



# Conservation Commission Meeting

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 7:00 PM  
Remote Participation Only

## Agenda

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, the meeting and public hearing will be conducted with remote opportunities for participation. Remote participation and access methods include:

### **ACCESS INFORMATION:**

- A. This meeting will be held on March 4, 2026, at 7:00 pm. Location: Remote Participation Only
- B. The in-person meeting will also be televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television) on Comcast Channel 22 or RCN Channel 13 and can be streamed online at: <http://vodwcatv.org/CablecastPublicSite/watch-now?site=3>
- C. The Public may join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/99597080710>
- D. Public may join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 995 9708 0710
- E. Public may comment through email: [sjenness@watertown-ma.gov](mailto:sjenness@watertown-ma.gov)
- F. Please Visit the Conservation Commission Website here: <https://www.watertown-ma.gov/199/Conservation-Commission>

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1. Call to Order
  2. Roll Call
  3. Whitney Hill Park Annual Abutters Meeting
    - A. 2025 Whitney Hill Park Annual Report
  4. Regular Business
    - A. Filling of open positions
      - i. Vice Chair
      - ii. Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Representative
    - B. Meeting Format
      - i. Discussion of meeting format: in-person, hybrid, or remote
    - C. Whitney Hill Park trees
  5. Updates
    - A. Chair Updates
    - B. Agent's Report
  6. Minutes to be approved

- A. February 4, 2026, Conservation Commission
- 7. Adjourn



**CITY OF WATERTOWN  
Conservation Commission  
Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472**

Patrick Towler, Chair  
Josh Coefer, Member  
Rachel Danford, Member  
Leo Martin, Member  
Maria Rose, Member  
Marilyn Salvas, Member

TO: George Proakis, City Manager, and the Honorable City Council  
FROM: Katherine Swan, Conservation Agent, and Watertown Conservation Commission *KWS*  
CC: Patrick Fairbairn, Stewardship Volunteer, Thomas Brady, Director of Public Works, and Michael Micielli, Tree Warden  
SUBJECT: 2025 Whitney Hill Park Annual Report  
DATE: February 10, 2026

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**Whitney Hill Park Annual Report, 2025**

**Background**

On January 8, 2013, the Watertown Town Council, by unanimous vote, adopted Resolution No. 3 (R-2013-31), *A Resolution Preserving the Property Known as Whitney Hill Park*. The resolution directs the Watertown Conservation Commission (WCC) to submit "...a recommended plan for maintenance and educational activities" for Whitney Hill Park. It has been proven useful for the WCC to draft and approve the final text of this report in time for its February session, after which it is disseminated not only to the relevant City officials but also to Park abutters for general public discussion at the WCC's regular March session.

**SUMMARY**

**General Activities in 2025**

- Prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Urban Wild Management Plan. The RFP was drafted by a subcommittee of WCC members, former member Patrick Fairbairn and Watertown resident Peter Del Tredici. A summary of the objectives of the RFP is provided as Attachment A. Bids for proposals went out in May and did not receive bids due to timing and proposed costs of creating the plan.
- DPW installed and maintain a trash barrel at the entrance of Oliver and Marshall Street in addition to other trash barrels in the Park.

## Whitney Hill Park – 2025 Annual Report

- Staff reached out to Animal Control about enforcement of unleashed dogs in the park.
  - Follow up from the Animal Control officer: If residents see off leash dogs during regular hours, they can call Animal Control to report it. If it is outside of regular hours, they can call the police who should respond and get owner and pet info and tell the owner that their dog must remain leashed. The Animal Control Officer can make visits to the area but without an officer witnessing this, police and animal control will not be able to take action so it needs to be reported while it is happening.

### **Stewardship Activities in 2025**

Patrick Fairbairn, a former member of the Conservation Commission, has been active with ongoing stewardship activities in the Park in collaboration with the City. Activities Fairbairn has completed in 2025 include:

- In early spring, routine maintenance of the 32 sample plot markers and cover boards; salamander monitoring were conducted.
  - The maintenance of the 32 sample plots is part of the long term ecological monitoring of the Park's forest growth and collaboration with the Watertown High School.
- In June and August, collaborated with Minerva Action Group (MAG), a non-profit, on estimating carbon storage (carbon and carbon dioxide) in trees in the Park. MAG used GPS coordinates and LiDAR to estimate total carbon storage in the trees.
- Continued coordination with the Watertown High School, City and volunteers, in joint ecological studies of Whitney Hill Park.

### **Proposed goals in 2026:**

- Investigate funding sources (CPA funding or State funding) to support the preparation of a Urban Wild Management Plan.
- Commence the development of an Urban Wild Management Plan once funding is secured. The process would include a baseline assessment, community input on actions residents wish to see at the park, a stewardship plan, projected costs to implement the plan, and a schedule.

### **Longer Term Goals**

- Finalize the Urban Wild Management Plan.
- Implement the recommendations of the Urban Wild Management Plan.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Urban Wild Management Plan Objectives**

The objective of the project is to develop an actionable management plan that includes strategies to:

- 1) Improve and maintain existing trails and perimeter edges for both ecological (i.e., salamanders, small mammals, birds) and urban woodland value;
- 2) Manage invasive or undesirable plant species in a manner that balances ecological priorities and feasibility, thereby providing the best and most sustainable ecological outcome given finite fiscal resources;
- 3) Develop an adaptive management strategy that cares for high value old growth trees and incorporates tree succession planning to compensate for tree losses due to natural causes and diseases (beech leaf disease);
- 4) Create a framework for long-term site management and monitoring including a holistic plan that balances passive recreational uses, ecological services and climate change impacts (i.e., drought, wind, more intense storms);
- 5) Other topics that arise through the public outreach and ecological management planning process; and
- 6) Conduct a thorough review of existing data and documentation (e.g., maps, reports, and policies).