

Shutesbury Conservation Commission

Minutes – September 25, 2025

Approved – Oc

Virtual Meeting

Commissioners Present: Beth Willson (Chair), Mare Fox, Scott Kahan

Commissioners Absent: Bob Douglas

Other Staff Present: None

Others Present: Mary David, Tom Siefert, Ward Smith, Isaiah Robeson

Call to Order: 7:02pm

This meeting is being recorded and all members are participating remotely.

Comments from the Chair

Willson reports that the Town is part of a state Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant of over \$400,000 as part of a multi-town effort by Pioneer Valley Planning Commission for all the towns that feed into the Fort River. The funds are for an expanded culvert assessment that will be included in the North Atlantic Aquatic Conductivity database. The Conservation Commission will have a role to play in some community outreach for the project. This project will make it easier to prioritize culverts of concern for future work.

Review and vote on minutes of September 11, 2025

Motion to approve the minutes of September 11, 2025: Fox; second: Kahan. Vote. Kahan - aye; Fox - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Site Visits Update

Fox reports that she visited the new library site last week and nothing there has changed. The contractor was putting in a walkway that would go right up to the edge of one of the retention ponds and they are going to be putting dirt around the walkway, so she is going to keep an eye on that to make sure it does not create a problem for the pond. She notes that they should compare the walkway's placement and the dirt around it to what was in the original plan. Willson will accompany Fox on her next site visit to the property on October 6.

Fox also visited the Jones property but will discuss that when they reach that agenda item.

Land Management Update

Kahan reports that he has been in touch with the Town Administrator who informed him she has been in touch with FRCOG for assistance working out the contracting requirements for the South Brook Conservation project. He is waiting for an update from her now. He would like to get the contract issued this fall.

Kahan will be reviewing the existing management documents and draft plans for the boat ramp area and South Brook so he can develop some suggestions for the Commission to review in adopting a comprehensive management plan for the two parcels.

Certificate of Compliance for Evan Jones for construction of an addition to an existing home located within the Buffer Zone to Lake Wyola at 64 Lake Drive (Maps ZB & B, Parcels 47, 48, and 117), DEP #286-0303

Willson states that she sent the other Commissioners the Certificate of Compliance application, the approved and recorded Chapter 91 dock license the applicant received, and the as-built plans. Willson shares that the Commission received a question about whether the docks were placed where required by the Order of Conditions. She shares the map that was included with the Chapter 91 license, which shows the original dock locations and the proposed locations for the two docks. She shares the as-built plan, which shows the aluminum dock in the correct locations.

Fox reports that during her site visit to the property she saw that the aluminum dock was in the correct location and that all the vegetation has grown in. She did not see the wooden dock and reviews her site visit photographs to confirm that she did not take a photo of the wooden dock. Willson shares the photographs and Fox describes the work that was done.

Willson explains she reviewed the materials and there is no threat of erosion and the terms in the Order of Conditions have been met. Fox agrees.

Motion to issue the Certificate of Compliance for DEP #286-0303, 64 Lake Drive: Kahan; second: Fox. Vote: Kahan - aye; Fox - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Notice of Intent for Clinton Kleciak for reconstruction of a retaining wall/Bank and filing for seasonal dock at 73 Shore Drive (Map B, Parcel 429), DEP #286-0309

Willson opens the hearing at 7:43pm and recognizes Ward Smith and Isaiah Robeson. Smith describes the nature of the work and why it is needed, including the need for the repair of the retaining wall and the licensing of the seasonal dock. He notes that National Heritage has no objection to the project and DEP has issued a file number. He describes the vegetation at the site and explains the applicant is willing to plant vegetation that might be required by the Commission. The work would be done after the lake draw-down and erosion controls would be

in place. A small piece of equipment would gain access via the northern abutter's property. He characterizes the project as relatively minor.

Willson suggests planting rooted vegetation that can help stabilize the bank. Smith notes the applicant is not opposed to such a requirement.

Willson asks if the project will involve bringing in new materials and stones. Robeson explains that they would bring in about one or two tones of stones to create the flat top of the wall and three-inch angular rip-rap for support behind the wall.

Willson asks if the length will be the same as what is there now and Smith confirms that it will be the same length. The goal is to restore the wall's ability to prevent erosion while also making it aesthetically pleasing.

Willson asks if the lake comes up to the embankment. Smith answers that it does not, except possibly in the event of a flood, because there is a beach between it and the high-water line.

Willson shares a photo of the current site and explains where the Commission would like to see stabilizing plantings of native plants just to the north and south of the beach. Fox suggests prioritizing native plants that are already in the vicinity. Willson agrees, as long as they are shrub-like and thus more likely to be stabilizing. They do not necessarily have to be wetland plants because they will be up on the bank. Fox suggests low-growing shrubs and nothing that would obstruct views. Smith agrees and asks that this be included in the conditions.

Willson will ensure that the conditions also include the requirements for Chapter 91's review of dock placement and impact.

There are no other questions from the Commission. There are no comments from the public.

Motion to close the public hearing at 7:59pm and issue the Order of Conditions for DEP #286-0309, 73 Lake Drive: Fox; second: Kahan. Vote: Fox - aye; Kahan - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Willson will bring the Order of Conditions to the next meeting for the Commission to review and invites Smith to attend to review them as well.

Unanticipated business

Willson reports that the Commission has received a request for an Emergency Certification to remove a hazard tree at 13 Cove Road. She shares photographs of the tree, which is a split pine,

and recognizes Mary David. David explains the risk that the tree poses to the house on the property and the house on the adjacent property. The tree is thirty feet from the lake and less than ten feet from the house. David reports that the arborist from Woodland Forestry would use a small piece of equipment that will have little impact on the lawn.

Fox asks about the distance to the property line to the neighbor. David is not sure but the lots there are very close to each other.

Fox asks how long the Certification is good for and Willson answers that the work would need to be done within thirty days.

Motion to issue an Emergency Certification for tree removal at 13 Cove Road: Fox; second: Kahan. Vote: Kahan - aye; Fox - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Willson will send the property-owner and David the Certification tomorrow.

Fox asks if the Commission will be voting on the regulations on October 9. Willson answers that it will only be the public hearing and the Commission might then make further changes based on comments at the hearing. Fox asks for a copy of the revisions before that. Willson will be sending it to Town Counsel and the Commissioners and it will be posted on the website as well.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Fox; second: Kahan. Vote: Fox - aye; Kahan - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Adjourned: 8:26pm

List of Documents Used:

- Certificate of Compliance application and materials, including site visit photographs, Chapter 91 license, and as-built plan, from Evan Jones for construction of an addition to an existing home located within the Buffer Zone to Lake Wyola at 64 Lake Drive (Maps ZB & B, Parcels 47, 48, and 117), DEP #286-0303
- Notice of Intent application and materials from Clinton Kleciak for reconstruction of a retaining wall/Bank and filing for seasonal dock at 73 Shore Drive (Map B, Parcel 429), DEP #286-0309
- Photographs of hazard tree for removal at 13 Cove Road