

**REGULAR MEETING
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
1 JUNKINS AVENUE
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
SCHOOL DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM**

4:00 P.M.

January 14, 2026

MINUTES

I. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. Chair
2. Vice Chair

The meeting opened and Vice Chair McMillan noted that she would be serving as acting chair due to Chair Collins' absence and that both alternate members T. Sperduto and O. Chag would be voting. Vice Chair McMillan noted that the first order of business was the election of officers. She stated that Chair Collins had told her that she would be willing to stay on as chair and that she herself would be willing to stay on as vice chair. She stated that she didn't want to rule out any other nominations if other members were interested in taking on either of the roles. J. Blasko made a motion to nominate Samantha Collins as Chair and Barbara McMillan as Vice Chair and re-elect them to their positions. B. Gibb seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. December 10, 2025

No corrections were made and J. Blasko made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. O. Chag seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0) with one member abstaining due to absence from the previous meeting.

I. WETLAND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. **REQUEST TO POSTPONE**
50 Clough Drive
Assessor's Map 206 Lot 20
City of Portsmouth, Owner

Vice Chair McMillan introduced this item and noted that the applicant had requested to postpone. J. Blasko made a motion to postpone this application and it's related NHDES application until the February meeting. B. Gibb seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

2. 333 Borthwick Avenue
Assessor's Map 240 Lot 2-1
HCA Health Services of New Hampshire, Owner

Chris Akers, an engineer from Catalyst Design Group, came to present this project. Mr. Akers went through the application and described the existing conditions of the facility, the need for an ambulance canopy, a widened garage door and some related driveway site improvements such as a widened sidewalk and canopy support columns. He described the location of the wetland and wetland buffer, and the proposed impacts within the buffer limits.

The Commission asked questions about and discussed the location of the wetland buffer, the history of the wetlands on this site, planting plans and opportunities for planting, potential areas for mitigation work onsite, the need for a wetland enhancement plan, current snow storage areas, placement of wetland boundary markers, existing water quality, areas for mowing restrictions, the materials proposed for the new infrastructure and their permeability, the need for dredging of the jurisdictional swale on site to prevent backup onto adjacent properties, and any necessary state permitting.

[42:55] J. Blasko made a motion to recommend approval of this project to the Planning Board with the following stipulations that were discussed and finalized amongst the Commission with a second from T. Sperduto:

1. *Applicant shall provide a planting plan prior to submission to the Planning Board for the work site which should include new plantings for the river rock area noted on the plan, the area between the new sidewalk extension and existing building, and a portion of the top of the swale bank that stretches the length of the ambulance garage to the lawn south of the helipad.*
2. *Applicant shall submit a plan to the Planning & Sustainability Department staff for review prior to submission to the Planning Board that shows the existing locations of onsite snow storage areas and plans for mitigating snow storage near wetland resources onsite. If existing snow storage occurs within close proximity to wetland resources, alternative locations shall be sought.*
3. *Applicant shall show on plans and install permanently prior to the start of construction, wetland boundary markers every fifty feet along the edge of the swale from the box culvert south down to the intersection of Borthwick Avenue.*
4. *Applicant shall note on plans that, during regular maintenance, no mowing shall occur in the area of new plantings along the top of the swale bank.*
5. *All necessary dredging and maintenance work for the swale onsite shall be completed by the applicant and approved by the City of Portsmouth Department of Public Works as a condition prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Completion for this project.*
6. *It is recommended that staff from the Department of Public Works make themselves available at the Planning Board meeting to speak to Stipulation #5.*

[51:50] The Commission voted unanimously (6-0).

II. STATE WETLAND BUREAU APPLICATIONS (NEW BUSINESS)

1. Dredge and Fill – Major Impact
50 Clough Drive
Assessor's Map 206 Lot 20
City of Portsmouth, Owner
2. Dredge and Fill – Minimum Impact
South of Goose Bay Drive
Assessor's Map 305, Lot 3 and Assessor's Map 303, Lot 8
Pease Development Authority, Owner

[53:03] Nicole Martin, a certified wetland scientist with VHB, came to present this application on behalf of Lonza Biologics on land owned by the Pease Development Authority. Ms. Martin noted that this application had also gone before the Pease Planning Board for approval prior to being submitted to NHDES. Ms. Martin proceeded to give an overview of the proposed project, reviewed the proposed jurisdictional impacts and the environmental screenings that were performed.

[1:00:40] The Commission then asked questions about and discussed removing existing vegetation, the newly constructed plunge pools, the larger Lonza stormwater system, the history of the stream alignment, how this project deals with ongoing soil remediation at the air force base, proposed sediment disposal areas and best management practices for stabilization, plans for future maintenance and continuing to limit sediment buildup and being copied on correspondence for this project going forward.

[1:11:28] J. Blasko made a motion to recommend approval of this application to NHDES with the following stipulations:

- 1. Applicant shall ensure that erosion control measures on the offsite soil storage area for this project are in place and functioning during the duration of this work.*
- 2. Applicant shall copy the City of Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department on all maintenance reports for and correspondence regarding this project.*

O. Chag seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

III. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Article 10 Discussion/Work Session

[1:13:26] The Commission started discussing other business. The Commission briefly discussed the upcoming Master Plan update and opportunities to provide feedback to a draft version. Additionally, new outreach materials specific to salt marsh buffer stewardship were released and the Commission discussed ways to use these new materials. Lastly, Vice Chair McMillan discussed feedback she had received from NHDES about receiving letters with detailed comments and reasoning for recommendations from local Conservation Commissions. She noted that they appreciated receiving recommendations from us that provide a greater level of detail and reasoning and we should consider continuing this practice with future applications, especially complicated ones.

[1:23:28] Ms. Homet then introduced the work session for zoning ordinance changes. She proceeded to go through Article 10 of the Zoning Ordinance page by page and pointed out past areas that had been called out for updates and new areas that staff had discussed. The Commission discussed trending issues, enforcement, attempts to review applications in an equitable way, getting applicants to work with us, the complexities of weighing impacts from larger projects versus smaller projects, and many other topics. The Commission did not finish reviewing the entire Article but decided they would finish the review in the following month's meeting in February.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.