

North River Commission By-Laws

Adopted August 22, 1979

Amended June 6, 1984

Amended June 25, 2026

Article 1 – Name

Section 1 The name of the organization shall be the NORTH RIVER COMMISSION, established under Massachusetts G.L. c.367, s.62 of the Acts of 1978 and herein referred to in these by-laws as the “Commission”.

Article II – Purpose

Section 1 The purpose of this Commission shall be to implement the PROTECTIVE ORDER written pursuant to G.L. c.21, s.17b, entitled “SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RIVER PROTECTIVE ORDER FOR THE NORTH RIVER,” herein referred to in these by-laws as the “ORDER,” and recorded in Book 4639, Page 278 at the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds.

Section 2 The Commission shall have and exercise all the powers and authorities necessary to carry out the purpose of such ORDER and the powers and authorities granted therein.

Article III – Membership

Section 1 The Commission shall consist of one regular member and one alternate member from each town whose jurisdiction includes land or bodies of water lying within the North River Corridor as defined by the Order, said towns being Hanover, Hanson, Marshfield, Norwell, Pembroke and Scituate.

Article IV – Selection and Terms of Office

Section 1 Regular and alternate members shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen of each town within the North River Corridor. Each member, before commencement his/her term shall be sworn to the faithful performance of his/her duties by the respective town clerk or other authorized town official.

Section 2 The members of the Commission shall serve three (3) year terms. However, the preceding sentence shall not apply to the initial members of the Commission.

Section 3 The term of membership shall run from the first meeting on or after the first of July to the first meeting on or after the first of July upon which their term expires. The two members from the same town shall serve the same term.

Article V – Vacancies

Section 1 A Vacancy shall occur upon the death or written resignation of a regular or alternate member.

Section 2 Upon the occurrence of any vacancy, the Chairman of the Commission shall notify the town whose member's seat is vacant, and shall request a replacement who shall serve the remaining unexpired term of the vacancy.

Section 3 Upon three (3) successive absences from Commission meetings by both Commissioners representing a town within the North River Corridor, the Chairman may notify the town of such absences.

Article VI – Duties and Rights

Section 1 Regular members shall have full voting and participatory rights in all proceedings of the full Commission and its committees.

Section 2 Alternate members shall be allowed to participate in all proceedings of the full commission but shall vote only in the absence of the regular member of the town they represent.

Section 3 Alternate members may serve on committees of the Commission and shall be voting members of such committees.

Section 4 All purchasing documents must be signed by one Commission member, and co-signed by two other Commission members if any one item is in excess of \$50.00.

Article VII – Liability and Compensation

Section 1 No member of the Commission shall be personally liable for any acts committed within the scope of his/her authority as a Commission member.

Section 2 No member of the Commission shall be paid a salary. However, upon authorization of the Commission and the Department of Environmental Management, a member may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in carrying out his/her responsibilities.

Article VIII – Officers

Section 1 The Commission shall elect annually from its own regular or alternate membership a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman.

Section 2 Nominations for officers shall be made by members of the Commission eligible to vote at the annual meeting of the Commission.

Section 3 The officers shall be elected by ballot to serve one year or until their successors are elected, their term to begin upon election.

Section 4 The duties of the officers shall be as follows, but not necessarily limited thereto:

(a) The Chairman upon election shall be eligible to vote in accordance with Article VI, he shall preside at all full meetings, regular or special, of the Commission; he shall appoint regular and/or alternate members to other task committees, and serve as an ex-officio member of all ad-hoc or special task committees; he shall be responsible for the general day-to-day administration of the Commission's office and its routine operations.

(b) The Vice-Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Commission in absence of the Chairman; he shall assist the Chairman as may be necessary, and shall perform all such duties as may be assigned such office by the Chairman or Commission.

Section 5 Upon vacancy of an office the following procedures shall apply:

(a) Upon the vacancy of the office of Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall become the Chairman for the remainder of the unexpired term.

(b) Upon the vacancy of any other office, the Commission members eligible to vote shall elect such officers from among the regular or alternate members.

Article IX – Meetings

Section 1 Meetings of the Commission shall be held at the call of the Chairman or at the call of more than half (1/2) of the regular membership. Such meetings shall be held no less frequently than twelve (12) times a year.

Section 2 The meeting on or after the first of September shall be known as the annual meeting.

Article X – Quorum

Section 1 Regular or alternate members eligible to vote from the majority of towns having representation on the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Article XI – Hearings and Field Operations

Section 1 The Commission shall prepare and adopt separate regulations covering public hearings and field operations in the execution of its responsibilities under the Protective Order.

Article XII – Parliamentary Authority

Section 1 The rules contained in the current edition of Robert’s Rule of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Commission in all cases to which they are not inconsistent with these by-laws or any special rules or orders which the Commission may adopt.

Article XIII – Amendments

Section 1 The Commission shall have the power to adopt and/or amend these by-laws by a majority vote.

Article XIV – Floats

Section 1 Purpose This Article governs the installation, use, and maintenance of 10x20-foot Floats or other approved sizes to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. The primary objective is to guarantee the safety, durability, and usability of the floats while accommodating vessels of varying sizes in accordance with best engineering practices. The 10x20 foot float is established as the maximum default-dimensions recommended float size by the North River Commission for inclusion in any new Special Permit. Nothing in this bylaw shall be construed to reinterpret or modify standing specifications within the Protective Order.

Section 2 Standard Specifications for Floats

- (a) The maximum default dimensions for floats approved by the North River Commission under this bylaw shall be 10 feet by 20 feet, unless otherwise modified per Section 4.
- (b) Floats shall be constructed with materials, anchorage or equivalent systems, and flotation devices that comply with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements.

(c) Floats must be capable of safely supporting the anticipated loads, including vessels, equipment, and human activity.

(d) All seasonal floats and ramps are to be stored at a suitable location.

Section 3 Compliance and Approvals

(a) All installations and modifications must comply with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulations, Chapter 91, the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act, local conservation and environmental commission protection guidelines and local zoning and waterway ordinances.

(b) All required permits must be obtained prior to construction, installation, or modification of the floats.

Section 4 North River Commission Authority to Modify Float Dimensions

(a) The North River Commission may approve modifications to the default 10x20-foot float dimensions based on the size and type of vessel(s) intended to be moored to the float in conformance with accepted US Navy, Coast Guard and marine engineering codes and standards of best practice.

(b) Any modifications must align with the best engineering practices to ensure safety and structural integrity.

(c) Modifications shall consider factors including, but not limited to:

- Vessel length, width, and draft.
- Water depth, currents, and environmental conditions.
- Anticipated usage and load distribution.

(d) All modifications must be reviewed and stamped by a licensed civil engineer or equivalent licensed professional. This certification will accompany any application to the North River Commission made by the applicant.

Section 5 Safety and Maintenance

(a) All floats must include safety features such as non-slip surfaces, cleats, and adequate walkways.

(b) Routine maintenance must be performed to ensure the longevity and safety of the floats.

Section 6 Enforcement and Penalties

(a) Non-compliance with this bylaw will void any approved application or permit and the North River Commission reserves the right to withhold approval until compliance is achieved.

(b) Subsequent changes made without permission of the North River Commission renders prior approved applications or permits null and void.

Section 7 Amendments This Article may be amended to address changing regulations, advancements in engineering practices, or emerging safety concerns.

Effective Date:

This bylaw shall become effective upon approval by the North River Commission after the required public hearing process has been completed prior to the execution of this bylaw.