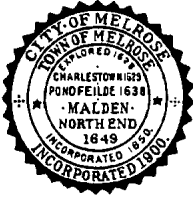


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CITY OF MELROSE

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MICHAEL PAIEWONSKY
Chair

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Melrose Conservation Commission Minutes for April 17, 2025

Present: Chair Michael Paiewonsky, Forrest Tiedeman, Charles McCabe, Craig Molway, and Associate members Kaitlyn Calhoun and Dorian Rose.

Absent: Paul Moore, Jason Jancaitis, and Emily Anderson were absent.

Staff present: Ingrid Winkler

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

Public Comment: None.

Review of Minutes:

Conservation Commission members reviewed draft minutes from March 20, 2025, meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to approve meeting minutes for the March 20, 2025, meeting, seconded by Mr. Tiedeman. Motion was approved 3-0. (Mr. Molway abstained from voting since he was not present at the March 20, 2025 meeting.)

Discussion:

Election of Officers: The election of officers was postponed to a future meeting due to the absence of three Commissioners.

Pond Maintenance updates:

Water & Wetlands (W&W) collected samples for phosphorus testing on March 27. The crew collected samples from five of the eight proposed locations (three locations were found to be dry). Results came back on April 3 and four of the five samples were at the lower to middle level of the eutrophic range (25-96 µg/L). The highest concentrations of total phosphorus were found in the samples collected at OF-29 located west of the skate park (48.4 µg/L) and OF-42 located on the east side of Ell Pond across from 742 Main Street (46.1 µg/L). Possible sources of phosphorus were discussed as well as the difficulty of treating for it. The Commissioners mentioned deep-sump catch basins and other Best Management Practices (BMPs) that might reduce the discharge of phosphorus and other pollutants to Ell Pond. Staff will check with the Engineering Department to see if there are sumps and catch basins associated with OF-29.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to approve the installation of EutroSORB filters at outfalls OF-29 and OF-42 by Water & Wetland to treat for phosphorus, seconded by Mr. Molway. Motion was approved 4-0.

110 Penney Road – Beginning in October of 2024, staff sent repeated requests to the property owner of 110 Penney Road to stabilize the site where soil had been disturbed during previous unpermitted work. On March 13, the homeowner called staff to confirm that his contractor was installing silt fencing and that the straw mulch would be put down by the weekend. Staff explained to the property owner that the straw mulch was supposed to have been installed before the winter to prevent erosion on the disturbed area and that straw is used as a temporary measure until the soil can be permanently stabilized with vegetation. Silt fencing was installed on or around March 13. The deadline for compliance with the Commission's requests was March 21 and staff sent a friendly reminder to the property owner on that day to encourage him to get the job done. On March 24, the property owner notified staff that his contractor had missed putting down the straw mulch but said it would be done the next day. On March 31, staff observed some straw mulch had been spread near the silt fence but not on the entire disturbed area. While it was not done exactly as requested by the Conservation Commission, Mr. Paiewonsky agreed that the silt fence and straw mulch on the more sloped areas would provide some erosion control until the entire disturbed area has been permanently stabilized with a vegetative cover. On April 14, staff sent the property owner another email stating that all disturbed areas need to be permanently stabilized with a vegetative cover using sufficient topsoil to assure long-term vegetative growth and requesting that the erosion controls be left in place until the disturbed area is seeded and vegetation is well established. Staff also reminded the property owner that he will need to file for a permit with the Conservation Commission for any future projects on his property.

155-157 Main Street - A garage behind the property at 155-157 Main Street is encroaching (located almost entirely) on a City-owned Conservation parcel on Mount Vernon Avenue. Staff sent a certified letter to the property owner of 155-157 Main Street regarding this encroachment issue but did not hear back from the property owner. Staff was able to contact the property owner by phone on April 14. Mr. Paiewonsky, the property owner, and staff are scheduled to meet at the property on April 18 to discuss the encroachment.

Clean-Up Day – In coordination with Keep Melrose Beautiful, the Conservation Commission will participate in a community cleanup day scheduled on April 26. The Commissioners decided to focus their efforts on the Penney Road area where incidents of illegal dumping have increased again.

Dumpling on Penney Road:

Illegal dumping along Penney Road has been an issue for many years but seemed to have increased over the past few months. After a meeting with representatives of the Police Department, Department of Public Works, Information Technology, and Office of Planning and Community Development, motion-sensor trail cameras were installed on Penney Road near where the most recent and egregious dumping occurred. Staff continues to monitor the area and has called police to report incidents of dumping.

Donation of Land:

Staff is coordinating with the City Solicitor to facilitate transfer of a parcel of land, located off of Dexter Road, to the care and custody of the Conservation Commission.

Fees for Permit Applications:

The Commission last discussed WPA filing fees in February of 2023 according to meeting minutes, but it is not known when these fees were last updated or adjusted. Staff compiled information on filing fees charged by other nearby communities for discussion. Several communities in the area charge fees for Requests for Determination of Applicability (RDAs) and Certificates of Compliance (COCs) whereas Melrose does not. Some communities also charge different amounts depending on the type of project being permitted (e.g., RDAs for residential projects are less than for commercial projects). Mr. Paiewonsky will review the information and suggest new fees to discuss at the next meeting.

Draft Encroachment Policy:

Staff prepared a draft encroachment policy based on those for Newton and Weston, incorporating comments from Mr. Moore and Mr. Tiedeman. Mr. Paiewonsky will work on the draft for continued discussion at the next meeting.

New and other items:

Open Space and Recreation Plan – extension of action plan

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) updated their Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) requirements and are instructing communities to create a 10-year action plan as opposed to the 7-year action plan that was previously required. Given this change, EEA has offered communities with plans approved under the old requirements an opportunity to extend their action plans by three years and receive an additional three years of eligibility. Since Melrose submitted our OSRP in 2023, it is eligible for an extension which would make our OSRP effective through December 2033. OPCD requested that the Conservation Commission review the action plan and consider whether there are any tasks that should be added, amended, or removed. The Commissioners will do this and continue the discussion at the next meeting.

287 Swain Pond Ave, Lot 6 – reissue COC

The attorney for the sellers of 287 Swains Pond Avenue requested a COC for work done approximately 20 years ago. At that time, a larger lot that the house sits on was subdivided by the previous owners. As part of the subdivision process, an NOI was filed to remove part of the existing driveway and reconfigure and repave a portion of it, all within the 100-ft buffer zone. The previous owner received an Order of Conditions, the work was completed, and a COC was issued to the previous owner, but it was never recorded. The parcel is registered land and land court typically requires an original document. The Conservation Commission reviewed the site plans and scope of the original project and reissued a COC based on the documentation on file.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be May 15, 2025, at 7:30 PM.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Tiedeman. Motion was approved 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 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.