
Manchester-By-The-Sea ~ Minutes of the Conservation Committee

January 13, 2026, 6:30pm

Members Present Online: Dr. Henry Oettinger, Jim Hoffmann, Dr. Olga Hayes, Dr. Gordon Turner, David Lumsden

Staff Present Online: Bethany Barstow, Conservation Agent

Call to Order/Welcome

The meeting of the Manchester-by-the-Sea Conservation Commission was called to order at 6:30 PM on January 13, 2026. Vice Chair Oettinger presided over the absence of Chair Steve Gang. Dr. Oettinger welcomed attendees and explained that the Commission operates under the Wetlands Protection Act and Manchester's local bylaws to protect water resources. He noted that the Zoom meeting was being recorded and conducted a roll call confirming the presence of Dr. Turner, Dr. Hayes, Mr. Lumsden, and Mr. Hoffman. Administrator Bethany Barstow was also present.

Public Hearings

1.) Continued Notice of Intent: MassDEP #039-0937, (Map 50, Lot 21), 44 Norwood Ave, Manchester-By-The-Sea

The applicant requested a continuance to the next meeting.

Motion by Vice Chair Oettinger to continue the case to February 3, 2026. Seconded by Dr. Turner. Approved unanimously.

2.) Continued Notice of Intent: MassDEP #039-0943, 146 Bridge, Manchester-By-The-Sea

Sean from Griffin Engineering presented on behalf of the Rossiter's. The project involves patio improvements in the rear of the property that falls within the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Since the previous meeting, the plan has been revised to reduce the impervious area of the patio and address DEP comments regarding land subject to coastal storm flowage. Additional modifications included adding sump pumps to the drainage system and a pump chamber for an exterior drain at the rear entrance.

During discussion, Mr. Hoffman inquired about the plantings for the backyard field. Sean clarified that the area would be maintained as lawn, explaining that it currently exists as thick, healthy grass with no evidence of erosion. Vice Chair Oettinger suggested using drought-tolerant and potentially salt-tolerant grass species closer to the riverfront or wetlands areas. Sean acknowledged this was worth considering.

No public comments were received.

Motion by Dr. Hayes to close the hearing for MassDEP #039-0943. Seconded by Dr. Turner. Approved unanimously.

3.) Continued Notice of Intent: MassDEP #039-0944, 373 Summer, Manchester-By-The-Sea

John Judd from Gateway Consultants presented the project, which involves removing two portions of an existing cottage and replacing them with additions. The expansion is modest, with only a 5-foot section and a 1–2-foot section being expanded. The proposed construction will include proper frost walls and foundations.

The resource areas are generally off-site, and the project includes 200% mitigation plantings to offset the approximately 135 square feet of increased footprint. Native plantings will be added along the wetland edge within the buffer zone. Erosion control measures including a sock will be implemented during construction.

Mr. Hoffman noted that he and Chair Gang conducted a site visit on December 6th and felt the renovation was needed and the increase modest. There was a note on the DEP website suggesting the Commission consider requiring a larger area of natural vegetation along the BVW boundary, but it was noted that the proposed 200% mitigation already exceeds the typical requirement.

No public comments were received.

*Motion by Dr. Hayes to close the hearing for 373 Summer Street, MassDEP #039-0944.
Seconded by Dr. Turner. Approved unanimously.*

4.) Continued Notice of Intent: MassDEP #039-0942, Atwater Avenue, Manchester-By-The-Sea

Mike DeRosa from DeRosa Environmental and Nate Desrosiers from the Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea presented updates on the Atwater Avenue sidewalk project. Since the last meeting, the engineer Brendan Bobrek responded to the Commission's questions raised during the site walk.

The sidewalk is proposed for the north side of the road because it would require less earthwork, blasting, and grade changes compared to the south side. While porous pavement was considered as a pilot project, it was determined to be prohibitively expensive due to installation costs, maintenance requirements, and the project's tight budget. The existing wooden guardrails will be replaced, and accumulated sand from years of plowing will be removed when the new guardrails are installed.

Mr. Hoffman raised concerns about high sodium levels in the Lincoln Street well, suggesting that road salt accumulation along Atwater Avenue could contribute to the problem. Nate explained that while it's difficult to pinpoint the exact source of sodium, the town could consider designating a low-salt area along that stretch, although this presents safety challenges during winter maintenance. The town currently does not have equipment for alternative deicing methods such as brine solutions.

No public comments were received.

*Motion by Dr. Hayes to close the hearing for MassDEP #039-0942 Atwater Avenue.
Seconded by Mr. Lumsden. Approved unanimously.*

5.) Notice of Intent: MassDEP #039-0945, 48 Central Street, Manchester-By-The-Sea

Mike DeRosa from DeRosa Environmental presented the project alongside Matt Ehrlich (landscape architect), Leticia Oliveira (civil engineer), and Richard Bodel (property owner). This is the third filing for this property over the past 5-6 years. The project has been significantly reduced from previous proposals, with no garage included.

The plans include a timber pergola (no roof) over the existing deck, reduced impervious surfaces, porous pavers, and a landscaping plan featuring native species. The site is entirely within the 100-foot buffer zone from Coastal Bank, with portions in the 30-foot no-disturbance zone and 50-foot no-build zone. The project proposes using PFAS-free artificial turf in certain areas to eliminate irrigation needs.

Several abutters expressed concerns during public comment:

- Richard Maestranzi, 44-46 Central Street, worried about native plantings going "rogue" without proper maintenance, questioned setting a precedent for artificial turf, and raised concerns about how snowbanks and storm surges would affect the artificial materials.
- Lisa Martinez, 50 Central Street, expressed concerns about the scope of the project, particularly the pergola with gas and electric utilities, and the possibility of future expansion.
- Mike Storella, 119 Pine Street, opposed expanding activities in the no-disturb zone and questioned the practicality of placing artificial turf over a sewer easement.

The property owner, Richard Bedell, responded that the entire no-build zone is currently paved, and any changes would be an improvement. He noted that there is already power to the dock area and that the proposed changes would improve the site.

The Commission determined it needed additional information before making a decision:

- Specifications for the artificial turf, particularly regarding its behavior when exposed to saltwater and road salt
- More details about the pergola design
- Consideration of alternative locations for the generator that is currently sited on an easement

Motion by Vice Chair Oettinger to continue MassDEP #039-0945, 48 Central Street to February 3rd, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Hoffman. Approved unanimously

6.) Notice of Intent: MassDEP #039-0946, 42 Lincoln Street, Manchester-By-The-Sea

Nate Desrosiers from the Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea introduced the team from CDM Smith for the Lincoln Street well treatment upgrades project. Lisa, a wetland scientist with CDM Smith, presented a comprehensive overview of the project, which aims to install PFAS treatment facilities at the Lincoln Street well, which provides 40% of the town's drinking water.

The site is within the 200-foot riverfront area of Sawmill Brook, with portions in the 100-foot buffer zone, 50-foot no-build zone, and 30-foot no-disturb zone. The project proposes replacing the existing pump house with a larger L-shaped treatment building around the existing chemical feed building to accommodate new treatment systems for PFAS removal.

The project qualifies as a limited project under the Mass Wetlands Protection Act for groundwater supply improvements. The riverfront alterations will increase from 8.45% to 9.22% impervious area, remaining below the 10% allowable threshold. Work in bordering land subject to flooding will match existing grades with no net loss of flood storage. Although the project cannot fully meet Manchester's mitigation ratios due to site constraints, they are proposing to replace native plantings and pollinator meadow habitat with a slight increase where possible (1.01:1 and 1.04:1 ratios).

Mr. Hoffman asked if there was any thought of digging deeper at the well as an alternative, but Mr. Desrosiers explained this wouldn't mitigate the PFAS. The proposed granular activated carbon treatment system will remove PFAS compounds to non-detect levels, with carbon media expected to require annual replacement.

Vice Chair Oettinger suggested considering using pollinator plantings over the below-ground infiltration tank area to increase mitigation, which Mr. Desrosiers agreed was feasible if it didn't interfere with maintenance access.

No public comments were received.

Motion by Vice Chair Oettinger to close the hearing for 42 Lincoln Street, MassDEP #039-0946. Seconded by Dr. Turner. Approved unanimously.

Request for a Certificate of Compliance: MassDEP #39-918, 11 Magnolia Avenue

The applicant was not present. The Commission voted to continue this item to the February 3rd meeting.

Motion by Vice Chair Oettinger to continue MassDEP #039-0918, 11 Magnolia Avenue to February 3, 2026. Seconded by Commissioner Turner. Approved unanimously.

Request for a De Minimis Change MassDEP #39-920, 9 Proctor Street

Mike DeRosa presented two requested changes to the existing order of conditions:

- Construction of a planting berm using soil from the foundation excavation to gain height for better screening between the property and neighbors
- Moving the fence around the pool area slightly farther from the deck while maintaining the same planting plan

Vice Chair Oettinger expressed concern about approving the berm as a de minimis change without seeing elevations or confirmation that all fill would come from the foundation. The Commission agreed to approve the fence relocation as de minimis but wanted to consult with Chair Gang regarding the berm and requested additional information including elevations showing the berm with and without plantings.

No formal vote was taken, with the understanding that Ms. Barstow would consult Chair Gang about the berm request.

Orders of Conditions

The Commission reviewed and approved orders of conditions for:

- 146 Bridge Street (MassDEP #039-0943), with the addition of a condition for monumenting along the 100-foot zone from Coastal Bank
- 373 Summer Street (MassDEP #039-0944)
- Atwater Avenue (MassDEP #039-0942)
- 42 Lincoln Street (MassDEP #039-0946), with the addition of a condition regarding tree warden approval for removing living trees and leaving dead trees at 6-foot height where possible

All orders of conditions were approved unanimously.

Minutes for Review

The Commission reviewed minutes from December 2, 2025.

*Motion by Mr. Lumsden to approve the minutes as written from December 2, 2025.
Seconded by Vice Chair Oettinger. Approved unanimously.*

New/Other Business

The Commission discussed a request regarding 58 Masconomo Street (DEP #039-0912), where new owners want to install bluestone steppingstones and a patio within the no-build and no-disturb zones. The Commission advised that a new Notice of Intent should be filed rather than amending the existing Order of Conditions.

Adjournment

Motion by Dr. Hayes to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Lumsden. Approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 PM. The next meeting was scheduled for February 3, 2026.