



Boards & Commissions Committee

Monday, March 30, 2026, 6:45 PM
 City Council Chamber, 1st Floor
 562 Main Street, Melrose, MA 02176

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Kimberly Vandiver	Vice Chair
Cal Finocchiaro	
Elizabeth Kowal	
Christopher Park	
William Bradley Freeman	President, Ex Officio Member
Ryan Williams	Chair

Meeting was called to order by Chair Williams at 6:45 PM

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Kimberly Vandiver	Vice Chair	Present	
Cal Finocchiaro	Ward 6	Present	
Elizabeth Kowal	At-Large	Present	
Christopher Park	Ward 3	Present	
William Bradley Freeman	President, Ex Officio Member	Present	
Ryan Williams	Chair	Present	

II. MINUTES APPROVAL

Boards & Commissions Committee Meeting March 9, 2026 6:45 PM

Motion to Approve minutes by unanimous consent without reading made by Chair Williams

All were in favor and motion passed

RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Cal Finocchiaro, Elizabeth Kowal, Christopher Park, Kim Vandiver, Ryan Williams, Bradley Freeman

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

When: Mar 30, 2026 06:45 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Boards & Commissions Committee Meeting

Join from PC, Mac, iPad, or Android:

<https://cityofmelrose-org.zoom.us/j/97200397061?pwd=qn7LLAiL2shdknHCGr6RCnYXEafolt.1>

Passcode:801819
Webinar ID: 972 0039 7061

Motion to Open public comment made by Chair Williams at 6:46 PM
There were no comments on the floor or via Zoom
Motion to Close public comment made by Chair Williams at 6:46 PM

IV. APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS

- A. **(ID # 2026-308):** Reappointment of Charlie McCabe, 14 Orient Avenue, Melrose to the Conservation Commission for a term of three years, said term to end the last day of February 2029.

Motion to Recommend made by Councilor Vandiver
Seconded by Councilor Finocchiaro
All were in favor and motion passed

RESULTS:	PASSED [UNANIMOUS]
TO:	City Council
AYES:	Cal Finocchiaro, Elizabeth Kowal, Christopher Park, Kim Vandiver, Ryan Williams, Bradley Freeman
NAYS:	None

Comments and Discussion:

Charlie McCabe discussed his first term's accomplishments, including invasive species removal at Ell Pond and working with volunteers. He highlighted upcoming challenges, including managing natural assets and addressing infractions on city land.

- B. **(ID # 2026-448):** Reappointment of Jason Jancaitis, 16 Tappan Street, to the Melrose Conservation Commission for a three-year term, said term to expire on the last day of February 2029.

Motion to Recommend made by Councilor Finocchiaro
Seconded by President Freeman
All were in favor and motion passed

RESULTS:	PASSED [UNANIMOUS]
TO:	City Council
AYES:	Cal Finocchiaro, Elizabeth Kowal, Christopher Park, Kim Vandiver, Ryan Williams, Bradley Freeman
NAYS:	None

Comments and Discussion:

Jason Jancaitis discussed his experience serving since 2020, highlighting both administrative tasks and hands-on work including water chestnut removal and pond cleanup efforts. The biggest challenge identified was leveraging limited resources and volunteers, with particular focus on understanding new permitting requirements for future pond projects. The Council discussed the Community Preservation Act as a funding source for conservation and park improvements.

- C. (ID # 2026-380): Reappointment of Ellen Cobau, 79 Otis Street, Melrose to the Melrose Council on Aging for a three-year term, said term to expire on the last day of February 2029.

Motion to Recommend made by Councilor Vandiver
 Seconded by Councilor Park
 All were in favor and motion passed

RESULTS:	PASSED [UNANIMOUS]
TO:	City Council
AYES:	Cal Finocchiaro, Elizabeth Kowal, Christopher Park, Kim Vandiver, Ryan Williams, Bradley Freeman
NAYS:	None

Comments and Discussion:

Ellen Cobau discussed initiatives to make Melrose a dementia-friendly community, including training for restaurant staff and caregiver cafes at the senior center. She mentioned plans to install a bocce court near the Senior Center to engage seniors and promote physical activity. She highlighted the importance of transportation services and digital literacy programs, particularly in collaboration with SDM, to support aging residents. The conversation also touched on her role as a certified SHINE volunteer, helping seniors navigate Medicare enrollment. The meeting focused on discussing outreach strategies for senior programs and reaching younger demographics. President Freeman shared insights from touring the Milano Center and suggested organizing a panel featuring people doing meaningful activities in retirement to engage younger audiences, along with making sure seniors are aware of the various tax abatement programs. The discussion highlighted challenges in reaching 50-somethings and men, with suggestions to explore voter registration data and consider hosting events in different parts of Melrose, including potentially using local clubhouses or private spaces. The meeting covered discussions about local events and programming for non-English speaking seniors, with Ellen planning to follow up with Councilor Vandiver about outreach efforts.

- D. (ID # 2026-355): Reappointment of Joe Viola, 134 Howard Street, Melrose MA to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, for a term of one year, said term set to expire on the last day of January, 2027.

Motion to Recommend made by Councilor Park
 Seconded by Councilor Vandiver
 All were in favor and motion passed

RESULTS:	PASSED [UNANIMOUS]
TO:	City Council
AYES:	Cal Finocchiaro, Elizabeth Kowal, Christopher Park, Kim Vandiver, Ryan Williams, Bradley Freeman
NAYS:	None

Comments and Discussion:

Joe Viola shared his experience serving on the housing trust, noting its formation within the past year and their efforts to develop guidelines, applications, and strategies for addressing housing needs in the community. The meeting focused on discussing affordable housing opportunities in Melrose, particularly at the Ripley School site and other locations. The Affordable Housing Trust

Fund committee explored options for developing 10-15 affordable units for seniors, with the possibility of using city-owned land or private land through land leases. The committee also discussed the current 80% AMI affordability threshold and considered the potential for deeper affordability levels, while exploring funding sources including free cash allocations and CPA funds for sustainable trust fund capitalization.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The City of Melrose does not discriminate based on disability and is committed to hosting accessible meetings and events. Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, in order to access the programs and activities of the City of Melrose or to attend meetings, should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Polina Latta platta@cityofmelrose.org.

Motion to Adjourn made by Councilor Vandiver at 7:29 PM

Seconded by Councilor Finocchiaro

All were in favor and meeting was adjourned

Charlie McCabe
14 Orient Avenue
Melrose, MA 02176

January 8, 2026

Mayor Jen Grigoraitis
City of Melrose
Via email

Mayor Grigoraitis,

I would like to request reappointment to the City of Melrose Conservation Commission. I have served my first three-year term, having been nominated by Mayor Brodeur and confirmed by the Melrose City Council in 2023. Since my appointment, I'm pleased to have participated in regular meetings, weighing in on decisions required by the state and city conservation regulations, and managing the ponds and open space owned by the city. I also took advantage of trainings offered to conservation commission members by state officials and the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions.

Following the unexpected death of our conservation agent, Eric Devlin in December of 2022, the committee kept the work of the committee moving forward, filling in aspects of the agent's role. We also switched to meeting in person for monthly meetings going forward at City Hall.

In addition to the regulatory work that the conservation commission has accomplished since my appointment, I am pleased to have contributed to the following:

We completed three years of water chestnut harvesting on Ell Pond by a contractor through funding from city funds and a state grant in 2024. Beginning in 2023, we organized additional volunteer workdays to remove hard to reach water chestnuts in shallow areas of the pond, asking volunteers to bring kayaks and canoes to help gather and remove water chestnuts. I have coordinated the volunteer workdays since 2023, averaging 2 volunteer workdays of 3 hours each with approximately 18 volunteers each year. Since 2024, volunteers are solely responsible for ongoing water chestnut monitoring and removal.

In 2024, Melrose residents donated two kayaks to the Conservation Commission for use for water chestnut removal and other pond management activities. I store those kayaks when not in use in my garage and bring them out for clean-ups and other activities on Ell Pond, Towners Pond and Swains Pond.

I helped our conservation agent, Ingrid Winkler survey invasive species in and around

(over, please)

(Continued from page 1)

Towners and Swains Ponds, using our donated kayaks to access portions of the ponds and shoreline not readily accessible by public access.

I've led a series of volunteer workdays in the fall of 2025 to manage invasive vines and plants growing in and around Ell Pond Park. We'll continue to work to manage invasive species there and we're looking to extend our efforts in city parks and open space surrounding Towners Pond and Swains Pond in the coming year.

I look forward to continuing to serve for a new 3-year term on the Conservation Commission.

Yours truly,

Charlie McCabe

Cc: Ingrid Winkler, Conservation Agent

**Statement of Interest of Jason Jancaitis
Conservation Commission**

Ingrid let me know that my appointed term on the Conservation Commission is almost expired. I have enjoyed being a part of the Commission for the past 5 years and would be interested in being re-appointed to the Commission. Since I have joined I have been involved with the administration of wetlands permits for projects throughout the City, the development of new encroachment regulations and procedures to protect the conservation land, and cleanups of trash and invasive species at Ell Pond, Towner's Pond, and other conservation parcels. I believe that the experience I've gained from being a part of the Commission over the past several years is beneficial to the City.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss further.

Thanks,

Jason Jancaitis

Melrose Council of Aging
Board of Directors
Member Ellen Cobau

February 2023- February 2026 Accomplishments

Served as Board Clerk for 2+ years

UMB Community Assessment

Community outreach re importance of completing survey
Identified community members for focus groups
Ongoing review of UMB Assessment and Recommendations
Self-assigned to committee that addresses Programming.
Self-assigned to committee that addresses Transportation.

Completed training to be a Certified Shine Volunteer. Volunteers provide free, unbiased, and confidential health insurance counseling to Massachusetts Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers. Assigned to Mystic Valley (Malden) to counsel and assist Medicare recipients during Fall 2025 Open Enrollment Period and Winter 2026 during Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period.

February 2, 2026

Mayor Jennifer Grigoraitis
Melrose City Hall - Second Floor
562 Main St
Melrose, MA 02176

Re: Reappointment to the Melrose Affordable Housing Trust

Dear Mayor Grigoraitis:

With my current term on the Melrose Affordable Housing Trust ending soon, I am writing to express my interest in reappointment to the Trust. Our group has had a productive year, and I believe we've helped to create a thoughtful process to prioritize the use of scarce public resources in worthy housing development or preservation projects in the years ahead.

By creating clear goals, guidelines, an implementation plan, and a formal application process, the Trust has moved from "planning" to "doing" -- as evidenced by our approval of a funding request for three units at 87 West Wyoming Avenue.

I see the creation of housing opportunities as a critical need for Melrose. My goal for the next term is to work with my fellow Trustees to identify and secure funding to ensure the Trust has the sustainability it needs to make Melrose affordable to more people. I would be honored to continue serving the city in this capacity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Viola". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "V".

Joe Viola
134 Howard Street