



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

Patrick Towler, Chair
Leo Martin, Member
Rachel Danford, Member
Marilyn Salvas, Member
Josh Coefer, Member
Marie-Sophie Rohwaeder, Member

MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2026, 7:02 PM, Remote Meeting on Zoom

Conservation Commission Members Present: Patrick Towler, Leo Martin, Marilyn Salvas, Marie-Sophie Rohwaeder, and Rachel Danford (joined at 7:05 pm)

Absent: Josh Coefer

Also Present: Patrick Fairbairn (resident) and Erika Holmes (resident)

Staff Present: Katie Swan, Conservation Agent, and Susan Jenness, Administrative Specialist

Towler chaired the meeting and took roll call.

1. General Business

A. Arsenal Park recreation shed follow up

Swan shared that the recreation shed that had been installed at Arsenal Park was spotted by Martin and identified as an item that was not in the final set of plans approved by the Commission and it was located within the 200 ft. River Front Area.

Martin briefed newer commissioners that Arsenal Park was placed under the control, care and custody of the Conservation Commission by City Council, and the final design approval was permitted in 2022 by the sitting commissioners at that time. Any changes to the final plans were supposed to be reviewed and voted on by the Commission prior to any work being done.

Swan explained that the commission could either agree it was acceptable where it was, or agree to have it moved to a more suitable location in coordination with Tom Brady, Director of DPW.

Commissioner Comments:

- Danford asked about the use of the shed, and Swan explained it was for the school department to store equipment and supplies.
- Rohwaeder inquired if the DPW would be required to repair the surface to its original condition if the shed was removed.
 - Martin confirmed if the shed was removed they would be required to also fix up the area so that it matched the intended, agreed upon design.
- Martin asked Swan to follow up with the DPW to find out what they planned to do and when the work would begin.

Motion: Martin made a motion to request that the shed be removed to a more suitable location and the vacated area be replanted to restore it to what was originally allowed in the Order of Conditions. Danford seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present voted by roll call, 5-0 to approve.

B. Admin Code update and draft rules of practice and procedure

Swan updated the Commissioners that each board and commission in the City are required to have rules of practice and procedure. She reviewed an example of City of Somerville's Planning Board rules of practice and procedure.

Swan plans to break the work down into manageable increments and will share sections during scheduled meetings.

Towler asked Swan to get a timeline from the City of when the rules of practice and procedure is due to ensure they complete their work in a timely fashion.

2. Updates

- A. Chair updates:** Towler shared that he will be moving from Watertown and his formal resignation from the Commission as Chair will be before the September meeting. Towler shared that Coefer submitted his resignation from the Commission as well. Towler asked Swan and Jenness to get a date from Coefer for his resignation.

Towler shared that there is a second public meeting on the former GSA site on May 7th at 6 pm online.

- B. CPC Updates:** Salvas shared that the CPC was reviewing the Walker Pond application for CPA funds at the last meeting.

Salvas also reported there was no follow up about the trees that were slated for removal from the historic burial grounds as part of the proposed CPC project on the cemeteries in Watertown. She will let members of the Commission know when the tree removal subject comes back up again, so that they can write a comment letter.

- C. Agent Report:** Swan reported she has been making rounds at sites with open Orders of Conditions as part of site enforcement.

Swan reported that she has been speaking with the Minerva Action Group (MAG) about an effort begun by Fairbairn in 2025 to work with Watertown High School on education and measuring total carbon stored in the trees at Whitney Hill Park. MAG will likely attend the upcoming scheduled June Conservation Commission meeting to give a presentation on their findings.

Swan also reported that at 311 Arsenal Street/Arsenal on the Charles property, two trees are dying and are planned to be removed. She showed photographs and explained she visited the site with Schreiber and the property manager, and all agree the trees need to be removed. Salvas asked if a tree hearing was needed and Swan explained it is not a public shade tree, it is on private property, so no hearing is needed. Rohwaeder asked if there is a procedure to replace the trees and if that would require a certain size. Swan reported it will be a 1 to 1 replacement and based on the forthcoming arborist report.

3. Minutes to be approved

A. February 4, 2026 minutes were approved.

Motion: Salvas made a motion to accept the minutes. Martin seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present voted by roll call, 5-0 to approve.

B. March 4, 2026 minutes were approved.

Motion: Martin made a motion to accept the minutes. Danford seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present voted by roll call, 5-0 to approve.

C. April 8, 2026 minutes were approved.

Motion: Martin made a motion to accept the minutes. Salvas seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present voted by roll call, 5-0 to approve.

D. Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm. Danford seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present voted by roll call, 5-0, to adjourn.