked if an arborist had made recommendations to stay clear of the trees' root zones. C. Tirone stated that it is the property owner's responsibility to determine that and recommended waiting to see what Al Gala comes up with. D. Morgan expressed concern that there would not be enough flood storage added for the amount of fill on site. There may not be sufficient room for 2 to 1 flood storage. C. Tirone stated that 2 to 1 would not be required for an Enforcement Order.

N. Stevens mentioned the prior history of violations from 2015 and the Commission's more recent deliberations about this matter. The goal is to provide as much compensatory flood storage as possible while allowing them to continue to use the property. Al Gala may be recommending a retaining wall due to a negotiation with the condo association. S. Chapnick stated that there is a history of violations from as far back as 2012. D. Morgan had estimated the amount of fill that was added, which is in the project file from 2024. N. Stevens presented a conceptual sketch of the area of fill that the Commission discussed and adopted at a prior meeting, which is restricted by the drainage easement bisecting the property.

C. Tirone recommended that the Commission look at a connected area on the end of Dudley Street PI, where a parking lot appears to have been extended within the Riverfront Area.

b) Water Bodies Working Group.

D. White stated that native plant restoration was approved at Spy Pond Park, using money from the Water Bodies Fund with the majority of the funding from the Friends of Spy Pond Park.

D. White stated that MassDEP is currently evaluating Spy Pond for water quality, and there will be a public meeting on December 12th at Robbins Library to discuss their findings. D. Morgan stated that DEP will likely establish a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Spy Pond for nutrients and for another small pond which Spy Pond outlets to.

D. White stated that an Eastern screech owl was entangled in fishing line at Spy Pond, but was rehabilitated. Multiple fishing line receptacles have been knocked down at Hills Pond and Spy Pond and the Res. C. Tirone stated that he and S. Chapnick have been reaching out to the Select Board to discuss fishing line issues, but the Select Board members they spoke to believe it is not in their jurisdiction. C. Tirone recommended sending another letter. D. White recommended a warrant article for Town Meeting. N. Stevens suggested options for Town Meeting warrant articles, ranging from a resolution, voting to prohibit fishing at Hill's Pond, or a moratorium on fishing at the pond.

M. Gildesgame asked about the construction schedule for the Menotomy Rocks Park near Hills Pond. D. Morgan stated that the construction vehicles were parking within the 100-foot protected area of Hills Pond during the pre-activity visit. The vehicle was moved to the other side of the tree at the end of that meeting. Erosion controls and fencing were up. Tree protection was installed,

and the only issue was that the tree protection did not extend around some of the exposed roots, so D. Morgan had requested they move the tree protection to cover the exposed roots. There is limited space for machines to access the area. D. Morgan agreed to visit the site again. The goal is to complete the project before winter, but the work seems likely to extend into the spring. B. McBride asked if the plantings were being delayed around the swale. D. Morgan stated that the condition for the plantings is enforceable but they had planned to do that in the second phase when more funding would be available.

D. White stated that there is also fishing line in trees at the Reservoir.

C. Tirone recommended working on a warrant article.

D. White stated that the WBWG annual report is in process, and there will be a celebration of the newly named Menotomy Brook in the spring.

c) CPA Committee Liaison.

B. McBride stated that he and D. Morgan have been discussing how to manage the submissions due to the shortage of CPA funding. D. Morgan stated that he plans to advance a CPA proposal for 10% of the cost of the Cooke's Hollow project to use as a match for an MVP grant. D. Morgan also plans to pursue multiple sources of funding for 21 Pond Lane, including CPA, a biodiversity grant from the state, and CDBG. D. Morgan plans to submit to only CPA to repair the stairs at 17 Mill St going to the bike path. The pocket of conservation land by Buzzell Field may need to go on the back burner for this round of funding. Meadowbrook Park and Window-on-the-Mystic are also being considered.

d) Tree Committee Liaison.

S. Alfaro-Franco stated that the Tree Committee met yesterday on 11/19/25. The DPW planted 180 street trees and is working on a backlog of tree removals and pruning. About 20 trees were lost from the Cool Corridors, so the plan is to

replant those 20 in 2026. Members of the Tree Committee met with Mike Rademacher to discuss improving contractor watering arrangements for future projects. The proposal is for developers to pay into a fund for the Town to contract for watering trees, addressing a problem that trees are not being watered once the contractor has been paid.

e) Calendar for 2026.

D. Morgan stated that the calendar of meeting dates for 2026 needs to be compared with the Town's holiday calendar before it can be presented to the Commission for approval. The goal is to present this to the Commission at its next meeting.

f) Recreation.

D. Morgan described a proposal for the ongoing invasive removal permit concern that Park and Recreation supports. The challenge is getting the bagged invasive plants removed as there is no Town entity to do this currently. D. Morgan reported that the ARMi group of volunteers and a Scout group, with his permission, performed invasive plant removal at Windows-on-the-Mystic, and the bags of invasive plants have not been picked up for weeks. There is currently no reliable disposal method with the new trash hauler. One idea is a dedicated dumpster to dispose of invasives. D. White recommended using a dumpster and asking Karen Mullins, Lexington Conservation Commission, about it.

N. Stevens remembered that at a prior Park and Rec Commission meeting, there was discussion and favorable views to using a single form for approvals of such projects by both Park and Recreation and Conservation. S. Chapnick stated that Park and Recreation wants tighter control than the Conservation Commission. D. Morgan explained that only Conservation Commission Land Stewards were allowed to do invasive removal on Park and Recreation properties, and ArMi has expanded that by training volunteers within the Land Stewards program. There is no change proposed to the procedure through the Conservation Commission. D.



Morgan agreed to explore a common form for both Conservation and Recreation with the Recreation Director.

g) Budget.

D. Morgan stated that he submitted the budget proposal and it should be reviewed in advance of Town Meeting, but he can follow up to ask about the procedure and timeline. C. Tirone suggested speaking to the Finance Committee.

Adjourn – 8:39pm