



MICHAEL PAIEWONSKY
Chair

CITY OF MELROSE

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Melrose Conservation Commission Minutes for May 21, 2026

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

Absent: Paul Moore and Emily Anderson

Staff present: Ingrid Winkler

Chair Paiewonsky opened the public meeting at 7:31 pm. All members participated in person.

Public Comment: None

Review of Minutes/Correspondence:

Conservation Commission members reviewed draft minutes from the April 16, 2026, meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to approve meeting minutes for the April 16, 2026, meeting, seconded by Mr. McCabe. Motion was approved 3-0. (Mr. Tiedeman and Mr. Molway did not vote on this motion because they were not present at the last meeting.)

Public Hearing:

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

Continued from April 16, 2026

Owner/Applicant: City of Melrose

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

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), Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (BLSF), 100-ft Buffer Zone to Bank and BVW, and 15-ft No Disturbance Zone (NDZ) and 20-ft No Construction Zone (NCZ) under the City's wetland Ordinance for the purposes of stormwater management, flood mitigation, wetlands enhancement and habitat improvement.

At applicant's request, the hearing is continued until the next meeting on June 18, 2026.

Public Hearing:

Request for Determination of Applicability

Applicant/Owner: City of Melrose

Project Location: Ell Pond Park, Lewis Monk Field

Representatives: Alexandra Gaspar (Environmental Scientist) and Kyle Alfred (Landscape Architect) of Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. (W&S)

Documents Submitted: Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) (04-30-2026), including Project Plan, Project Maps and Wetland Delineation Report

Project Description: Proposed installation of five new sports lights and associated wiring and electrical equipment around an existing baseball field. Two of the proposed light locations are within the 100-ft buffer to resource areas; the entire limit of work is within BLSF. Applicant is seeking a negative Determination.

Mr. Alfred went over the proposed plan which includes the installation of five new sports lights and associated wiring and electrical equipment: two adjacent to the existing dugouts, two on the sides of the field, and one at the center outfield beyond the fence line.

The proposed lights are approximately 60-ft tall. A new 6-ft x 2-ft x 6.5-ft high electrical cabinet mounted to a concrete pad is proposed to be in the southwest corner of the ballpark, adjacent to the existing metal shed, to house electrical components and irrigation controls.

An approximately 24 in x 34 in trench will be excavated to run the conduit from the new electrical box to each proposed light location with an approximately 12 in x 16 in hand hole for each fixture. Stone dust surfacing and topsoil will be stripped and stockpiled and then placed back and restored after construction.

Stone dust surfacing will be removed and stockpiled for reuse. The base material will not be reused. The trenches will be backfilled with new base material and then covered with the stockpiled stone dust or reseeded. The trench excavated through the sports field will be resodded instead of reseeding so as not to delay play.

Ms. Gaspar discussed impacts to resource areas. The entire site is within BLSF so all work will be within BLSF and two of the proposed light locations with associated wiring and handholes are within the 100-ft buffer to wetlands resource areas. The proposed activities will result in minimal impacts to wetland resource areas and associated buffer zones.

Straw wattles or compost filter tubes and silt fencing will be installed between proposed work areas and resource areas and around stockpile areas. Inlet sediment controls will be used for all catch basins within the work area and existing trees will be protected. No alteration to existing grades is required for this project.

Temporary impacts, including staging and stockpile areas, construction entrances, access to pole locations and trenching areas for conduit, will affect 1,102 ft² of BLSF and 297 ft² of buffer zone. Permanent impacts from the light poles, electrical handholes and the concrete pad for the electrical cabinet will affect 45 ft² in BLSF and 5 ft² in buffer zone.

W&S considers impacts of the lights, handholes, and concrete pad to be minimal with no significant impact to the flood storage volume on site and therefore is not providing for compensatory storage as part of this project. Flows will not be restricted, and the site will largely be restored to pre-construction conditions. Applicant is therefore requesting a negative Determination.

Mr. Paiewonsky asked how long the construction will take. W&S hopes that the project will go out to bid in late June and it will probably take a few months for construction.

Mr. Jancaitis asked for clarification on the permanent impact to BLSF and why no compensatory storage is proposed.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Tiedeman. Motion was approved 5-0.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to approve the Determination of Applicability as a Negative 2 (work described is within jurisdictional resource area but will not alter the resource area), seconded by Mr. Tiedeman.

Roll Call Vote:

Michael Paiewonsky – Y; Forrest Tiedeman – Y; Jason Jancaitis – Y; Charles McCabe – Y; Craig Molway – Y.

Motion was approved 5-0.

Discussion:

48 Burnett Street –

Property owners Lucas Mathos and George appeared at last month's meeting at the Commission's request to discuss unpermitted work done at the property. A silt fence had been improperly installed and there was still fill visible in the wetland area behind the house. The property were still awaiting a formal report from their wetland scientist. Next immediate steps discussed at the last meeting were to install the silt fence properly, get the formal report from the wetland scientist, and put together an NOI for wetland restoration, include deck construction.

Since the last meeting, the silt fence was adjusted so that the bottom of the fabric is buried. The property owners shared the final Wetland Resource Evaluation and a BVW Restoration Protocol prepared by their wetland consultants, EcoTec Inc. They are currently in the process of preparing the NOI.

Mr. Paiewonsky and staff conducted a follow-up site visit on May 14 and observed that while the back deck had been rebuilt, no ground disturbance was evident beneath the deck, and it appeared that no excavation for footings beneath the posts had been performed.

10 Elmcrest Circle - Encroachments onto Conservation land – A sport court was recently constructed in the backyard of this property within the buffer zone to a wetland resource area. Members of the Conservation Commission and staff met with the property owner during a site visit on May 14 and recommended that he submit an after-the-fact RDA. The property owner said he will do so promptly. In addition, a putting green, fencing, and a shed are located on

adjacent City-owned Conservation land. During the site visit, Mr. Paiewonsky told the property owner that the fence will need to be moved and the putting green removed, at a minimum. The shed is on City-owned property.

The Commission discussed the encroachment and reviewed aerial photos of the property. At the Commission's request, staff will ask the City Solicitor to advise on what to do about the shed. The matter of this encroachment will require additional review and discussion separate from the RDA.

40 Martin Street – review of possible resource area impacts – The Health Department received a complaint of discharge from a pipe and trash in a wetland area on adjacent, privately-owned property to 40 Martin Street, where a nursing home is located. The Health Inspector and staff met with the interim administrator and maintenance staff of the nursing. At the Health Inspector's prior request, the trash had been cleaned up and the dumpster had been replaced. Two PVC pipes were observed that, according to the maintenance person, discharged from two sump pumps in the basement of the facility. Staff advised that discharge from the sump pump should be re-routed to an upland location on their property, away from the wetland area. When the Health Inspector and staff revisited the facility on May 19, they observed that one of the pipes had been capped and the other was rerouted to discharge onto a small grassy area on the nursing home property, close to the property boundary and a corner of the building. The Commissioners reviewed photos of the site and the new discharge along the side of the building and agreed that the issue had been resolved.

New and other items not reasonably anticipated at time of posting

The seller of a property on Ell Pond on Main Street just became aware of an outstanding OOC from 1985 for the construction of the house. The property has changed hands numerous times since 1985, and the seller had submitted an RDA and received a negative DOA in 2004 to rebuild porches on back of the house. This issue of an outstanding OOC was not discovered during any of those transactions, until now. The seller's attorney submitted a request for a Certificate of Compliance. After reviewing the request and aerial photos of the property, the Conservation Commission decided to issue the COC.

Community Clean-up Day – A clean-up organized by Keep Melrose Beautiful is scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 2026, 9 am -12 pm. The Conservation Commission will participate and focus its attention on the areas around Swains Pond and Swains Pond Ave.

Administrative Updates:

- **Free cash request update** – Order for the free cash appropriation request to be heard by City Council Appropriations Committee at their June 4 meeting.
- **Pond maintenance update** – Water & Wetlands completed pond surveys and water quality sample collection (awaiting analytical results), installed the filters in Ell Pond, and completed the initial Sonar treatment at Towners Pond.
- **Sylvan Street Conservation land update** – The Urban Biodiversity Alliance received permission to remove mustard garlic and Norway maple saplings from agreed-upon area along sidewalk on Sylvan Street. Ms. McDonough has organized a volunteer event for tomorrow, May 22. She was present to discuss her plans to remove vegetation on the Conservation land. She said that she spoke with the owner of 35 Edgemere Street who believes that he owns the Conservation parcels and showed her a deed that showed an old plan. Staff will look at the deed and research when the parcels were transferred to the

care and custody of the Conservation Commission.

Ms. McDonough mentioned that it appeared that someone had scored some tree of heaven on Conservation land on Mt. Vernon Avenue. Staff will take a look and see if there is evidence of that.

Ms. McDonough will pull the garlic mustard tomorrow with her group. She questioned whether Norway maples on the Conservation land would be considered public shade trees since they are along a public way. Staff will double-check the Public Shade Tree Law and the City's Tree Hearing Procedure to see whether either of them would be applicable to this situation.

Ms. McDonough mentioned planting sunchokes and asked if the Conservation Commission would provide trees to plant. Mr. Paiewonsky said that the Conservation Commission will not be providing plants but would be willing to participate by volunteering to help plant. Provided the plants selected are native and appropriate to the area, the Commission will go with TUBA's recommendations on plant selection.

- The City Solicitor provided a new waiver form for volunteers to fill out before doing work on City-owned property.
- **The next regularly scheduled meeting will be June 18, 2026, at 7:30 PM.**

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Molway.

Motion was approved 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

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 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.
