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CITY OF MELROSE

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MICHAEL PAIEWONSKY
Chair

City Hall, 562 Main Street
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176
Telephone - (781) 979-4312
Fax - (781) 979-4290

Melrose Conservation Commission Minutes for March 19, 2026

Present: Michael Paiewonsky*, Paul Moore, Forrest Tiedeman, Jason Jancaitis, Charles McCabe, Craig Molway, Emily Anderson and Associate members Dorian Rose and Cole Lepler

*Mr. Paiewonsky recused himself from the public hearing for the Burnett and Laurel Streets Stormwater Management Project due to conflict of interest and therefore was not present at the beginning of the meeting.

Absent: N/A

Staff present: Ingrid Winkler

Vice Chair Moore opened the public meeting at 7:30 pm. All members participated in person.

Public Comment: None

Review of Minutes/Correspondence:

Conservation Commission members reviewed draft minutes from the February 12, 2026, meeting.

Motion made by Mr. McCabe to approve meeting minutes for the February 12, 2026, meeting, seconded by Mr. Jancaitis. Motion was approved 5-0. (Mr. Moore did not vote on this motion because he was not present at the last meeting.)

Public Hearing:

Notice of Intent – DEP # 217-0236 – Burnett & Laurel Streets Stormwater Management Improvements Project

Continued from February 12, 2026

Owner/Applicant: City of Melrose

Project Location: Multiple parcels on Burnett and Laurel Streets (between Wheeler Ave and Sycamore Rd)

Representative: Jay Coy, Acting City Engineer, was present

Documents Submitted: Notice of Intent (01-23-2026) and Permit Set of Plans

Project Description: Filed as an Ecological Restoration Limited Project within Bank, BVW, Land under Water Body and Waterway (LUW), BLSF, 100-ft Buffer Zone to Bank and BVW, and 15-ft No Disturbance Zone and 20-ft No Construction Zone under the City's wetland Ordinance for the purposes of stormwater management, flood mitigation, wetlands enhancement and habitat improvement. Proposed project activities include:

- Removal of sediment in an intermittent stream
- Removal of fill from BVW
- Construction of forebays for storage and pretreatment of stormwater runoff
- Construction of permeable and impermeable berms to direct flow and provide access to Burnett Park for passive recreation
- Wetland restoration and replication
- Invasive plant management within Burnett Park

The City is seeking an Ecological Restoration-Limited Project Order of Conditions (OOC) and requesting a Waiver for work proposed within the 15-ft NDZ and 20-ft NCZ.

This matter was continued from the previous meeting because the wetland flags could not be refreshed and the wetland delineation could not be confirmed until the snow cover was gone. The flags were refreshed and the wetland delineation was checked by Mr. Moore and staff on March 12, 2026. Mr. McCabe also went to the site and noted that the flagging looked great and he was impressed with the proposed plan overall.

Mr. Coy updated the Commission that the City will be pursuing more grant funding opportunities, including a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program grant, to get this project funded.

Ms. Anderson mentioned that OOCs are valid for three years with only one possible extension. She asked Mr. Coy if he would be ready for an approval and starting the clock on the OOC or if it may be beneficial to continue the hearing. Mr. Coy requested that the hearing be continued.

The only potential scheduled work on the site is a bat endangered species assessment in spring or early summer, something that was not in the original plan. The assessment but would involve a visual inspection for evidence of bats and could be done without an OOC.

The hearing is continued until the next meeting on April 16, 2026.

*Mr. Paiewonsky entered the meeting at this point.

Public Hearing:

Request for Determination of Applicability

Applicant/Owner: Peter and Teresa Walter

Project Location: 287 Swains Pond Avenue

Documents Submitted: Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) (02-25-2026), Site Sketch, and Deck Plan Drawing

Project Description: Replacement of an existing 6-ft x 13-ft deck/porch and construction of a 16-ft x 16-ft addition to the deck extending toward Towners Pond. Construction of the deck addition includes installation of 12-inch diameter 4-ft deep footings with crushed stone under the deck and white privacy lattice around the deck.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter were present to describe the project. No heavy machinery will be used on site; the contractor will place erosion controls (straw wattles) around the work site; excavated soil will be placed at the end of the asphalt driveway which is pitched away from the pond; and excess soil will be spread under the deck and covered with landscape fabric and crushed stone. All soil will remain on site. All work will be outside of the 20-foot no construction zone.

After the straw wattles have been installed, Mr. Walter will notify staff who will check that the installation was done properly.

Mrs. Walter asked how long the straw wattles must remain in place. The Commissioners explained that the erosion controls must stay in place during the construction period and until the soil is stabilized.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Molway. Motion was approved 7-0.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to approve the Determination of Applicability as a Negative 3 (work described is within the Buffer Zone but will not alter the resource area), seconded by Mr. Moore.

Roll Call Vote:

Michael Paiewonsky – Y; Paul Moore – Y; Forrest Tiedeman – Y; Jason Jancaitis – Y; Charles McCabe – Y; Craig Molway – Y; Emily Anderson – Y.

Motion was approved 7-0.

Discussion:

155-157 Main Street - Mr. Gilcelio Souto, the property owner, had appeared before the Commission on November 20, 2025, to discuss the Commission's request for removal of the garage encroaching onto abutting Conservation land. At that meeting, the Commission offered a possible extension of the deadline for removal if Mr. Souto could come before the Commission again prior to the March 31, 2026, deadline, with a cost estimate for removal of the garage and a reasonable timeline of when the work would be completed, showing good faith effort. Mr. Souto was present to continue the discussion. He said that he had gotten some estimates but they were very high and therefore he is planning to do the work himself. He is requesting more time to complete the garage removal. Mr. Paiewonsky suggested a new completion deadline of September 1, 2026. Mr. Souto agreed to that date. Mr. Souto asked if the Commission was planning to sell the Conservation parcel in question. Since the land is protected Conservation land, it would be very difficult to change its use as it would require a legislative act. Mr. Souto also brought up the possibility of a land swap since he owns another parcel on Mt. Vernon Avenue, abutting the Conservation land. Again, this would be a long and difficult process and not something the Commission is considering at this time.

Mr. Souto will notify staff when the removal of the garage is complete; he expects that to happen within the next month or two.

Sylvan Street Conservation Land - At the December meeting, Ms. Meghan McDonough, representing The Urban Biodiversity Alliance (TUBA), asked the Conservation Commission if

any Conservation land parcels within Environmental Justice (EJ) neighborhoods might be suitable for a microhabitat pollinator planting grant project. As a possible site, the Conservation Commission proposed a bit of grassy area near the sidewalk on two parcels of Conservation land along Sylvan Street (just under 60 ft long stretch), across from Wyoming Cemetery. TUBA would require a letter of consent and a 3-year commitment from the Conservation Commission for this project. Ms. McDonough was present to explain the process and describe the project. She provided a list of proposed plants that a focus group of local residents determined do particularly well in this area. The list includes Jerusalem artichoke, goldenrod, mint, Joe Pie weed, blue lobelia, brown-eyed Susan, packera aurea, ground cover wild strawberry, and cardinal flower.

Ms. McDonough would like get started by doing an invasives assessment. She is considering planting some native grasses and sedges that are attractive but also may help with erosion control along the roadway. She went over the list of proposed plants.

An advisory board for TUBA will come up with a planting plan but planting may not happen until later in the fall. The grant will cover planting, tools, and educational materials; the work will be done by volunteers. Ms. McDonough hopes that the Conservation Commission will join in this effort. Mr. Paiewonsky said that the Commission could help with organizing volunteers.

Ms. McDonough asked if installing a bat house at that location may be possible, and the Commissioners did not see a problem with that. Mr. McCabe said that DCR at the Middlesex Fells has a number of bat houses near their headquarters on Woodland Road and he could connect the bat scientist on TUBA's advisory board with DCR's bat expert.

Staff will coordinate with the City Solicitor to draft a letter of consent granting permission to TUBA to plant native plants at the Conservation land site along Sylvan Street for three years.

Pond Management – After some research and discussion, staff determined that hydro-raking at Towners Pond may not be feasible at this time, both because funding has not been secured and the permitting is uncertain. The Commission's proposed treatment plan for this year will cover surveys and sampling at Ell, Swains, and Towners Ponds, SONAR treatment at Towners Pond, and the installation of EutroSORB filters at Ell Pond. The Commission will decide on additional treatment if sampling results indicate that they are required, based on sampling results, later in the summer.

The proposing pond surveys, sampling, permitting, EutroSORB filters for Ell Pond and Sonar treatment at Towners Pond, total **\$14,700**.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to approve the proposal from Water & Wetland to survey and sample Ell, Swains, and Towners Ponds, install EutroSORB filters in Ell Pond, and apply Sonar treatment in Towners Pond, totaling \$14,700, seconded by Mr. Moore.

Roll Call Vote:

Michael Paiewonsky – Y; Paul Moore – Y; Forrest Tiedeman – Y; Jason Jancaitis – Y; Charles McCabe – Y; Craig Molway – Y; Emily Anderson – Y.

Motion was approved 7-0.

48 Burnett Street – On February 19, staff received a complaint that unpermitted work had occurred in the back yard of 48 Burnett Street, a parcel which is partially within 100-ft buffer

zones and the 100-yr floodplain. After visual confirmation from the street that the complaint was valid, staff sent a letter to the owner on record, 48 Burnett Street, LLC, requesting that they contact the Conservation office to discuss the matter and to schedule a site visit. On March 4, staff received an email from Lucas Marthos, owner of Next Home Builders Corp. Mr. Marthos and his company were applying for a building permit to renovate the house on the property and were advised to contact staff because the property is partially within the floodplain. He said that he "would like to spread a bit of dirt to level the backyard and plant grass, similar to what the neighbors have done". Staff emailed back advising that property owners must obtain approval from the Conservation Commission for any proposed work within resource areas or buffer zones and explained the permitting process. Staff asked for additional information about any work that had already occurred as well as a plan or better description of where any proposed work would take place in order to determine appropriate next steps. Staff also reached out to schedule a site visit. As of the meeting date, there has been no response from Mr. Marthos, Next Home Builders Corp., or 48 Burnett Street, LLC.

On March 12, Mr. Moore and staff walked by the property and observed a pile of unconsolidated material and disturbed unvegetated soil very close to, possibly even within, what looked to be wetlands. Staff sent a follow-up letter via certified mail on March 16, stating that the unconsolidated material must be relocated away from the resource area and properly stabilized, erosion and sedimentation controls must be installed, and disturbed soils must be stabilized with vegetative cover. The letter also requested that the owner contact the Conservation office to discuss any work done or planned, arrange for a site visit and schedule the owner's attendance at an upcoming meeting to determine next steps.

Staff will continue attempts to contact the property owners to gain access to the property and determine what, if any, work has occurred there.

Bellevue Golf Club (BGC) drainage question – Brian Skinner, Superintendent-Director of Facilities and Operations at BGC, had contacted staff to discuss some maintenance work on BGC property and asked if it might be possible to remove flags from a recent wetland delineation. Staff reported that Mr. Coy had already responded to Mr. Skinner, requesting that the flags remain in place until an NOI is filed by the City.

Other item not on the agenda:

Additional screening layer for GIS map - Staff is currently working with the City's GIS analyst to include "presumed" wetland areas (areas where wetlands are suspected but not confirmed) and associated buffers on a GIS layer to use as a screening tool during building permit and land-use reviews. The goal is to prevent missing wetlands that are not in official datasets and trigger review by the Conservation Commission, if appropriate.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be April 16, 2026, at 7:30 PM.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Moore. Motion was approved 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

<p>Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. 39, 23B, the approval of these minutes by the Commission constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements</p>

made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Commission as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.