Memo

TO: Conservation Commission Members
FROM: Kate Homet, Environmental Planner/Sustainability Coordinator; Peter Britz, Director of Planning & Sustainability
DATE: November 13, 2026
SUBJ: November 18, 2026 Conservation Commission Meeting

50 Andrew Jarvis Drive
Assessor's Map 229 Lot 3
City of Portsmouth School Department, Owner
LU-26-133

This application is for replacing an existing line of fencing at the high school baseball field and at the track and field. The existing chain link fencing will be replaced with 829 linear feet of higher chain link fencing and five chain link gates for access. The project includes additional holes to be dug for new fencing posts.

1. The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.

This project seeks to replace an outdated fence along two athletic fields and introduce new access ways for safety and security at the high school. The wetland buffer is already impacted by the existing fence and is already being used for recreational purposes.

2. There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.

This location is already an existing fence line within the 100' wetland buffer and moving it outside of the buffer is impossible due to the sport field locations. There is no reasonable alternative location that would allow for continued safety and security around the sports fields..

3. There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.

The proposed work is almost entirely occurring in already disturbed fence line areas. This fencing is within high-traffic areas and will help reduce foot traffic and disturbance by recreational activities in the resource.

4. Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.

This project will be performing the majority of construction in a previously developed area and no vegetation removal is proposed.

5. The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.

This proposal is a replacement of a fence within the wetland buffer that is currently helping to keep people, pets and trash from entering the wetland resources around the athletic fields. An upgrade to the existing

fencing should have minimal impact to the resource and should serve as a deterrent for other unintended impacts.

6. Any area within the vegetated buffer strip will be returned to a natural state to the extent feasible.

This application proposes impacts within the vegetated buffer strip. Applicant should demonstrate how they are minimizing disturbance within the 25' buffer and what plans there are, if any, for planting or reseeding.

Recommendation: Staff recommends **approval** of this application to the Planning Board with the following stipulation:

Prior to submission to the Planning Board:

1. *Applicant shall update application to include planting or seeding plans, if any.*

175 Middle Road
Assessor's Map 168 Lot 16
Natalie and John Michael Jr. Murphy, Owners
LU-26-136

This application is for the expansion of a deck and footings within the wetland buffer to provide a secondary egress off the rear of the home and connect into the existing rear deck. This project proposes digging and permanently installing an additional footer to hold the new deck area above. This project proposes approximately 21 square feet of permanent impact to expand their deck above a space that is currently exposed soil and less than 1 square foot of impact for installing a new footing.

1. *The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.*

This project is a minor deck expansion and includes less than square foot of soil disturbance. This area within the buffer is already surrounded by decking and associated footings.

2. There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.

The entire property is within the 100' wetland buffer, there are no alternative locations outside of the jurisdictional areas where this deck connection can be made.

3. There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.

The proposed work is occurring in an already disturbed area and the applicant has confirmed that no heavy equipment/machinery will be used. The impacts to the buffer should be minimal and could be even further reduced through installation of erosion controls such as a silt soxx, silt fencing, etc between the structure and the wetland edge.

4. Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.

This project does not propose any removal of existing vegetation.

5. The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.

This proposal does not appear to have any alternative locations that would be feasible. It is occurring within an already disturbed area of decking and walkways and should not create any significant adverse impacts.

6. Any area within the vegetated buffer strip will be returned to a natural state to the extent feasible.

This application does not propose impacts to the vegetated buffer strip.

Recommendation: Staff recommends **approval** of this application to the Planning Board with the following stipulations:

Prior to submission to the Planning Board:

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 along the 25' vegetative buffer at 50-foot intervals. Applicant shall show the proposed locations for these markers on the plan set.

2. Applicant shall show on the plan set where erosion control measures will be installed to reduce debris entering the wetland resource during construction.

Coakley Connector Road (650 Borthwick Avenue & 100 Coakley Road)
Assessor's Maps 234 Lot 7-6 and Lot 6
City of Portsmouth ROW
LU-26-149

This application is for the construction of a new 300' long public road between two private parcels off of Borthwick Avenue and Coakley Road. The proposed project includes a sidewalk, closed drainage and on-street parking along the connector roadway. Drainage improvements are proposed on the Granite Group property and on-street parking and sidewalk construction are proposed on Coakley Road. The project will also include minor re-striping and landscaping. Overall, this project proposes approximately 18,433 s.f. of temporary disturbance within the wetland buffer and 12,922 s.f. of permanent new impact within the wetland buffer.

1. The land is reasonably suited to the use activity or alteration.

This project proposes new impervious and new underground structures in what currently exists as a mix of maintained lawn and a parking lot. This land is within a mix of various wetland buffers and this proposal will increase the current impervious surface amount.

2. There is no alternative location outside the wetland buffer that is feasible and reasonable for the proposed use, activity or alteration.

These properties are both within various wetland buffers and eventually drain to nearby Hodgson Brook. Due to safety concerns for residents of the nearby Coakley Road neighborhood, this location is being proposed as the only viable area for getting in and out of the neighborhood once the upcoming bridge project on Coakley Road is underway.

3. There will be no adverse impact on the wetland functional values of the site or surrounding properties.

The proposed work will create nearly 13,000 s.f. of permanent impervious impact to the wetland buffers. This additional impact will have an adverse effect on the adjacent resources if the applicant cannot provide management and treatment for all the stormwater before being released back into the wetland systems.

4. Alteration of the natural vegetative state or managed woodland will occur only to the extent necessary to achieve construction goals.

This project proposes regrading, removal of existing vegetation and trees and removal of existing lawn area. This project proposes some impacts within the 25' no-cut buffer on the Granite Group property. The applicant states that regrading and clearing is needed to slope stormwater off the new connector road and into the adjacent wetland system and plantings are proposed to help revegetate this area of the buffer. Applicant should quantify the square footage of new plantings proposed. Applicant should address alternatives, if applicable, that reduce vegetation removal and prioritize retaining healthy native trees and shrubs.

5. The proposal is the alternative with the least adverse impact to areas and environments under the jurisdiction of this section.

This proposal is introducing nearly 13,000 s.f. of new impervious surface into the wetland buffer area. Alternative locations and layouts with less impact should be discussed.

6. Any area within the vegetated buffer strip will be returned to a natural state to the extent feasible.

This application proposes impacts to the vegetated buffer strip and has a proposed planting plan within this disturbed area of the 'southwest ditch'.

Recommendation: Staff recommends **approval** of this application to the Planning Board with the following stipulations:

Prior to submission to the Planning Board:

1. Applicant shall include trees to be removed, trees to remain, and the specific seed mix for areas to be seeded on the landscaping plan.

2. Applicant shall address alternative layouts or locations for this project as part of their submission.

3. Demolition plan shall include delineation of erosion control measures (silt soxx, silt fence, etc.) to prevent debris, trash and sedimentation from entering the various wetlands during construction.

4. Applicant shall include a column in the impact table calculating existing impervious surface area for comparison with the proposed permanent impervious area.