

**REGULAR MEETING
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
EILEEN DONDERO FOLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

4:00 P.M.

November 13, 2025

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Samantha Collins; Vice Chair Barbara McMillan; Members: Jessica Blasko, Brian Gibb, Lynn Vaccaro, Alice Carey, Alternates: Talia Sperduto, Oliver Chag

MEMBERS ABSENT: Stewart Sheppard

STAFF PRESENT: Kate Homet; Environmental Planner

Chair Collins opened the meeting and introduced the draft meeting minutes to be voted in and requested that T. Sperduto vote due to the absence of member S. Sheppard.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. October 8, 2025

J. Blasko made a motion to accept the October meeting minutes as presented. A. Carey seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Chair Collins explained that there had been a request by City staff to move up the City's NHDES permit in the agenda to hear it earlier. Vice Chair McMillan made a motion to hear it now and J. Blasko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

II. WETLAND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. 250 McKinley Road
Assessor's Map 250 Lot 117
Rachel & Christopher Delisle, Owners

Chris Delisle, property owner, and Bob DeColfmacker, contractor, came to present this application. Mr. Delisle explained the residential project and the proposed wetland buffer impacts, and in addition, described the current stormwater flows on his property and how the existing rain garden and stormwater system captures and treats that flow before entering the wetland.

The Commissioners discussed the site walk and noted the existing wetland buffer enhancements in place and how the property owners were already good stewards of the buffer. J. Blasko made a motion to recommend approval of this application to the Planning Board. The commission then

discussed the motion and agreed to attach the following stipulation to their recommendation:

1. In accordance with Section 10.1018.40 of the Zoning Ordinance, applicant shall permanently install wetland boundary markers, which may be purchased through the City of Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department. It is recommended that markers be placed near the existing stone wall at the rear of the property at 50-foot intervals.

B. Gibb seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

The Commission and applicant then discussed the stipulation and commended the applicant on the presentation and the stewardship of the buffer on his property.

2. 65 Onyx Lane
Assessor's Map 220 Lot 35
Mariya Kontsepolskaya & Ralph Minderhoud, Owners

Vice Chair McMillan made a motion to take this application out of order on the agenda and hear it once the applicant arrived. J. Blasko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

The applicant did not arrive and Ms. Homet gave a quick overview of the project and asked the Commission what they would like to do. The Commissioners noted that they would like to hear more details about the application from the applicant and would like to postpone them.

Vice Chair McMillan made a motion to postpone this application until the December meeting. B. Gibb seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

III. WORK SESSIONS

1. 1185 and 1187 Sagamore Avenue

Shawn Tobey from Haley Ward, came to present this work session. He gave a brief overview of the two existing properties and then reviewed potential plans for redevelopment of the lots and impacts within the wetland buffer.

The Commission asked whether the applicant would have to combine the lots which they would, and wondered whether or not it would make sense to remove the existing house. The Commission asked questions about the wetland buffer line, the use of pervious pavement, what would be removed and what would stay, the type of stormwater management structure to be put in place, the existing vegetation that would have to be removed and the parking needed.

The Commission then started to list off what their priorities would be for this project and the changes that they would like to see before an application comes back. Specifically, they noted that they would like to see any new pavement in the buffer be pervious, the additional fifth unit is not supported, photos should be included of the existing conditions, the combination of the two driveways into one proposed driveway is a positive change, doing more to offset the new

buffer impacts, creating a greater stormwater strategy for the northern portion of the site, making sure the stormwater is treated onsite before crossing the road to the conservation land, the addition of more trees behind the new buildings on the north and west sides of the properties, the retainment of as many existing trees as possible, they appreciated parking within the building and the addition of a sidewalk and they would like to see a landscape plan that addresses enhancing and healing the site to bring back as much vegetation as possible and pointing out exactly what would be removed and what would remain.

2. 105 Bartlett Street

Alex Monastiero came to present this application on behalf of Chinburg Builders along with Neil Hansen from Tighe & Bond and Shawna Sammis from Chinburg. Ms. Monastiero went over the proposed project idea, including the new impacts and proposed public trail, and discussed the site visit that some members attended.

The Commissioners then discussed the location of the project, the original proposal for this site from a few years prior, the extent of the site and where the property lines would end, the long-term vision for the trail, the existing conditions of the buffer, the existing living shoreline, the specifications of the public trail, the location of the proposed trail, impacts to the 25' vegetated buffer, how to mitigate the vegetation that will be removed as part of this project, expanding the vegetated area, the delineation of the flood zone and extended flood hazard area and how flood insurance could harm homeowner costs, considering regrading of the buildings to allow for parking underneath and the proposed height of the new buildings.

The Commissioners then gave their feedback on the project idea, with one member noting that this would be an introduction of all new impervious because the driveway that exists now is not the kind of impervious that they usually deal with and this project would take away existing vegetation and pervious areas and would disturb an already vegetated area to create a park. This commissioner would like to see this project moved further back, away from the wetland edge and with the pathway restored to a natural vegetated area. They also noted that this project would take away the natural wildlife habitat that exists now and the introduction of windows in this area could create a problem for migratory birds. Another site walk would be preferred. Another commissioner noted that it would be preferable to see the path pulled closer to the buildings instead of towards the wetland and the introduction of native, natural barrier vegetation to deter people from stepping off the path into the 25' buffer would go a long way in protecting that area. Another commissioner noted that the applicants are looking for the privilege of being able to build within the wetland buffer that they are assigned to protect and for the commissioner to feel good about this project, they would like to see a project that is very beneficial to the environment in the space that is not built such as a demonstration area with innovative planting. In addition, one commissioner noted that it would be great to see the design of these buildings enhance the environment by either using renewable energy or being a fossil fuel-free site to help align this property with our goals as a City and community to be net zero and follow our climate action plan. Once commissioner asked why they were even considering permitting such a project because no justification for the project falls within the rules they have been asked to uphold. The abutting properties and residential homes on the pond were discussed and it was noted that there was not a real precedence for building on the pond this close to the wetland. One commissioner noted that with climate change and rising sea levels, it felt irresponsible to be developing in such

a space. The stress on City infrastructure was discussed and the affordability of living in such a space. It was mentioned that this particular development project would cross a lot of the boundaries that the Commission has responsibility for. If this project does not come back without substantially reduced impacts, then they noted it would be difficult to find a way to move it forward.

IV. STATE WETLAND BUREAU APPLICATIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Dredge and Fill – Minimum Impact

Four Tree Island

Assessor's Map 208 Lot 2

City of Portsmouth, Owner

This application was heard right after the acceptance of meeting minutes.

Christine Sproviero, project manager from the Department of Public Works, came to present this application along with Erich Fiedler, engineering supervisor on behalf of the applicant, Civil Works New England for work on City property at Four Tree Island. Ms. Sproviero gave a background on the proposed shoreline repair project and the different areas that required upgrades within the tidal buffer. She went over the extent of existing damage to areas of the shoreline and explained the purpose for and type of repairs that would be done.

The Commissioners then asked questions about the project including how the revetment area would be rebuilt, if stones would be removed as part of the project, the sections of the culvert that will remain and those that will be relined, the materials to be used for culvert repair, the sizing of the culvert, the history of the culvert, projected lifetime of the new culvert, the possibility of abandoning the culvert in place, how the plastic material of the new culvert will hold up, wildlife value of the culvert and planting ideas for landscaping and buffer enhancement.

J. Blasko made a motion to recommend approval of the permit to NHDES. The commission then discussed the motion and agreed to attach the following stipulations to their recommendation:

1. Applicant shall consider trimming the edges of the new culvert pipe to limit UV exposure of the plastic.

2. The City of Portsmouth Department of Public Works shall consider inspecting this new culvert every 10 years to minimize degradation and culvert failure.

L. Vaccaro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

2. Dredge and Fill – Minimum Impact

53 Pray Street

Assessor's Map 102 Lot 40

Rebecca & Kenneth Nicholson, Owners

Eric Weinrieb of Altus Engineering came to present this application along with Robbie Woodburn, the landscape architect, and Ben Auger, the builder. Mr. Weinrieb noted that they hosted a site walk the previous week and then went through the details of the proposed project. Ms. Woodburn also gave a brief rundown of the landscaping plan and went into details about the

new pervious features.

The Commission then asked questions about existing water levels and past floods, the seed type for the proposed lawn, maintenance plans for the plantings and the heated driveway.

A. Carey announced that she would not be voting on this application would be abstaining.

Vice Chair McMillan made a motion to recommend approval of this application to NHDES with the following condition:

1. Applicant shall develop maintenance plan for property owners which should include NHDES shoreland regulations.

J. Blasko seconded the motion. Commissioners discussed the confined space and noted that the applicants did a lot to reduce the existing impacts. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

3. Permit-By-Notification
34 Ceres Street
Assessor's Map 106 Lot 45
Portsmouth Navigation Group, Owner

Kuerstin Fordham from Riverside Pickering came to present this project on behalf of Moran Towing. Ms. Fordham gave a detailed explanation of the proposed project to remove and replace 38 existing oak dock pilings that are failing and the reasons for an expedited application request.

The Commission asked about the lifespan of the existing pilings compared to the new wood type that would be used, how the pilings would be removed and the new blockings would be installed.

J. Blasko made a motion to sign the Permit-By-Notification and expedite the review of this application by NHDES. A. Carey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Homet discussed a request from the Planning Board to have a joint work session for reviewing amendments to Article 10 of the Zoning Ordinance. It was decided that dates will be sent around in January for a Conservation Commission work session to come together and discuss any amendments needed.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.