

North River Commission – Minutes

Meeting #616 – December 18, 2025 – Norwell Town Offices, 93 Longwater Circle, Norwell, MA

Present:

Boulter (Pembroke), Jones (Hanover), Heine (Hanson), Cyrus (Marshfield – A), Lynch (Norwell), Gallagher (Scituate), Lalone (Scituate – A),

Absent:

Leonard (Marshfield), Butler (Hanover – A), Simpson (Norwell-A), Kemmett (Hanson – A), Conway (Scituate – A)

1. Request for Determination – 80 Kings Landing, Norwell (Bulman)

Request: Repair and replacement of an existing failing retaining wall along the salt marsh adjacent to the marina, including removal of the existing wooden wall and installation of a new corrugated composite sheet pile retaining wall.

Presentation: Paul Gunn, Design Engineer with Morse Engineering, appeared on behalf of the applicant, Mike Bulman. Mr. Gunn described the existing marina facilities, including the boat ramp, dock gangway, and floats within the North River. He explained that the existing wooden retaining wall is in a state of disrepair and contributing to ongoing erosion of the adjacent salt marsh. The proposed project consists of removing the existing wall and replacing it with a new composite corrugated sheet pile wall at the same elevation, extending from the concrete ramp to the dock. Installation would be completed using an excavator accessing the site from the existing gravel drive. The purpose of the project is to stabilize the salt marsh and prevent further erosion into the river. A sample of the proposed wall material was provided to the Commission.

Mr. Bulman further described the conditions at the site, noting safety concerns due to erosion creating hazards for pedestrians and boats, particularly during high tides. He explained that the proposed wall system allows for maintenance and replacement of individual sections if damaged, and that the work would not increase depth, expand dock facilities, or add new structures. No additional docks or floats are proposed.

Discussion: Commission members asked questions regarding wall materials, durability in cold climates, installation methods, elevation relative to high tides, and precedent for similar applications. The applicant and engineer explained that the composite polymer system has been

used in marine environments, including New England, and is intended as a repair and replacement of an existing structure. The Commission discussed Chapter 91 considerations and noted that the work constitutes repair and replacement of an existing facility.

Action: Motion to determine that the proposed retaining wall replacement is an allowed use and to accept the project as presented. (Jones/Gallager) – Vote 6-0

2. Request for Determination – 36 Stony Brook Lane, Norwell (Dear)

Request: Septic system replacement.

Presentation: The applicant’s representative described the existing septic system, consisting of two leaching trenches installed in approximately 1987. The proposed work involves removal and replacement of the existing system with a Presby alternative system in a similar location, with the new system located slightly farther from the North River than the existing system. The project does not increase flow or bedroom count and is intended solely as a repair of a failed system.

Discussion: Commission members asked questions regarding system type, inspection and maintenance requirements, groundwater separation, and prior history of the system. The applicant’s representative explained that the Presby system is an approved alternative technology with established use and maintenance requirements, and that it allows for reduced system size while maintaining environmental protection.

Action: Motion to determine that the proposed septic system replacement is an allowed use and to accept the project as presented. (Heine/Gallagher) – Vote 6-0

3. New Business

Approval of Minutes:

Action: Motion to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2025 meeting as written. (Gallager/Heine) – Vote 6-0.

Administrator’s Report:

The Administrator reported;

- The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has released funding for the upcoming year (Fiscal Year 2026.)

- The 67 Collier Road Appeal of the Special Permit Denial will be scheduled at a January 14, 2026 Status Hearing. The Hearing Officer would like to schedule the hearing before the end of January.
- Room 133A is unavailable for meetings in January, February, and March. The Commission's regularly scheduled meetings will be held in Room 220.
- Room 133A is available February 23, 2026 for the proposed Public Hearing for introduction of the Commission's Float By-Law. Members were inclined for the separate meeting rather than adding this item to the regularly scheduled February 26, 2026 meeting and directed the Administrator to proceed with scheduling, advertisement, and postings.
- The Chairman and the Administrator met with DCR and NSRWA to discuss drafting a Memorandum of Understanding for the relationship between DCR and the Commission. DCR suggests the Commission provide a first draft as a starting point. Commissioners were prompted to review a suggested template and provide specific asks. Various arrangements for structure and funding were discussed.
- Real estate transactions in the North River Corridor - 28 Old Shipyard Lane, Hanover and 110 Damon's Point Road, Marshfield.

4. General / Open Discussion

- 22 Barry's Landing, Scituate – The Commission reviewed the status of the Special Permit Application for 22 Barry's Landing, Scituate. The hearing has been continued twice and the Commission expressed procedural concerns for repeated continuances. Members suggested that the Application be withdrawn rather than continued indefinitely. The Administrator suggested contacting the Applicant's representative to determine if they would be attending the January meeting.

Action: Motion to draft a letter to Applicant to withdraw their Application for Special Permit (without prejudice) if they are unable to appear at the January 22, 2026 meeting and to re-submit when they are ready to proceed. (Lynch/Jones) – Vote 6-0.

-Proposed Float By-Law Update – Mr. Lynch reviewed options for marketing the proposed By-Law.

-55 Collier Road, Scituate – Vegetative Cutting was observed at 55 Collier Road, Scituate and photographs provided to the Commission. Ms. Gallagher, as an abutter to the property recused herself from discussion about the site and left the meeting. The Commission reviewed photos and discussed what an appropriate response.

The Administrator was directed to draft a letter to the property owner indicating what the Commission had been made aware of and inviting them to an upcoming meeting to discuss the project.

Adjournment

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

Minutes prepared by: Gary Wolcott, Administrator

Video available: Norwell Spotlight TV - <https://www.norwellspotlighttv.com/schedule.html>