



City of Watertown
Conservation Commission
Administration Building
149 Main St.
Watertown, MA 02472

Maria P. Rose, Chair
Jamie O'Connell, Vice Chair
Leo Martin, Member
Rachel Danford, Member
Patrick Towler, Member
Marilyn Salvas, Member
Josh Coefer, Member

MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 7:00 PM, Remote Meeting on Zoom

Conservation Commission Members Present: Jamie O'Connell, Leo Martin, Rachel Danford, Patrick Towler, and Marilyn Salvas

Absent: Maria Rose (Jamie O'Connell chaired the meeting) and Josh Coefer

Also Present: Glenn Howard (CDM Smith), Michelle Moon (City of Watertown), Gideon Schreiber (City of Watertown), and Dennis Duff (Resident).

Staff Present: Katie Swan, Conservation Agent, and Susan Jenness, Assistant

O'Connell chaired the meeting and took roll call.

1. Wetlands Decisions

- A. **Request for Certificate of Compliance:** 1 Paramount Place, (Mass DEP #: 321-0144). City of Watertown, Property Owner and Representative.

Gideon Schreiber (City of Watertown) was present to discuss the request for a Certificate of Compliance to close the final Order of Conditions for the installation of the eight (8) foot stone dust path behind the John A. Ryan Ice Skating Rink. Swan met with Steve Magoon on March 25, 2025 on site to look at the design specs and site per the installation of the path. The Department of Public Works (DPW) has agreed to upkeep and maintenance on the site.

There were no questions/comments from the members of the Commission.

Motion: Danford made a motion to accept the request for issuance of a Certificate of Compliance. Salvas seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present were polled and agreed with the motion made by Danford.

- B. **Request for Certificate of Compliance:** Arsenal Park (Phase A), (Mass DEP#: 321-0169). City of Watertown, Property Owner, and CDM Smith, Representative.

Glenn Howard (CDM Smith) was present to discuss the request for a Certificate of Compliance to close the final Order of Conditions for construction of Phase A of Arsenal Park. The construction was completed in 2024, and additional stormwater BMPs were needed on the border of 100 Forge and Arsenal Park.

O’Connell inquired about the documents submitted for members of the Commission, and Howard reported he will get the full as-built plans to the Commission. Martin stated he walked the site and the drainage looks good.

Motion: Martin made a motion to accept the request for issuance of a Certificate of Compliance. Towler seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Members were polled and all agreed with the motion made by Martin.

2. Informational Update

- A. **Arsenal Park Phase B, (Mass DEP#: 321-0181):** Glenn Howard (CDM Smith) and Michelle Moon (City of Watertown) were present to discuss the updates of Phase B construction for Arsenal Park:

- Community gardens and skate park (skate park mural will be completed soon) are open.
- Playground inspection completed; outstanding issues being corrected.
- New pavilion under construction.
- Final paving and grading nearly complete.
- Field to be fenced off and sodded; opening set for June 2025, with a community celebration in July.

Public Comment:

- Resident Dennis Duff emphasized original intent for passive use (no organized sports). The Commission clarified that while the softball diamond was removed, open space may now accommodate informal or organized soccer.

- B. **FEMA Flood Map Update:** The draft FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) will be available soon. The draft Floodplain Overlay District zoning amendment was submitted to City Council for first review, to the Planning Board for second review, and approval to the City Council again before the July 8, 2025 deadline. Rose had given a brief overview at the April meeting of the flood maps and why FEMA is requiring City and Towns who are enrolled with the Flood Insurance Program to update their floodplain ordinances. Commission members asked to have a general overview by City Staff on the changes to the City’s Floodplain Ordinance updates and changes to the FIRMs.

Schreiber and Swan gave a brief overview of the changes to the FEMA FIRMs for Watertown. There are minor expansions in Zones A & AE along the Charles River and Pleasant Street corridor. Schreiber will take on the role of reviewing projects for the City that might have areas affected by the flood zones. The updated changes to the Floodplain Ordinance are to be approved and submitted to FEMA before July 8th.

3. Updates

A. **Chair updates:** There were no updates by the Chair.

B. **CPC Update:** O'Connell reported on project updates.

- CPC funding was awarded to fund a study for affordable housing for a group home at 103 Nichols Avenue. On May 15th, there will be a formal presentation to CPC who will decide whether to fund the project.
- The next round of funding starts around July 25th.

C. **Agent Report**

- Ongoing Site Monitoring: Swan has been visiting sites to check on the leafing out of vegetation and any erosion control issues.
 - i. **99 Coolidge/DCR bike path:** Swan met with Nick O'Connor from National Development and Taylor Donovan from VHB to look at the 99 Coolidge/DCR bike path in April. O'Connor inquired if the final Order of Conditions could be closed out before the two-year growing season (the slopes of the bike path still need to be fully stabilized). Swan recommended that O'Connor to wait until the end of the two-year growing season (May 2027) before coming to the Commission to request the Certificate of Compliance.
- Whitney Hill Park Updates:
 - a. Trash Bin: Installed as requested by abutters using repurposed bin
 - b. Dog Enforcement: Animal Control Officer has agreed to increase patrols
 - c. Urban Wilds Management RFP: Now live; responses due May 22, 2025

4. Acceptance of Minutes

A. April 2, 2025, Conservation Commission minutes were approved with amendments.

Motion: Martin made a motion to accept the minutes of April 2, 2025 meeting as amended. Danford seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Members were polled, and all agreed with the motion made by Martin.

5. Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Danford made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. Martin seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Members were polled, and all agreed with the motion made by Danford.