Town of Hamden

Planning and Zoning Department

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Inland Wetlands Commission Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2026

The Inland Wetlands Commission, Town of Hamden, held a hybrid Regular Meeting on Wednesday, October 7, 2026. The meeting was held in-person in the Legislative Council Chambers at Hamden Memorial Town Hall, 2372 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT 06518, and remotely via Town Zoom teleconferencing at https://hamden.zoom.us/j/82474089466.

Commissioners in Attendance: **In Person:** Michael Milazzo *(Chairman)*, David McCollum *(Vice Chairman)*, Michael Stone, Kirk Shadle, George Schneider, Elizabeth Hayes, Deb Laliberte

Staff in Attendance: **In Person:** Eugene Livshits *(Town Planner)*, Thomas Vocelli, *(Wetlands Agent)*, Maisie Albis *(Commission Clerk)*

Via Zoom: Tim Lee *(Assistant Town Attorney)*

Chairman Milazzo called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m. Commissioner McCollum called the roll and established a quorum.

A. Public Comment Session

Chairman Milazzo invited comments from the public. An in-person attendee, Marc Vece, approached the podium to speak. He identified himself as the president of the Meadowbrook Third Co-Op and spoke to concerns the group has regarding Pardee Brook and the diversion channel maintenance proposed by IWC #26-1276. Mr. Vece reported that water flow is heavily restricted by sediment. As a result, he said that residents often need to contact Public Works to activate a pump system after storm events in order to manage flooding. Mr. Vece concluded with a request that the Commission do what it can to help the community resolve the ongoing issue.

No other in-person attendees made comments. The Chairman confirmed with the clerk that there were no online attendees who wished to speak, then closed the public comment session.

B. Application Review

1. IWC #26-1275 *Received 09/02/2026*

Hamden Hills Drive Bridge over Shepard Brook
Stabilization of bridge footings
Applicant: Town of Hamden

Town Engineer Stephen White and Assistant Town Engineer Jose Alvarez presented the application. Mr. Alvarez joined the meeting remotely, sharing his screen to show the proposed

plans. Mr. White stated that erosion has exposed the foundation of the bridge and protective measures must be taken to stabilize the structure. Multiple options were considered, he said, but the ultimate proposal is to install riprap around the bridge columns to rebury the exposed footings.

Mr. Alvarez explained that the State inspects bridges on a regular basis and recently increased the frequency of inspections for the Hamden Hills Drive Bridge due to scour. The CT Department of Transportation has notified the Town that the bridge requires repair, Mr. White added. The current proposal was designed in response to that notification.

Mr. White stated that 12”-18” intermediate riprap would be used, and that Public Works would be assisting with the repair work. Mr. Alvarez noted that work extended into the wetland area but not into the waterway itself. At the conclusion of their presentation, Chairman Milazzo called for questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Shadle remarked on the undercutting he noticed on the channel bank. Mr. White confirmed that work would be focused on the eroded western bank. Commissioner Shadle then asked whether the intention was to restore the channel to its original design conditions or to reinforce the existing conditions. Mr. White confirmed it was the latter. He noted that, though the objective was not to restore the original conditions, the proposed riprap slope would approximate the original stream bed.

In response to another question from Commissioner Shadle, Mr. White said that the riprap would extend upstream roughly 12 feet from the end of the foundation. He clarified an earlier statement by Mr. Alvarez regarding work taking place in the waterway: the riprap would extend over the existing northwest bank, thus into the stream, but would end near the original bank.

Mr. White said that no work was planned for the northeast bank at this time. Mr. Alvarez explained that the current proposal for the northwest bank addressed an immediate necessity to prevent the loss of capacity of the bridge; a separate application would be filed if future evaluations demonstrate that work is needed on the other bank.

Commissioner Schneider raised concerns about potential downstream erosion. He reported that some disturbance to the far bank was observed during the site walk. He wondered whether the narrowing of the stream could increase the flow velocity and worsen the disturbance. Mr. White acknowledged the possibility that the work might increase flow, and indicated that bank stabilization could be considered if warranted.

Commissioner McCollum had several questions. He first asked whether the site plan indicated how construction equipment would enter the site. Mr. White did not believe the plans showed the access point, but recalled it to be from a parking lot off of Shepard Avenue to the north of the work site. Commissioner McCollum asked about the feasibility of doing the work from the Farmington Canal Trail. Mr. White said that the goal was to do as much work from the trail as possible, though some equipment may need to be brought further down the embankment.

At Commissioner McCollum's request, Mr. Alvarez pointed out the potential access points at the north and south of the work site on the plan.

Commissioner McCollum then asked when the work was anticipated to occur and what the timeline for completion might be. Mr. White replied that the timing was somewhat dependent on the availability of Public Works staff but ideally work would begin in late October or November. Mr. Alvarez added that weather was also a factor, as work will need to take place during a dry season.

Mr. White and Mr. Alvarez responded to a number of questions from Commissioner McCollum to say that: equipment was not anticipated to be stored on-site but could be kept on the shoulder of the trail if necessary; no similar maintenance has been performed on the bridge footings, though riprap was added to the embankment slope at some point; the estimated design service life for the bridge is around 75 years and the repairs are intended to last the duration of that lifespan; dewatering will not be necessary.

Noting that the application also presented alternative approaches, Commissioner McCollum asked what the determining factor would be in finalizing the plan. Mr. White replied that cost considerations resulted in a preference for the riprap approach. He added that the more challenging gabion basket alternative could create additional disturbance as equipment may need to be brought further down the bank. He said that he was willing to reconsider the alternative approach if the Commission wished.

Commissioner Schneider asked whether the riprap technique was a traditional method of minimizing scour under abutments, which Mr. White confirmed. There were no further questions from the Commission.

Chairman Milazzo remarked that the member who makes a motion to approve the application should also read the suggested conditions offered by Mr. Vocelli. **Commissioner Schneider made the motion and requested that Mr. Vocelli read those conditions into the record. Commissioner Shadle seconded.** The suggested conditions were as follow:

1. Access routes to the work site shall be limited to Town property and/or to public rights-of-way. If any encroachment onto private property proves to be necessary, prior written consent from the owners shall be required;
2. Heavy equipment shall remain on hard pavement or on upland soil;
3. A downstream turbidity curtain and oil containment boom shall be installed prior to the onset of work in the watercourse;
4. Rip rap stone shall be washed before installation;
5. The stabilization project shall be scheduled for a dry weather period, but any inspection or maintenance schedules mandated by the State shall take priority;

6. The October 2, 2026 Regional Water Authority comment letter shall be included on the final revised plans. RWA recommendations shall be considered binding conditions-of-approval, subject to any modifications herein;
7. The applicant's final revised plans shall be signed and sealed by a professional engineer;
8. The Notice-of Decision to be issued by the Wetlands Agent shall be included on the final revised plans, and all conditions-of-approval shall be listed and incorporated into those plans. The final revised plans shall be subject to review and approval by the Wetlands Agent or by the Chair of the Commission;
9. Either repair alternative depicted by the applicant on the submitted plan is acceptable. Prior to the onset of the project the applicant shall confirm in writing which option has been chosen and the reason(s) for the choice.

Commissioner Shadle raised the idea of a condition requiring a post-construction inspection. He and other members discussed the State's authority with respect to bridges. Ultimately it was decided that such a condition would not be necessary.

Commissioner McCollum recommended that additional language in Condition 2 should require that any temporary access routes needed to gain further access to the site are indicated on the plans. Commissioner Schneider suggested amending Condition 1 instead, and suggested that all access routes be depicted. Members also agreed that there should be language requiring that areas of disturbance be restored. Commissioner Schneider offered the following revision:

1. Access routes to the work site shall be limited to Town property and/or to public rights-of-way, *and shall be depicted on the final revised plans.* If any encroachment onto private property proves to be necessary, prior written consent from the owners shall be required. *Any disturbance shall be stabilized and reseeded as necessary.*

Both Commissioner Schneider and Commissioner Shadle accepted the change, and Chairman Milazzo called for a vote. **All voting members were in favor of approving IWC #26-1275. The application was approved with conditions as recommended by Mr. Vocelli and revised by the Commission,** as follow:

1. Access routes to the work site shall be limited to Town property and/or to public rights-of-way, and shall be depicted on the final revised plans. If any encroachment onto private property proves to be necessary, prior written consent from the owners shall be required. Any disturbance shall be stabilized and reseeded as necessary.
2. Heavy equipment shall remain on hard pavement or on upland soil;
3. A downstream turbidity curtain and oil containment boom shall be installed prior to the onset of work in the watercourse;
4. Rip rap stone shall be washed before installation;
5. The stabilization project shall be scheduled for a dry weather period, but any inspection or maintenance schedules mandated by the State shall take priority;

6. The October 2, 2026 Regional Water Authority comment letter shall be included on the final revised plans. RWA recommendations shall be considered binding conditions-of-approval, subject to any modifications herein;
7. The applicant's final revised plans shall be signed and sealed by a professional engineer;
8. The Notice-of Decision to be issued by the Wetlands Agent shall be included on the final revised plans, and all conditions-of-approval shall be listed and incorporated into those plans. The final revised plans shall be subject to review and approval by the Wetlands Agent or by the Chair of the Commission;
9. Either repair alternative depicted by the applicant on the submitted plan is acceptable. Prior to the onset of the project the applicant shall confirm in writing which option has been chosen and the reason(s) for the choice.

2. IWC #26-1276

2623 Dixwell Avenue
Pardee Brook Diversion Channel
Maintenance activities—removal of sediment and brush
Applicant: Town of Hamden

Hamden Engineering Department staff engineer Steve Mcallister presented the application to the Commission. He gave a brief history of the channel, which he said was constructed as part of a flood control strategy after heavy flooding impacted the area of the Meadowbrook Co-op. Maintenance activities had last been conducted in 2012, he said. The current application seeks to remove sediment and cut back brush in order to improve water flow through the channel.

Mr. Mcallister reported that the amount of sediment to be removed is similar to the amount that was removed in 2012. He also mentioned that the previous approval limited work to three feet vertical height above the stream channel floor, and said a similar limit could be appropriate for the current proposal. Mr. Mcallister agreed to all other conditions recommended by Mr. Vocelli as well. He concluded his presentation and welcomed questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Shadle recalled the public comment made at the start of the meeting and asked if this project related to the concerns raised by Mr. Vece. Mr. Mcallister believed Mr. Vece had been referring to Pardee Brook, which he distinguished from the Pardee Brook Diversion Channel; the work being proposed at this time addresses the diversion channel. Mr. White explained that the channel is designed to reroute water flow from Pardee Brook around the Meadowbrook Co-op and into Shepard Brook. The Engineering and Public Works Departments have been evaluating the area to improve flood prevention measures, he said, and proper maintenance of the diversion channel would be a quick and simple start.

Commissioner McCollum asked how often the diversion channel is mowed. Mr. Mcallister replied that it was routinely mowed two to three times per year. Commissioner McCollum then inquired about leaving a strip of vegetation along each channel bank. Mr. Mcallister confirmed

that was the intention, and that the three-foot vertical height limit for clearing would keep vegetation in-tact at the top of each slope.

Commissioner McCollum asked how much of the flow from Pardee Brook gets diverted via the channel. Mr. Mcallister could not provide specific figures but said the majority of the water goes to the diversion channel. Mr. White offered additional details for the overall stormwater system in the Meadowbrook area. He said that proper maintenance of the diversion channel was the first step in a longer process to address the flooding issues the community has faced. When asked how the sediment and brush materials would be removed, Mr. Mcallister replied that a backhoe would most likely be used.

Chairman Milazzo granted Mr. Vece permission to address the applicant. Mr. Vece expressed his frustration at the perceived lack of action regarding the Meadowbrook community's concerns. He was under the impression that the current proposal would address Pardee Brook and the health and safety issues the community feels it poses, and asked when they might expect something to be done. Mr. White assured him that the diversion channel maintenance was part of a larger plan to improve conditions in the area.

There were no further questions or comments from members. **Commissioner Schneider moved to approve the application, pending discussion of the conditions recommended by Mr. Vocelli. Commissioner Hayes seconded the motion.** Mr. Vocelli then read his recommended conditions into the record, as follow:

1. The Town shall conduct sediment and brush removal operations whenever warranted or dictated by field conditions. Mowing of the project work area in order to facilitate proper access & egress shall continue to be allowed;
2. If temporary stockpiles or transfer areas prove to be necessary, the location of same shall be depicted on the final revised plans. Any stockpile(s) shall be secured with appropriate erosion controls, and said controls shall be checked on a weekly basis until the material is properly dispersed;
3. A downstream turbidity curtain and oil containment boom shall be installed prior to the onset of any brush or sediment removal operations;
4. The uprooting of vegetation shall be avoided, and root systems shall remain in place;
5. Removed sediment and brush shall ultimately be dispersed in a suitable upland area at least 100 feet from any wetland or watercourse;
6. The October 2, 2026 Regional Water Authority comment letter shall be included on the final revised plans. RWA recommendations shall be considered binding conditions-of-approval, subject to any modifications herein;
7. Removal operations shall generally be conducted during dry weather periods, unless an excessive build-up of sediment dictates otherwise;
8. The applicant's final revised plans shall be signed and sealed by a professional engineer;

9. The Notice-of Decision to be issued by the Wetlands Agent shall be included on the final revised plans, and all conditions-of-approval shall be listed and incorporated into those plans. The final revised plans shall be subject to review and approval by the Wetlands Agent or by the Chair of the Commission.

Commissioner McCollum wondered if the comments from the RWA should be incorporated as conditions of approval. Mr. Vocelli pointed out that an existing condition stated that "RWA recommendations shall be considered binding conditions-of-approval," which satisfied Commissioner McCollum.

Commissioner Schneider asked Mr. Vocelli if Condition 1 was intended to create an open-ended permit to the Town to perform maintenance of the channel. Mr. Vocelli confirmed it would allow the Town to perform the requested work as needed for the duration of the permit, which he said would be five years with the right to renew for five more. Work beyond that timeline would require a new permit.

Commissioner Shadle suggested the addition of a condition that requires the Town to assess the functionality of the channel after the work has been performed. The Commission discussed the benefit of evaluating the effectiveness of the channel at serving its stated flood prevention purpose. However, Mr. Livshits clarified that it was an existing diversion channel and the current request was for maintenance activity. He said that evaluating the effectiveness of the original design might be going beyond the Commission's purview. Commissioner Schneider inquired whether the channel had performed effectively when it was first constructed, which Mr. White confirmed. Commissioner Schneider declined to incorporate the suggested condition into his motion.

With no further questions, comments, or suggestions, Chairman Milazzo called for a vote. **Commissioners McCollum, Stone, Schneider, Shadle, and Laliberte voted in favor of approving IWC #26-1276; Commissioner Hayes voted against. The application was approved subject to the conditions recommended by Mr. Vocelli**.

C. Old Business/New Business

1. Review of September 2, 2026, Regular Meeting minutes

Chairman Milazzo called for any corrections or edits. **Commissioner Schneider moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner McCollum seconded the motion. All members voted in favor; the September 2, 2026, meeting minutes were approved as written.**

2. Review site inspection schedule

Mr. Vocelli reported that there were no pending site inspections to schedule.

3. Storm water catch-basin medallion update

Mr. Vocelli said he had been informed by Ron Walters, a retired RWA Senior Environmental Analyst who has continued to be involved in the medallion project, that all of the necessary contracts have been signed. He added that the Hamden Land Conservation Trust is working to organize a team of volunteers to complete the installation.

D. Adjournment

Chairman Milazzo called for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner McCollum made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Hayes. All were in favor and the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:32p.m.**

Submitted By: _____

Maisie Albis, Commission Clerk