TOWN OF HARWICH
732 Main Street
Harwich, MA 02645
PHONE (508)-430-7538 FAX (508)430-7531

HARWICH CONSERVATION COMMISSION – MEETING MINUTES
TOWN HALL – GRIFFIN ROOM
Wednesday, June 18, 2025 – 6:00 PM

Commissioners and Staff Present
Chairman John Ketchum, Mark Coleman, Viv Mulhall-Maguire, Sophia Pilling, Wayne Coulson, Conservation Administrator Amy Usowski.

Call to Order
Chairman John Ketchum called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Discussion and Possible Vote
Support of the Town's draft revision to the Open Space and Recreation Plan

Ms. Usowski stated that she, along with the Harwich Town Planner, the Recreation Department head, the Harwich Conservation Trust, and some citizens of Harwich have all been involved in rewriting the Open Space and Recreation Plan with Tighe and Bond to get it up to date. She stated that the document has not been looked at or revised in 20 years. The last revision was during 2014-2015. She stated that since that time, Harwich's open space and recreation priorities have changed.

Ms. Usowski stated that in the 1990's and early 2000's the goal was to acquire as much land as possible for conservation and recreational use. Since that time, the Town of Harwich and the Harwich Conservation Trust have acquired a lot of land and now the focus is more towards how to best manage those pieces of land.

Ms. Usowski stated that as the Commission has just received the draft of the Open Space and Recreation Plan, they will be given time to review it to be able to vote on it at their July 2, 2025 meeting. She stated that the public has had a chance to view the document on the town website and the draft document has also been presented at various committee meetings.

Mr. Coulson stated that management of the land costs money. Ms. Usowski answered that if the Selectboard, the Recreation Commission, and the Conservation Commission agree to move forward with this document, it lays the groundwork to appeal to hire more people or redirect certain projects. Ms. Usowski stated that having a valid, updated Open Space and Recreation Plan lays the groundwork to help argue for what is needed in the future and will also allow the Town to continue to be good contenders for a lot of state grants.

Mr. Ketchum asked about a map included in the plan noted as a water body AU category map, but with no explanation of what that meant. He stated that the freshwater ponds were not labeled, the town golf course was not on the list of municipal facilities, and nothing was included about eliminating invasive species. He stated he would like invasive species elimination noted as one of the priorities.

Ms. Usowski stated that the next step is to get support from other Town committees and once done, the Town Planner will send the draft to the state Department of Conservation Services for ratification. When the document is ratified, it becomes an official town document. Once official, Town committees will talk about how to accomplish the goals of this 10-year plan.

No further discussion from the Commission. No public comment.

This discussion will be continued at the July 2, 2025 meeting.

The following applicants have filed a Notice of Intent

Lindsay Strode, 19 Wequasset Rd, Map M5, Parcel K1-41, SE 032-2596. Bank restoration and dock alteration. *Continued from May 7, 2025.*

Mr. Dan Ojala, Engineer/Land Surveyor with Down Cape Engineering, was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Ojala spoke about the components of the work to be done as noted on the plan and stated that he and Mr. Strode adjusted the stakes seaward. The dimensions of the float have been changed from 8'x 22' to 10'x18 and therefore, will stick out less into the waterway. The proposed fiber rolls to be used are bio-engineered, which are a good alternative to structures. The intent is to bolster the salt marsh to keep it from eroding as well as provide a higher platform to allow the marsh to advance landward. He stated that the Harbormaster is fine with the plan.

Ms. Usowski stated that on the previous plan, the rolls were to go in the marsh itself, but now that the plans have been corrected to show the logs located at mean low water, she is comfortable recommending approval as now presented. She stated that all materials being used are naturally biodegradable, they are not using ductal anchors, the fiber rolls are a soft material they are even using oak stakes. She spoke about the property to the north that was over-dredged for years resulting in the slumping of the marsh. Ms. Usowski stated that the protection and enhancement of our salt marshes is a priority. She stated she approves of the reconfiguration of the float as well.

No discussion from the Commission. No public comment.

MOTION
Mr. Coulson moved to approve the Notice of Intent.
Mr. Coleman seconded.
Vote: 5-0
Motion carried; Notice of Intent approved.

Jeffrey Lang, 11 River Bend Rd, Map 1, Parcel G1-9. House demolition and rebuilding, septic system installation, bulkhead repairs and replacement, and mitigation plantings. ***Continued from June 4, 2025. Applicant has requested a continuance to July 2, 2025.***

Ms. Usowski stated the applicant requested a continuance to the July 2, 2025 Conservation meeting.

No discussion from the Commission. No public comment.

MOTION
Mr. Ketchum moved to approve the continuance of the hearing to July 2, 2025.
Mr. Coulson seconded.
Vote: 5-0
Motion carried; Request for continuance of the hearing to July 2, 2025 approved.

Ms. Usowski asked Chairman Ketchum if the Certificate of Compliance for 19 Walther Road could be taken out of order on the agenda. Chairman Ketchum agreed.

<u>Request for a Certificate of Compliance</u>

Victoria Wiseman, 19 Walther Road, Map 9 Parcel A4-0, SE 032-2570, Reconstruction and improvement of Stone Revetment.

Ms. Wiseman was present to answer questions about the project.

Ms. Usowski stated that the project has been completed, the as-built site plan has been received, they have done the beach nourishment and installed their benchmarks. Ms. Usowski stated the only issue that needs to be addressed regards the stones they placed at the top of the coastal bank for a pathway. Ms. Usowski explained that there was a slight misunderstanding about having a path leading to the stairs. It is meant to be a path through the vegetation or dirt, not a stone walkway. Ms. Usowski said the stones will be removed and sand will be placed down instead.

Ms. Usowski recommended approval of the certificate of compliance but stated that she will not release the certificate until she inspects the pathway to make sure the stones have been removed. She stated that they need to abide by their ongoing conditions such as beach elevation monitoring and sand nourishment via the benchmarks.

Ms. Wiseman asked about the beach elevation monitoring and when the pictures are to be submitted to Ms. Usowski. Ms. Usowski answered that Ms. Wiseman should send the pictures near the end of February 2026. Ms. Wiseman said she would let Ms. Usowski know when the stones had been removed.

No discussion from the Commission. No public comment.

MOTION
Mr. Coleman moved to approve the Certificate of Compliance with the release of the certificate based on the Conservation Administrator's level of comfort with the stones being removed as discussed.
Mr. Coulson seconded.
Vote: 5-0
Motion carried; Request for Certificate of Compliance approved.

<u>Orders of Conditions</u>

Kyle L. and Patricia Marles Lissack, 10 Harwich Pines, Map 103, Parcel S1A-11. Timber step removal and stone step reconstruction, vegetation management and landscaping.

No discussion from the Commission. No public comment.

MOTION
Ms. Mulhall-Maguire moved to approve the Order of Conditions.
Ms. Pilling seconded.
Vote: 5-0
Motion carried; Order of Conditions approved.

Renato Carniero, 54 Main Street Extension, Map 55, Parcel E1-2. After the fact lot clear cutting and proposed restoration plan.

Ms. Usowski stated that since the owner was able to acquire some of the required plantings, she told him he could start planting. She stated that Mr. Carniero is now putting down seed mix.

Mr. Coleman asked about the amended plan that was asked to be submitted showing the location of the boulders among other pertinent details. Ms. Usowski stated that she will check on the amended plan to be submitted. There was a discussion about certain conditions on the order and the corrections to be made based on the decisions agreed upon at the last meeting.

No further discussion from the Commission. No public comment.

MOTION
Mr. Ketchum moved to approve the Order of Conditions.
Mr. Coleman seconded.
Vote: 5-0
Motion carried; Order of Conditions approved.

Request for a Certificate of Compliance

Gertrude A. Collins and Ann L. Collins, 587 Pleasant Lake Avenue, Map 110, Parcel C1-93, SE 032-2535, Creation of an on-grade path to water, pruning to create a view corridor and a small landing near pond.

Ms. Usowski said they did a nice job on the project. They snaked a path through what was essentially sweet pepper bush to be able to access the pond which they haven't been able to do. She stated they lowered the sweet pepper bush within the approved vista window and pruned some lower limbs off the trees to get a view through. She stated that the owners also placed a small bench at the very edge of the pond which the Commission had allowed them to do. Ms. Usowski stated that since the conditions are now known, the owners will be able to maintain them.

No discussion from the Commission. No public comment.

MOTION
Mr. Coleman moved to approve the Certificate of Compliance.
Ms. Mulhall-Maguire seconded.
Vote: 4-0
Motion carried; Request for Certificate of Compliance approved.

DISCUSSIONS

Ms. Pilling asked if at a future meeting the Commission could have a discussion about the old salt road. Ms. Usowski stated she will look into inviting the DPW director to a meeting to discuss this issue.

Mr. Coulson stated that the fence on the walkway at the herring run has been erected and looks good.

Mr. Ketchum asked about the herring count. Ms. Usowski explained that there is a herring counter at the Depot road entrance and noted that they are close to the final herring count. Mr. Coulson said that for safety reasons, a single-rail fence should be installed across the front of the bulkhead where the two flumes drop off. Ms. Usowski was in agreement.

Ms. Usowski spoke about the recent algae bloom located at the west end of Buck's pond by the John Joseph and Bucks Pond spit. She stated that the bloom was sampled and found to be microcystus and dolpherum, both of which are toxic. She stated that the homeowner's association was notified, and caution signs were placed at all the major areas. She spoke about how these types of bacteria impact people. Ms. Usowski noted that even though Hinkley Pond was treated in 2019, is still in distress.

Mr. Ketchum asked why people seem to be reporting more of these algae blooms. Ms. Usowski stated that people seem to be more educated about this issue.

Ms. Usowski spoke about the Plovers and stated that the vast majority of the Plover nests were lost in the recent storm.

Ms. Mulhall-Maguire asked about an area near Allen Harbor that is staked out. Ms. Usowski said that it is most likely a Mass Audubon project and probably concerns the Plovers or the Terns.

Mr. Ketchum asked about the scheduling of a third informational Land Nutrient meeting. Ms. Usowski stated that Ms. Kristin Andres, Director of Education and Outreach for the Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC), was going to come but had to cancel. Ms. Usowski said they could reschedule the meeting for the end of August or early fall. Mr. Ketchum stated that it would be good to have the meeting when more summer residents are available.

Minutes of June 4, 2025

MOTION
Mr. Coleman moved to approve the minutes of June 4, 2025 with the edits as discussed.
Ms. Pilling seconded.
Vote: 5-0
Motion carried; Minutes of June 4, 2025 approved.

MOTION TO ADJOURN
Mr. Coulson moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:50pm.
Mr. Coleman seconded.
Vote: 5-0
Motion carried; Meeting adjourned at approved.

Meeting Attendance
Dan Ojala
Vicki Wiseman

Minutes taken and transcribed by Lisa Shaw, Executive Assistant