

Minutes of Meeting #624 - August 27, 2026

Location: Room 133A, Norwell Town Offices, 93 Longwater Circle, Norwell, MA 02061

Time Called to Order: 7:00 P.M.

Present: Boulter (Pembroke), Heine (Hanson), Jones (Hanover), Lawrence (Hanover - A), Leonard (Marshfield), Lynch (Norwell), Simpson (Norwell – A), Gallagher (Scituate)

Absent: Kemmett (Hanson – A), Cyrus (Marshfield – A), Lalone (Scituate – A)

I. Request for Determination — 78 Stony Brook Lane, Norwell

Applicant: Robinson — Additional Floats to Existing Dock

David Robinson and his representative, Paul Seaberg of Grady Consulting, LLC presented the application on behalf of the applicant. The property has an existing licensed dock consisting of a 10' x 16' float. The applicant currently keeps three boats (a 38' center console, a 23' pontoon boat, and a 20' pursuit boat) at the existing float, which the applicant offers, does not provide sufficient length or maneuvering area to safely accommodate the vessels while maintaining appropriate clearance between them.

The applicant proposes to retain the existing float and install four additional floats (bringing the total to five float sections), along with a post-and-rope railing along the existing pier. The applicant cited Section 4 of the Commission's Float By-Law, which allows for modification of the default 10' x 20' float dimensions where necessary to safely accommodate the size and type of vessels at a property. The proposed float system would extend approximately 68' from the river channel and would be approximately 183' from the opposite riverbank, which the applicant stated provides ample room for navigation.

The applicant noted that the project will also require review and a permit from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Waterways Program (Chapter 91), and stated that preliminary informal review by that office had not raised major concerns. Commission members advised the applicant that additional approvals will likely be required, including from the Norwell Zoning Board of Appeals (given the property's location in the Salt Marsh Zoning District), the Building Department, and the Harbormaster (dock/mooring registration).

Commission members discussed the proposed float configuration at length, including the number and total size of floats relative to the number and size of vessels, and expressed concern about the cumulative visual and precedential effect of large float assemblies along the river (referred to informally as the "marina effect"). Members emphasized that any additional floats should be engineered for safety, durability, and usability, with each vessel secured independently and with adequate clearance for safe access. The Commission noted that this is among the first applications reviewed under the Commission's recently adopted float bylaw, and indicated a preference to proceed deliberately given the precedential nature of the decision.

The applicant agreed to continue the hearing in order to obtain and submit outstanding approvals and information (including from the Department of Environmental Protection, Building

Department, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Harbormaster) before the Commission acts on the request.

Action: Motion to continue the hearing to a date to be determined. (Leonard/Heine) Vote: 6-0

II. Request for Determination — 36 Littles Lane, Marshfield

Applicant: Hagerman — Removal of Diseased Trees

The applicant did not attend the hearing. A Commission member reported having visited the site and observed that the tree in question is a dead ash tree, which had also been assessed as dead by a landscaping company retained by the applicant. The member noted the tree's proximity to the applicant's house and the risk it poses given prevailing northeast winds. The applicant also indicated a desire to remove a couple of additional small trees near the front of the house, which Commission members noted are located well beyond 100 feet from the resource area.

Action: Motion to approve removal of the diseased trees. (Jones/Gallagher) Vote: 6-0

III. Approval of Minutes — July 23, 2026

Action: Motion to accept the minutes of July 23, 2026 as submitted and waive the reading. (Lynch/Jones) — Vote: 6-0

IV. Administrator's Report

Float Bylaw — Legal Review

The Administrator reported that the Commission's legal counsel had previously advised that the Department of Conservation and Recreation was not required to review or approve the Commission's newly adopted float bylaw. The Administrator had separately asked counsel whether the Massachusetts Secretary of State or Attorney General must review or approve the bylaw. Counsel responded that the Protective Order and the enabling statutes governing the commission's authority to pass bylaws do not provide for Attorney General or Secretary of State review, and that counsel did not believe such review is required.

Float Bylaw — Website Posting and Minor Corrections

The Administrator reported that the new float bylaw has not yet been posted in final form on the Commission's website, and proposed adding a link to the bylaw as a standalone item (rather than posting the Commission's full set of internal governance bylaws). In reviewing the bylaw in preparation for posting, Commission members identified two minor corrections: (1) in Section 1, clarifying the word "vessels" to read "vessel(s)" to remove ambiguity as to whether the provision applies to a single vessel or multiple vessels; and (2) in Section 6, item 2, correcting a misspelling of "North River Commission."

Action: Motion to direct the Administrator to make the above two corrections to the float bylaw (clarifying "vessel(s)" in Section 1 and correcting the misspelling of "North River Commission" in Section 6, item 2) prior to posting. (Lynch/Leonard) Vote: 6-0

Property Owner Awareness of Commission Jurisdiction

The Administrator and members discussed the recurring problem of new property owners within the North River corridor being unaware that their property is subject to the Commission's jurisdiction, since this is often not disclosed by standard title examinations. The Administrator described ongoing outreach to the Registry of Deeds regarding indexing and cross-referencing of the 1978 document establishing the corridor's protected parcels, and noted that recording individual notices of restriction against the roughly 650–700 affected parcels would cost in excess of \$65,000 and was not considered a practical option at this time. The Administrator's current practice of identifying recent property sales within the corridor by Real Estate Sales reporting websites and subsequent Registry of Deeds research and sending a welcome letter to new owners was discussed as the most practical near-term approach. Additional outreach ideas (e.g., business cards, coordination with municipal boards and real estate professionals) were raised for further consideration and will be placed on next month's agenda.

Action: Motion to send certified letters welcoming buyers of property within the North River Corridor. (Lynch/Jones) Vote: 6-0

Marine Patrol Update

The Administrator reported that the Pembroke Police patrol of the river has continued to go well this year, with regular reports and invoicing, and no concerns raised. Mr. Boulter reported that the Massachusetts Environmental Police assisted with patrol during this year's Great River Race and have expressed interest in providing additional patrol coverage of the North River, noting that it is the only state-protected river of its kind in the Commonwealth.

61 Bridge Street, Norwell

The Administrator reported that the property owner (previously granted a special permit for a raze-and-rebuild project) has notified the Commission that construction is now beginning.

September Meeting Location

The Administrator reported that the Norwell Town Clerk has requested that the Commission relocate its September meeting to the upstairs room at the Norwell Town Offices (a room the Commission has used previously), and that members would be reminded of this change prior to the next meeting.

Site Visits / Recent Sales in the Corridor

The Administrator reported on recent property sales identified within the North River corridor, for which welcome letters have been sent, including: 79 Collier Road, Scituate; 54 Old Meeting House Lane, Norwell; 19 Old Bridge Road, Hanover; 89 River Road, Hanover; 101 River Road, Hanover; 300 Water Street, Hanover; 6 Damons Point Drive, Marshfield; and 512 Spring Street, Marshfield.

169 Macomber's Ridge, Marshfield — Fence

The Administrator reported that the fence issue previously discussed by the Commission has been resolved; the property owner voluntarily removed the fence.

V. New Business

C.O.C. Request — 79 Collier Road, Scituate

The Administrator summarized the history of this request. In 1994, the property owners received a special permit to enclose an area between the house and garage and to construct decking on the back of the house, but never returned to the Commission to close out that permit with a Certificate of Compliance. In 2006, the owners returned to the Commission requesting approval to enclose the same area; that 2006 project was completed and a Certificate of Compliance was issued for it, which the Administrator noted effectively covered the same footprint as the outstanding 1994 work, although neither the applicant nor the Commission recognized at the time that the 1994 permit had never been formally closed out. Separately, a 1994 condition requiring installation of a septic system (in place of an existing cesspool) has since been mooted, as sewer service has since been extended down Collier Road.

The current owners' daughter, who is in the process of selling the property, brought the open 1994 item to the Administrator's attention while confirming the status of the 2006 Certificate of Compliance. The Administrator provided the Commission with the original 1994 plans and before-and-after photographs from the 2006 project for review and noted that issuing the Certificate of Compliance for the 1994 project would resolve an outstanding item in the chain of title without any change to the property as it exists today.

Action: Motion to approve the Certificate of Compliance for the 1994 special permit at 79 Collier Road, Scituate. (Lynch/Leonard) — Vote: 6-0

VI. General/Old Business — Open Discussion

Update — 67 Collier Road, Scituate Appeal

The Administrator reported that the Town of Scituate has hired an independent review engineer for this matter. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will not hear the related matter until the Town has concluded its own review. Commission members asked whether DCR has been notified that the Town has engaged a new review engineer; the Administrator had not yet done so and agreed to follow up with DCR to keep them informed of the Town's progress.

VII. Adjournment

Action: Motion to adjourn the meeting. (Lynch/Leonard) — Vote: 6-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

Minutes prepared by: Gary Wolcott, Administrator