



Town of Arlington, MA Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, January 8, 2026 — 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, David Kaplan, Sara Alfaro-Franco (Associate Member)

Members Absent: Brian McBride, Mike Gildesgame, Eileen Coleman (Associate Member)

Arlington Staff Present: David Morgan, Jackie Yee

1. Review Meeting Minutes.

Materials Reviewed:

12182025 Draft Minutes Conservation Commission

a. Draft minutes from 12/18/25 were revised by S. Chapnick and N. Stevens.

D. Kaplan requested another correction.

- i. *Motion to approve minutes from 12/18/25 as corrected:* N. Stevens
- ii. *Seconded:* D. Kaplan
- iii. *Motion passed unanimously:* C. Tirone – yes; S. Chapnick – yes; N. Stevens – yes; D. White – yes; D. Kaplan – yes

2. Correspondence Received

- a. All correspondence is available to the public. For a full list, contact the Conservation Agent at concomm@town.arlington.ma.us.

3. Vote to Endorse a Comment Letter on Charles River Combined Sewer Overflows

Materials Reviewed:

Letter from Massachusetts Conservation Committees to the MWRA Board of Directors

D. Morgan summarized the comment letter drafted by the Charles River Watershed Association and Mystic River Watershed Association, which concerns Combined-Sewer Overflow discharges to the Charles River, Mystic River, and Alewife Brook. The current Long Term Control Plan as proposed allows continual dumping of sewage via CSO's into the water bodies. This letter is part of a campaign to pressure MWRA to change the plan to improve the quality of the water bodies. The Conservation Commission was asked to sign on to the letter using the Google form. C. Tirone agreed to sign on behalf of the Commission.

- a. *Motion to sign on to the comment letter:* N. Stevens
- b. *Seconded:* D. White
- c. *Motion passed unanimously:* C. Tirone – yes; S. Chapnick – yes; N. Stevens – yes; D. White – yes; D. Kaplan – yes

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

Materials Reviewed:

Draft Plan dated 12/8/25

Al Gala, P.E., from Gala Simon Associates, representing the property owner, presented the floodplain maps and explained that the most recent revised floodplain map is most accurate. A. Gala presented the preliminary plan for restoration, which includes creation of flood storage and tree protection. Gabion retaining walls are proposed to allow free flow of water. The slope would be 2:1, and 1845 cubic feet of fill would be removed.

C. Tirone asked where the estimated seasonal high groundwater is relative to the flood storage elevation. Al Gala stated that the flood storage area is dry and

would fill up from the brook rather than from groundwater, but it is likely very close to the groundwater level.

C. Tirone asked how the steep slope would be stabilized, and if the plan could include the vegetated strip around the car parking area that the Commission had asked for. Al Gala clarified that he plans to provide a plan and vegetated buffer, but thought it would be premature to do so before discussing it with the Commission.

D. Morgan stated that the condominium association had requested for everything to be brought back behind the property line. This proposal would need their authorization to proceed on their side of the property. The addition of the impervious surface for the brick patio and parking area, and compensatory storage on the right side of the plan should also be considered.

D. Kaplan asked how the water would get to the flood storage space if the top-of-bank elevation shown on the plan is higher than the FEMA map elevation. Al Gala explained that the water would flow into the compensatory storage area from further upstream. D. Kaplan asked why the opportunity to follow the property line and restore the encroachment area was not taken. N. Stevens replied that the Commission had originally discussed including more flood storage to the east, but once the Commission realized there were mature trees to the south, the protection of the trees was prioritized. S. Chapnick agreed that the amount of flood storage proposed is minimal, and the gabion on the right side could be extended down the property line to increase the flood storage. C. Tirone recommended finding out if the trees are invasive species. The Commission discussed the benefits and drawbacks of invasive trees and various potential configurations of the gabion wall and flood storage. D. Morgan explained that some small plantings were already installed on site voluntarily, and may need to be removed.

Al Gala stated that the condominium association might prefer not to have the gabions on their property, and in that case trees would need to be removed. There may need to be a compromise between the owners of 66-66R Dudley Street, the condominium association, and the Conservation Commission. C. Tirone stated that the Commission will need to see more flood storage and removal of pavers. Al Gala explained that the gabions are proposed where they are to protect the trees, and should not be moved any closer to the trees. Moving the gabions to the property line would impact the trees.

Al Gala agreed to continue the discussion to the February 5th Conservation Commission meeting.

- a. *Motion to continue the discussion to the meeting of 2/5/26:* N. Stevens
- b. *Seconded:* D.Kaplan
- c. *Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote:* C. Tirone – yes; S. Chapnick – yes; N. Stevens – yes; D. White – yes; D. Kaplan – yes

5. Water Bodies Working Group.

D. White stated that the Water Bodies Annual Report is close to completion. The budget may need to increase for next year. The Water Bodies Working Group does not support the moratorium on fishing, and encourages the cleanup of fishing lines by volunteers and other steps such as public education. The Hills Pond representative did not think the moratorium was appropriate for Hills Pond, but did support additional cleanup by volunteers. Spy Pond volunteers seem to be managing the fishing line cleanup successfully.

D. Morgan stated that he has not discussed this with the Park and Recreation Director recently, but plans to meet with Recreation on January 16th.

S. Chapnick stated that the Conservation Commission sent a strong letter to the Select Board last summer about Hills Pond, and she is concerned that the Water Bodies Working Group is not supporting the idea of a moratorium despite the fact that the Conservation Commission supported it. S. Chapnick believes the moratorium would be unlikely to pass at Town Meeting if the Water Bodies Working Group does not support it.

D. White also stated that the representative of Hills Pond did not think a fishery assessment of the pond would provide much value and was necessary.

6. CPA Committee Liaison.

No updates.

7. Tree Committee Liaison.

S. Alfaro-Franco stated that the Tree Committee will meet next week.

8. Symmes Conservation Restriction.

N. Stevens stated that there have been no updates since the last Conservation Commission meeting, and the group will meet again next week.

9. Budget.

D. Morgan stated that he submitted a budget request to the Town Manager's Office. The town manager then requested to see a budget for the Water Bodies Working Group, which D. Morgan submitted. C. Tirone asked if staff would attend Town Meeting. D. Morgan confirmed that he plans to attend Town Meeting. If the Town Manager's Office doesn't include the Water Bodies Fund in the budget, the warrant article can cover it.

10. DEP #091-0374: Notice of Intent: Winchester Country Club Greens (468 Mystic Street) (Continued from 12/18/25).

The Conservation Commission opened a public hearing to consider a Notice of Intent to perform golf course fairway and green reconfiguration and improvements. Areas proposed to be altered include Buffer Zone, Adjacent Upland Resource Area, and Riverfront Area associated with Herbert Meyer Brook.

Materials Reviewed:

Winchester Country Club Arlington Permit Set
Winchester Country Club NOI Supplemental Info
Site Visit Photos

Sarah Stearns of Beals and Thomas clarified that the DEP number is 091-0374 for this project. S. Stearns presented a plan showing the proposed improvements to the golf course, and photos of the golf course showing existing conditions. S. Stearns suggested an option to replant the slope next to the tee box with native plants. D. Kaplan asked if the Riverfront Area should end and be perpendicular to the stream where it daylights. D. Morgan and C. Tirone agreed that the way the Riverfront Area is depicted on the plan is a conservative approach, and could end at a perpendicular line at the point where the brook daylights. Jackie Boyer of Beals and Thomas explained that the project is proposed as new development under 310 CMR 10.58(4) rather than redevelopment under 10.58(5).

C. Tirone requested buffer strips along the Herbert Meyer Brook, and suggested mowing it in spring rather than winter. C. Tirone also asked for documentation that the mowing along the brook is approved, and explanation of why the two Notice of Intent's are separated. J. Boyer stated that the projects are on different

schedules and managed by different contractors, and unexpectedly overlapped in timing. C. Tirone asked if the existing condition has altered more than 10% of the Riverfront Area based on the definitions of alteration in the regulations. J. Boyer stated that the narrative includes that calculation. N. Stevens requested a site visit for both projects. The Commission agreed to meet on site at 8 am on Wednesday, January 21st.

C. Tirone requested justification for the seasonal cutting up to the edge of the bank, calculation of total existing alteration of the Riverfront Area prior to the project, a list of the existing plantings near the tee box, and a vegetated buffer strip along Herbert Meyer Brook. S. Chapnick requested more vegetation along the brook.

C. Tirone opened the hearing for public comment. No comments were made.

Applicant agreed to continue the hearing to January 22, 2026.

- a. *Motion to continue the hearing for Notice of Intent #091-0374 at 468 Mystic Street to the meeting of January 22, 2026:* N. Stevens
- b. *Seconded:* D. Kaplan
- c. *Motion passed unanimously:* C. Tirone – yes; S. Chapnick – yes; N. Stevens – yes; D. White – yes; D. Kaplan – yes

11. DEP #091-0376: Notice of Intent: Winchester Country Club (468 Mystic Street).

The Conservation Commission opened a public hearing to consider a Notice of Intent to conduct improvements to the facilities within the Buffer Zone, Adjacent Upland Resource Area (AURA), and Riverfront Area associated with Herbert Meyer Brook, and within the Buffer Zone and AURA of a Bordering Vegetated Wetland.

The Commission agreed, at the applicant's request, to continue this hearing to the meeting of January 22nd, 2026, without discussion.

Materials Reviewed:

Winchester Country Club Arlington Permit Set

Winchester Country Club NOI Supplemental Info

Site Visit Photos

- a. *Motion to continue the hearing for Notice of Intent #091-0376 at 468 Mystic St to the meeting of January 22, 2026:* N. Stevens
- b. *Seconded:* S. Chapnick
- c. *Motion passed unanimously:* C. Tirone – yes; S. Chapnick – yes; N. Stevens – yes; D. White – yes; D. Kaplan – yes

Adjourn – 8:46pm