

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Minutes of a Meeting –May 7, 2026

The City of Methuen Conservation Commission held a hybrid meeting via in-person and Zoom video conferencing (VC) on May 7, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Searles Building, 2nd floor Conference Room, 41 Pleasant Street, Methuen, MA 01844. Present for this meeting were Dave Di Zazzo, Chair; Cara Seaman, Vice Chair; Kenneth Sateriale, Secretary; and Commissioners Rachel Lecher and Patrice Friant. Also present were Conservation Officer Chris Parsons, Confidential Secretary Amy Priante-Walkowicz, and Conservation Clerk Michelle Davidson. Commissioner Sandra Boulay was absent.

Chairman, Dave Di Zazzo, announced that, Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote means in accordance with applicable law. This means that members of the public body, as well as members of the public, may access the meeting via virtual means. The meeting may be accessed remotely via Zoom video conferencing (VC) by contacting the Conservation Office. When required by law or allowed by the Chair, persons wishing to provide public comment or otherwise participate in the meeting may do so by in-person attendance or by accessing the meeting remotely, as noted above. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen/watch the meeting may do so in the following manner: to be contacted by phone or by VC, please contact the Commission Office. In the event that access and participation are not achieved, then the Commission will post, on the City of Methuen website, an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting. The following are actions, comments, and concerns regarding the information submitted for the Commission's meeting of May 7, 2026.

I. NOTICES OF INTENT:

- A. Notice of Intent – DEP File #219-1320, MCC File #26-001 – 11 Cross Street –**
CROSSL D QOZB, LLC – Dresser, Williams & Way, Inc. (Continued from 4/16/2026)
Michelle Davidson, Conservation Commission Clerk, reported receipt of an email from Steven Dresser, on behalf of the applicant, requesting a continuance.

Motion made by Cara Seaman, seconded by Kenneth Sateriale, so voted unanimously to continue the hearing to the 05/21/2025 meeting.

- B. Amendment to Order of Conditions – DEP File #219-1274, MCC File # 22-007 – 9**
River Street – Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI) – Anthony Ngethe (Continued from 4/16/2026)

Sarah Shactman, GPI, explained that the proposed amendment related to the addition of a single ADA parking space and associated striped aisle resulting from a reconfiguration of the garage and office layout on the property. The revised layout required relocation of the ADA-accessible parking area.

Sarah reported that all comments from the City's peer reviewer had been addressed, including submission of revised plans, riverfront and alternatives analyses, and phosphorus removal calculations using the EPA VSAT tool. The peer reviewer subsequently confirmed that the outstanding comments had been resolved.

Additional discussion addressed comments regarding infiltration practices, erosion control, overflow management, and stormwater treatment adjacent to the river. Sarah stated that overflow from stormwater systems would be dispersed through vegetated areas and stone drip edges to prevent erosion and concentrated discharge. The applicant also agreed to provide verification of subsurface conditions as a condition of approval.

Commission members discussed the improvements proposed for stormwater and erosion control compared to existing site conditions.

Motion made by Cara to approve the amendment to the Order of Conditions for the property, seconded by Patrice and approved unanimously.

Motion made by Cara to close the public hearing, seconded by Patrice, and approved unanimously.

C. Notice of Intent – DEP File #219-1321, MCC File # 26-002 – 397 Transmission Line Asset Condition Refurbishment Project – BSC Group

Hannah Raddatz, Wetland Scientist with BSC Group, presented the Notice of Intent for the 397 Transmission Line Asset Condition Refurbishment Project. She explained that the project is a maintenance and infrastructure improvement project involving approximately 7.5 miles of transmission line, forming part of a larger regional reliability initiative extending from Tewksbury to Amesbury.

The project includes replacement of existing wooden utility structures with steel structures, upgrades to foundations, overhead utility improvements, and access road and work pad improvements necessary for construction and long-term maintenance access. The applicant stated that the work would remain within the existing right-of-way and would not expand the corridor or introduce new transmission lines.

The applicant explained that portions of the work qualify as exempt maintenance activities under the Wetlands Protection Act, while other activities, including access improvements and certain work pad construction within resource areas and buffer zones, require Conservation Commission review. Restoration and revegetation measures were described for temporary impacts within bordering vegetated wetlands and buffer zones.

Project representatives outlined erosion and sedimentation controls, temporary matting procedures, stormwater management practices, and restoration plans. Construction is

anticipated to begin in March 2027 and continue through early 2028, with restoration activities extending through the 2028 growing season as needed.

The Department of Public Works submitted a letter stating that it had reviewed the Notice of Intent and had no comments on the project.

Commission members discussed the scope of the work, including replacement of wooden poles with steel structures, restoration of disturbed wetland areas, and the temporary nature of many construction impacts. The Commission's environmental consultant indicated that similar utility maintenance projects had previously been completed successfully with appropriate restoration.

A member of the public residing on Park Street spoke regarding coordination and notification during construction activities, particularly concerning access through private property. The applicant agreed to provide contact information and advance notification regarding construction scheduling and access needs.

The Commission discussed engaging Lucas Environmental to conduct the peer review for the project.

Motion was made by Kara to authorize Lucas Environmental to perform the peer review for the project. The motion was seconded by Ken and approved unanimously.

Motion was then made by Kara and seconded by Ken to continue the hearing to the June 4 meeting to allow time for completion of the peer review.

D. Notice of Intent -- DEP File #219-1322, MCC File #26-003 – 29 Oak Street – Andover Consultants, Inc. – Eduardo Tineo

Dennis Greicci of Andover Consultants presented the Notice of Intent application on behalf of the applicant, Eduardo Tineo. The property consists of an approximately 1.9-acre residential lot developed with a single-family home, detached garage, and paved areas. An intermittent stream and associated resource area are located along the property boundary.

The applicant proposed reconstruction and raising of existing front and rear porches/additions, as well as reconstruction of a side covered entry. Dennis explained that a substantially similar project had previously been approved by the Commission through a Request for Determination process; however, changes identified during the building permit review required filing a formal Notice of Intent.

Commissioners discussed the proximity of the work to the intermittent stream and reviewed the proposed erosion controls. The Commission requested that a designated stockpile area be identified on the site plan outside the resource area buffer.

The Department of Public Works submitted correspondence stating that it had no significant comments regarding the project due to the limited scope of work, while recommending maintenance of erosion and sediment controls throughout construction and stabilization of disturbed areas upon completion.

Motion was then made by Cara and seconded by Patrice to close the hearing for the Notice of Intent application for 29 Oak Street. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Notice of Intent – DEP File #219-1923, MCC File #26-004 – 109 North Street --
Andover Consultants, Inc. – Nolberto Galicia

Dennis Greicci of Andover Consultants presented the Notice of Intent application on behalf of the applicant, Norberto Galicia, for the construction of a single-family dwelling at 109 North Street. Mr. Greicci noted that the project had previously appeared before the Commission for confirmation of the wetland boundary and approval for partial lot clearing associated with the proposed house location. A Certificate of Compliance has recently been issued for prior work.

The proposed project includes the construction of a single-family residence, driveway, greenhouse, shed, brick walkway, and utility connections to public water and sewer. The sewer connection is proposed via an Environmental One force main extending along the roadway shoulder to an existing manhole at the intersection of North Street and Hampstead Street.

Mr. Greicci explained that the applicant was requesting waivers from the Commission's 50-foot no-disturb zone to allow grading and limited work within the buffer zone, but no closer than 35 feet to the wetland resource area. A habitat study prepared by North Environmental Services was submitted in support of the request. The applicant also proposed installation of no-disturb markers and implementation of a planting plan intended to improve the existing buffer area, which currently contains debris and remnants from the site's prior use as a landscaper's yard.

Commissioners discussed the proposed grading limits, placement of no-disturb markers, and long-term maintenance within the 35-foot to 50-foot buffer zone. Several commissioners expressed concern regarding permanent encroachment into the buffer area, including proposed brick walkways and future landscaping activity. Commissioners generally indicated support for maintaining conservation markers at the 50-foot line to discourage future encroachment and unauthorized maintenance activity within the buffer zone.

The Department of Public Works submitted correspondence stating that it had no additional comments at this time and would defer to the third-party peer review for further evaluation of the project.

A member of the public, Jeff Morin of 115 North Street, spoke regarding the project. Mr. Morin requested additional information regarding the size and location of the proposed house, and he expressed concerns related to the extent of disturbance near the wetland buffer, long-term maintenance of the property, and the presence of an existing chain-link fence within the wetland area. Commissioners advised that the plans were available for public review at the Conservation office and noted that the matter would remain open pending peer review.

Motion was then made by Cara and seconded by Kenneth to authorize Tighe & Bond to perform the peer review for the project. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion was then made by Cara and seconded by Kenneth to continue the hearing to the May 21 meeting pending completion of the peer review. The motion was passed unanimously.

II. CALL TO ORDER: 7:58 pm

III. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA / AMENDMENTS (IF ANY):

The Commission reviewed proposed amendments to the meeting agenda. Michelle noted that the Notice of Violation NOV 24-008 and Enforcement Order 25-001 for 25 Thayer Street, previously continued from the April 4 meeting, had been inadvertently omitted from the agenda.

Michelle also noted that the Department of Environmental Protection file number for 29 Oak Street had been received earlier in the day and was added to the agenda as DEP File No. 219-1322.

Motion was then made by Cara and seconded by Ken to accept the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: March 19, 2026 & April, 16 2026

Motion made by Ken to accept the minutes of March 19, 2026, and April 16, 2026, seconded by Cara and approved unanimously.

V. NEW BUSINESS: None

VI. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Stormwater Permit Application – 11 Cross Street – CROSSL D QOZB, LLC – Dresser, Williams & Way, Inc. (Continue from 4/16/2026)

Michelle reported receipt of an email from Steven Dresser, on behalf of the applicant, requesting continuation.

Motion made by Cara, seconded by Patrice, so voted unanimously to continue the hearing to the 05/21/2025 meeting.

B. Enforcement Order #25-006 – 2 Muirfield Lane – Aniberquiz Baez (Continued from 4/16/2026)

Michelle reported receiving an email from Maureen Harold of North Environmental, on behalf of the property owner, requesting continuance to the May 21 meeting.

A motion was made by Cara and seconded by Ken to continue the matter to May 21, 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Notice of Violation #25-012 – 13 Lyndale Ave. – Ryan Cleveland & Elizabeth Drinkwater (Continued from 2/19/2026 to assess driveway plan)

Chris reported that the previously removed driveway area had been regraded with gravel, relocated, and seeded as requested. Staff noted that the Commission would monitor the site to evaluate vegetation growth and stabilization.

A motion was made by Cara and seconded by Ken to continue the matter to August 20, 2026, meeting for further review of site growth and stabilization. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Notice of Violation #25-014 – 134 Meriline Ave. – C & A Enterprises, LLC (This item was addressed at the 4/16/2026 meeting and continued to the 6/18/2026 meeting)

Chris stated that concrete and fill material that had been illegally dumped near the river associated with an unauthorized addition had since been removed. The remaining soil had been spread out and seeded, and Chris indicated the site was currently in compliance pending successful vegetation growth and stabilization.

A motion was made by Cara and seconded by Patrice to continue the matter to the August 20, 2026, meeting for further monitoring. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Notice of Violation #25-006/Enforcement Order #25-004 – 15 Ayers Village Road – Elicer Gomez (Continued from 4/16/2026 to loam and seed in Spring)

Chris reported that the required conservation markers had been installed and that site stabilization work had begun. Although the property owner had not yet requested a formal

inspection of the markers, Chris confirmed they had observed the markers during a site visit. The Commission discussed allowing additional time before further review to complete the inspection and monitor site conditions.

A motion was made by Cara and seconded by Ken to continue the matter with the June 18, 2026 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Notice of Violation #26-003 – 30 Hidden Road – Sam Higginbottom

The Commission discussed a reported violation involving tree removal activity on a property owned by Mr. Higginbotham. Chris explained that the matter originated after a dead tree fell near a shed and damaged a truck cap, prompting the property owner to remove additional trees out of concern for safety and potential storm damage.

Chris reported that limited clearing and removal of brush and logs had been allowed. Any remaining logs located beyond the stone wall, identified as the wetland boundary, were to remain in place. No additional activity would occur beyond the shed area, where conservation markers would eventually be installed following site stabilization.

Chris noted that vegetation, including skunk cabbage and sensitive ferns, had already begun to regrow naturally in disturbed areas. The property owner also offered to plant replacement trees as part of restoration efforts. Commissioners discussed a leaning pine tree near a neighboring shed and agreed that the issue would be revisited after the current violation matter was stabilized.

The Commission acknowledged that the property owner had been cooperative and responsive in addressing the site conditions. Chris stated that a site meeting with the property owner was scheduled for the following Monday to determine what additional material removal, if any, would be permitted while ensuring no disturbance beyond the stone wall.

A neighboring property owner also requested that concerns regarding the leaning pine tree be entered into the record.

A motion was made by Cara and seconded by Patrice to continue the matter to the May 21, 2026, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Notice of Violation #24-008/Enforcement Order # 25-001 – 25 Thayer Street
(Continued from 4/4/26)

The Commission reviewed the Notice of Violation for 25 Bayer Street. Chris reported that they had been working with the property owner, Ms. Moscow, for approximately one year regarding the violation. He conducted a recent site visit, flagged the area, and stated they

were awaiting confirmation once the markers were installed so the site could be re-inspected.

A motion was made by Ken and seconded by Cara to continue the matter to the May 21 meeting. The motion passed unanimously

VII. CONSERVATION OFFICER'S REPORT:

Bird Sanctuary

The Commission discussed the Bird Sanctuary trail area near Route 213, the police station, and the rail trail. Mr. Bower presented on behalf of Councilor Ryan Dizoglio. Also, representatives from the Department of Public Works and the Police Department participated in the discussion regarding restoration of a historically used pedestrian path connecting the police department parking area to the rail trail through the bird sanctuary.

Mr. Bower explained that the trail had historically existed and remained visible, with features including benches and a kiosk still present on site. The proposed work would consist of minimal maintenance activities to reopen the path for public and public safety access, including selective brush clearing and removal of fallen limbs and trees within the limits of the existing trail. No grading, major construction, or significant alteration of wetlands or floodplain areas were proposed.

The Commission discussed the environmental sensitivity of the area, noting the presence of wetlands, floodplain, riverfront area, and a pond adjacent to the trail. Commissioners emphasized that no disturbance beyond the existing path should occur and discussed installing conservation markers in sensitive areas to keep users within designated trail limits.

Representatives noted that reopening the trail would improve recreational access to the bird sanctuary and provide improved emergency and police access to the rail trail area. Future volunteer efforts to restore benches and remove invasive species from the sanctuary area were also discussed.

The Commission expressed support for the limited trail rehabilitation and conservation marker installation, provided that work remained within the existing disturbed path area and avoided impacts to wetlands and floodplain resources. No formal vote was taken.

Veterans Park

The Commission discussed a request from the Recreation Department regarding the rehabilitation of an existing basketball court located within or adjacent to a wetland resource area. Chris reported that the court was currently in disrepair and that the proposal involved paving over the existing surface and repainting the court rather than removing and reconstructing it.

Commissioners discussed site access concerns, including the use of an existing walking trail for construction equipment access. It was noted that the basketball court was an existing structure and that the proposed work was intended to restore usability, including replacement of basketball equipment.

The Commission agreed that additional site review was necessary before deciding. Chris and the Commissioners scheduled a site visit to further evaluate access conditions and potential wetland impacts prior to proceeding further with the request.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Emergency Certification #26-006 – lots 510-124-14 & 410-124-9 – Dam Breach

Commission reviewed Emergency Certification 26-006 for Lots 510-124-14 and 410-124-9 associated with Harris Brook and the Route 93 corridor. Chris explained that recent flooding had damaged a secondary dam structure following prior primary and secondary dam breach events. An emergency certification was required to authorize immediate stabilization and repair work.

A motion was made by Cara and seconded by Ken to ratify the issuance of the emergency certification. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Concerns about Tree Removal Policy

The Commission then discussed concerns regarding the recently adopted tree removal policy and associated terminology within the document. Commissioners reviewed comments received regarding wording and implementation of the policy, including discussion of language related to soil disturbance and erosion control.

Commissioners explained that the policy language had been developed using examples from other municipalities and was intended to provide written guidance for contractors, homeowners, and tree companies operating near wetland resource areas. The Commission agreed that the policy could be revised over time if improvements or clarifications became necessary.

Several Commissioners expressed support for the policy, noting that local contractors had responded positively to having written guidance available. The Commission also discussed the broader need for simplified educational materials summarizing wetland protection requirements for developers and homeowners.

At the conclusion of the discussion, a motion was made by Cara and seconded by Rachel to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURN:

8:29pm

Respectfully submitted by,
Dave Di Zazzo, Chairman

Respectfully submitted by:

Reviewed by:

Approved on:

Michelle Davidson

Kenneth Sateriale

Date