



Waltham Conservation Commission

April 23, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Meeting took place via public Zoom call with participation information posted at City Hall, Government Center, and on the Commission's page of the city web site. Zoom information was circulated directly to all applicants and others on the public agenda.

Meeting called to order at 7:01 PM.

Attendees: Chair Bill Doyle, Vice Chair Lisa Limonciello, Michael Donovan, Gerard Dufromont, Anja Shafer, Frank Fitzgerald. Conservation Agent Julia Abbott.

Absent:

Public Hearing

Notice of Intent (DEP File # 316-tba)

Applicant: 455 DIV TPR LLC

Property Location: 455 Totten Pond Road

Project Description: Redevelopment of site, including work and additional plantings within previously disturbed Buffer Zone resulting in a net decrease to impervious area. Removal of sand and sediment from intermittent stream, as requested by the city engineer.

Dr. Lars Carlson, wetland scientist from VHB, presented for the applicant. John Hession was also present. Dr. Carlson summarized the proposed work. This has been submitted to the city of Waltham as a 40B project and has been rejected by the ZBA, but the applicant plans to appeal so is continuing the wetlands permitting process. He noted existing conditions and highlighted the jurisdictional wetlands. The majority of wetland areas are on the east side of the parcel. Approximately 1,150 sq.ft. of the new building will be in buffer zone; this and all other work in BZ will be pavement or landscaping in previously developed areas. All proposed work is farther from the wetlands than existing development. All WPA performance standards and storm water management standards will be met. There is a net decrease to impervious area and it will improve water quality. They will improve infiltration and decrease runoff. Dr. Carlson added that as part of the comprehensive permit review, the city engineer asked the applicant to remove sediment from West Chester Brook (photos shown). He stressed that this sediment is upstream of the existing discharges, so is coming from the Totten Pond Road storm water system not this site, but they have agreed to remove this sediment. They propose this as a limited project under 310 CMR 10.53(3)(k) [maintenance and repair of road drainage structures]. He suggested using standard CPW cleaning conditions, if Waltham has them. They propose using a vacuum truck to do the work, under the supervision of a wetland scientist. The area and volume involved are expected to meet exemptions.

Mr. Donovan asked for and received clarification on the existing and proposed outfalls, infiltration, and the discharge velocity into the brook. Mr. Dufromont asked about snow storage details; Mr. Hession noted this is a requirement of the comprehensive permit. He highlighted storage areas on the plan and added that snow beyond capacity will be hauled off site. Mr. Dufromont expressed concerns about snow melt to the brook and roof runoff. Mr. Hession explained that roof runoff will be plumbed

into the infiltration system. He noted that the grading and storage areas have been designed to direct all melt and other parking lot runoff into the system for treatment, not into the brook. The design will reduce impervious area and reduce runoff based on current conditions. Discussion.

Mr. Doyle asked if this plan has been vetted by the city engineer or a peer reviewer. Mr. Hession stated that both the engineer and an outside review (by Nitsch Engineering) have confirmed it is compliant. Mr. Doyle asked if engineering had requested any other conditions (relevant to ConCom); Mr. Hession said there were none. Ms. Shafer asked for additional details of the restoration/landscaping near the brook, and if the area could be increased. Mr. Hession showed the landscaping plan and noted some of the native plantings. The area has been widened over existing conditions. It will be difficult to do more—they have already asked to reduce the parking requirement and most parking will be inside the building. Mr. Fitzgerald asked for details of the maintenance plan, specifically noting regular cleanup of the area. This has not been created yet. It was noted that all the trash areas will be on the west side of the building, to minimize litter migrating toward the brook. Inquiry into protections and barriers at the brook; there will be some fencing to the north to prevent headlight glare reaching the neighbors, but otherwise the expectation is that the naturalized plantings will create a screen. There will be a small curb to block debris at ground level. Dr. Carlson added that the applicant plans to clear existing debris from the stream and buffer during the project. Ms. Limonciello asked the applicant to elaborate on the conclusion that the sediment in the stream is not from this parcel. Mr. Hession and Dr. Carlson explained the observations and reasoning. Mr. Dufromont disagreed. Mr. Doyle speculated that part of the city engineer's reasoning for this cleanup is to be able to precisely locate discharges afterwards. Mr. Doyle raised the issue of the property boundary issues and other potential permitting requirements (401/404 water quality, Army Corps, DEP, Chapter 91). He suggested that getting clarity on these permitting requirements and/or getting some of these permits would likely simplify the process with MA DEP/ConCom. This might also be viable as a Restoration Limited Project. The applicant understood these issues; Dr. Carlson noted that if the work area/volume is under 5,000 sq.ft. and 100 cu.yds, it would not trigger 401. Brief discussion of recent regulation changes and permit and future maintenance options. Where responsibility lies, based on property lines, was questioned.

Mr. Sean Chen of 300 Winter Street, an abutter, spoke on behalf of the condo residents at 300 Winter and the residents at 296 Winter. Mr. Chen thanked the commission members for their diligence and raised several concerns, some of which are not within the commission's jurisdiction. The commission has received and reviewed a letter from the residents detailing these. They include: development density, fire safety, storm water, traffic, protection of the wetlands, disturbance from construction. There was discussion of the reduction of impervious area and the improved treatment and movement of storm water from the roof and parking lots; the existing conditions have no infiltration or treatment. Mr. Doyle noted typical improvements in a plan like this, including that the interior garage run-off will go through treatment and then into the city sewer system (not storm drains). The commission scheduled a site visit for April 30 at 9 a.m.

Ms. Shafer moved to continue to the May 7 meeting. Mr. Donovan seconded. In favor: Doyle, Limonciello, Donovan, Shafer, Fitzgerald, Dufromont. **Motion passed.**

Commission Business

- Approval of meeting minutes from 4-9-2026. Motion to approve by Mr. Donovan, seconded by Mr. Dufromont. In favor: Doyle, Donovan, Limonciello, Shafer, Fitzgerald, Dufromont. **Motion passed.**

Correspondence

- NOTED: As of April 8, MA DEP has lowered the drought status in our region to Level 1 – Mild Drought. Field observations made on or after September 1, 2024, may not be used to support an intermittent stream determination.

- NOTED: DCR has submitted the 2025 work summary and 2026 invasive management plan for Beaver Brook Reservation (316-0777). They are expecting to expand efforts this year.

Old Business

- Tree Removal Administrative Approval policy. Discussion. Some minor changes to the draft were suggested, which will be incorporated. The commission plans to review and vote at the next meeting.

Site Visit Reports

- 976 Lexington Street (Hardy Pond Outlet) and Chester Brook at Beaver Street culvert. Ms. Abbott noted site visits to be scheduled for these two new filings, which will be on the May 21 agenda.

New Business

- Schedule annual Conservation Trust Fund meeting. Discussion. The commission scheduled the meeting for May 21, and public notice will be made.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Limonciello, seconded by Mr. Donovan. All present in favor. **Motion passed.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.