

## North River Commission – Minutes

Meeting #620 – April 23, 2026 – Norwell Town Offices, 93 Longwater Circle, Norwell, MA

**Present:** Boulter (Pembroke), Heine (Hanson), Gallagher (Scituate), Leonard (Marshfield), Lynch (Norwell), Simpson (Norwell – A), Cyrus (Marshfield – A), Lalone (Scituate – A)

**Absent:** Jones (Hanover), Kemmett (Hanson – A)

### 1. Special Permit Application – 61 Bridge Street, Norwell (Pulsifer)

**Request:** Raze and rebuild an existing single-family dwelling.

**Presentation:** Applicant Gordon Pulsifer of 55 Bridge Street, Norwell, appeared with engineer Brendan Sullivan of Merrill Engineering. Mr. Pulsifer is seeking approval to raze the existing house at 61 Bridge Street and replace it with a smaller dwelling. The existing structure is approximately 10,000 square feet with a width of 121 feet; the proposed replacement would be between 7,000 and 8,000 square feet with a width of 98 feet, representing approximately a 19% reduction in width. Mr. Sullivan provided additional technical detail. The existing dwelling has a setback of approximately 101 feet from the natural bank, which is riverward of the buffer width (BW) line in the area where lawn transitions to the salt marsh of the North River. The proposed new structure will occupy substantially the same footprint and will extend further toward the upland area to accommodate a garage. The proposed building height is approximately 33 feet, within the 35-foot maximum. While the height has increased slightly due to the narrower corridor width, the facade area is actually decreased slightly. Applicant also noted a proposed pool on the eastern portion of the property, which involves a retaining wall; the pool is not included in the width corridor and will be graded down to match existing grade. The area between the existing house and the natural bank consists primarily of lawn with some trees along both property lines. No trees will be removed. Supplemental materials provided to the Commission included a special permit application and larger-format drawings, including an overlay showing the existing and proposed dwelling footprints in comparison. The Commission inquired about exterior colors; the applicant indicated the windows will be black and the siding will be a stucco finish in an off-white or medium tone designed to blend with the natural environment, in keeping with the Commission's standard condition for special permits.

**Discussion:** Commission members discussed the procedural sequence for local permitting approvals. Mr. Sullivan confirmed that this is the Commission's first step – no zoning relief is required – and that next steps would include the Norwell Conservation Commission for a stormwater review and Notice of Intent. Members noted that where the project footprint is well outside the 50-foot no-touch buffer, it is reasonable to seek North River Commission approval before Conservation Commission review, as the likelihood of Conservation-driven footprint changes is minimal. Mr. Sullivan indicated that he would notify the Commission of the outcome of the Conservation filing and that any material changes would

be brought back to the Commission. A member of the public from an abutting property was present and indicated no objection.

**Action:** Motion to approve the Special Permit. (Leonard/Lynch) – Vote 5-0.

## **2. New Business**

### **Approval of Minutes – March 26, 2026:**

Administrator noted one correction to the draft minutes distributed prior to the meeting: the name of an engineer was listed incorrectly and had been corrected in the revised version circulated by email on the day of the meeting. No additional corrections were identified.

**Action:** Motion to approve the minutes of March 26, 2026 as corrected. (Heine/Leonard) – Vote 4-0, Lynch abstained as not present on March 26, 2026.

## **3. Administrator’s Report**

Administrator reported on the following matters:

### **Special Permit Recordings – 16 River Road, Hanover and 89 Neal Gate Street, Scituate:**

The 30-day appeal period for the special permits approved at the February 2026 meeting for 16 River Road, Hanover and 89 Neal Gate Street, Scituate has expired without appeal. Both permits have been recorded at the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds.

### **22 Barry’s Landing, Scituate:**

The Commission discussed sending a letter to the property owner via certified mail, using Commission letterhead and the formal language of a Cease & Desist letter regarding vegetative cutting within the North River Corridor. The letter will also be copied to the Scituate Conservation Commission.

**Action:** Motion to authorize the Administrator to send a cease-and-desist letter to the property owner at 22 Barry’s Landing, Scituate, with a copy to the Scituate Conservation Commission. (Lynch/Leonard) – Vote 5-0.

### **36 Moreland Road, Scituate – Tree Service Precautionary Letter:**

Administrator reported that following a neighbor’s report of a tree service sign posted at 36 Moreland Road in Scituate, the Commission sent a precautionary informational letter to the property owner advising them of the vegetative cutting standards of the Protective Order. The owner responded with a courteous explanation that branches had fallen in the driveway during a storm and a crew was engaged to clean them up. The matter is considered resolved with no violation.

**Real Estate Transactions:**

The Administrator noted several recent property sales within the river corridor: 70 River Road in Hanover, 55 Maccombers Way, Marshfield and 26 Damon's Point Circle, Marshfield. Welcome letters have been sent to the new owners of each property.

**Conflict of Interest Training:**

The Administrator encouraged all Commission members to complete the state-required conflict of interest training (required every two years, with an annual acknowledgment of the summary materials) and to forward copies of their completion certificates to the Administrator for the Commission's records.

**Scituate Representation:**

Member Adria Gallagher reported that there had been some confusion in Scituate regarding the length of term for Commission appointments. The issue has been resolved: Scituate's two current appointees, Gallagher and John Lalone, are confirmed through 2028. A former Scituate member, Ken Conway, has stepped down from the Commission due to changed circumstances. The Commission also discussed ongoing vacancies: alternates are still needed from Pembroke and Hanover.

**67 Collier Road, Scituate – DCR Response:**

Administrator reported on the response received from Counsel following the Commission's inquiry at the March meeting which indicated: The recommended course of action is to maintain regular communication with the Scituate Conservation Commission and press for a decision.

**Action:** Motion to authorize the Chair to direct the Scituate Commission member(s) to approach the Scituate Conservation Commission at a time and manner of their choosing to request an update on the matter of 67 Collier Road. (Lynch/Heine) – Vote 5-0.

**4. General / Old Business / Open Discussion****Remainder FY 2026 Budget:**

Administrator advised that the Commission is approaching the end of its fiscal year with some unspent funds and asked members to think about appropriate expenditures before the May meeting. Ideas discussed included: (1) a document scanning and digitization project to extend the prior scanning effort to cover administrative records (agendas, minutes, correspondence) going back to 1978, potentially with OCR capability to make records searchable; (2) cloud-based backup of current digital records to complement the Administrator's existing local storage; (3) additional escrow of the Administrator's compensation to cover the lag period before new-year funding becomes available; and (4) continued

funding of the river patrol program in coordination with the town of Pembroke. No decisions were made; members were asked to bring further ideas to the May meeting.

**Float By-Law Public Hearing:**

Administrator reminded members that the public hearing on the proposed Float By-Law has been scheduled for Thursday, May 14, 2026.

**Float Identification – Discussion:**

Member Steve Lynch presented a handout he had prepared summarizing float and dock identification and registration requirements across the six towns in the North River corridor as background for the upcoming public hearing. His research found considerable variation: some towns have existing identification requirements administered by the harbormaster; others have more informal arrangements. Mr. Lynch proposed that as an adjunct to, or follow-on amendment of the Float By-Law, the Commission consider establishing a float identification and registration system, potentially using numbered tags or QR codes, with the Commission serving as a common registry accessible to all six towns. Members noted that mooring balls on other waterways carry numbers tied to harbormaster records, and a similar system for river floats would assist with identification when floats break loose or cause hazards. The discussion was framed as preliminary and no action was taken; members agreed the topic would be an appropriate subject for the May 14 hearing.

**Virtual / Zoom Participation:**

Administrator noted that the Norwell Town Offices NSTV AV setup already has a Zoom meeting slot designated for the North River Commission’s regular meetings. The Commission discussed making this option available for both members and members of the public going forward, consistent with open meeting requirements.

**NRC-DCR MOU Update:**

Discussions with the relevant state parties regarding the Memorandum of Understanding are ongoing.

**Adjournment**

**Action:** Motion to adjourn the meeting. (Lynch/Gallagher) – Vote 5-0.

Minutes prepared by: Gary Wolcott, Administrator