

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

February 3, 2026, 6:30pm. Virtual Only

Members Present Online: Steve Gang, Dr. Henry Oettinger, Dr. Olga Hayes, Dr. Gordon Turner, David Lumsden, Jim Hoffman, Dr. Jeffrey Bodmer-Turner

Staff Present Online: Marc Resnick, Town Planner & Bethany Barstow, Conservation Agent

Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Gang called the Conservation Commission meeting to order. The Chair noted that the meeting was virtual, consistent with ongoing state rules and regulations, and that it would be recorded. He explained that public comments would be permitted at appropriate points during the meeting, with a limit of 2 minutes per person, and that all voting would be conducted by roll call.

Chair Gang took attendance with all members present: Vice Chair Dr. Henry Oettinger, Dr. Olga Hayes, Dr. Gordon Turner, Mr. Jim Hoffman, Mr. David Lumsden, Dr. Jeffrey Bodmer-Turner, and Chair Steve Gang. Also present was Bethany Barstow, Administrator.

Public Hearings

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

The applicant, Nicolas Stangl, requested a continuation.

Motion by Dr. Hayes to continue the public hearing to February 24, 2026. Seconded by Dr. Oettinger. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Mike DeRosa from DeRosa Environmental represented the applicant, Richard Bedell. Also present were Matt Ulrich from Ulrich Landscape Collaborative (landscape architect) and Leticia Oliveira from Morin-Cameron Group, Inc., (site engineer).

Mr. DeRosa presented the revised plans based on feedback from the previous meeting. Key changes included:

- A detailed rendering of the pergola, which will have a bluestone patio with at least quarter-inch spacing between patio blocks filled with rice stone
- The pergola will have an open structure without a solid roof
- Elimination of the previously proposed artificial turf in favor of natural grass, addressing concerns about microplastics potentially entering the harbor during storms or tidal events
- Confirmation from the DPW that the generator pad could remain in its current location with continued access to the sewer manhole
- Addition of sitting walls near the lawn area to protect it from vehicle traffic
- Snow storage to utilize the lawn area

- Updated calculations still show a reduction or no change from previous plans regarding surface area and floodplain impact

The commission raised questions about:

- The safety of installing a gas line for the proposed fire pit in a flood-prone coastal area
- The potential risk of hardscape being placed in an area subject to flooding
- The need for proper lighting plans for waterfront properties

Several abutters expressed concerns during public comment:

- Richard Maestranzi (44 Central Street) raised concerns about snow removal on the shared driveway, noting the proposed granite blocks would limit snow storage options
- Kim Hofeldt (42 Central Street) strongly opposed the project, showing video of previous flooding in the area and expressing concerns about structures and utilities in the no-build zone
- Lisa Martinez (50 Central Street) requested consideration of storm flow impacts, wave action on the new granite wall, and concerns about the generator's placement
- Mike Storella (119 Pine Street) emphasized that the no-build and do-not-disturb areas were designated for valid safety reasons, particularly in an area with frequent flooding

The commission discussed the possibility of requiring safety measures for the gas line, such as winter shutoffs when the property is unoccupied. The commission also noted that the application would need Historic District Commission approval for the pergola design before Conservation Commission could make a final determination.

Motion by Dr. Oettinger to continue the hearing until February 24th, 2026. Seconded by Dr. Bodmer-Turner. Motion passed unanimously.

3.) Request for a Certificate of Compliance: MassDEP #39-918, 11 Magnolia Avenue, Manchester-By-The-Sea

The applicant, Gary Gilbert, was present to discuss his completed shed project. The commission and Ms. Barstow noted difficulties in locating the original order of conditions and plans to verify compliance.

After discussion, the commission determined they would need:

- A letter from Mr. Gilbert confirming the as-built shed conforms to the approved plans
- A copy of the original order of conditions and proposed plans

The commission agreed to continue this matter to the February 24th meeting once these materials were received.

4.) Request for a 3 Year Extension: MassDEP #39-0861, 189 School Street, Cornerstone Church, Manchester-By-The-Sea

Alden Drake, representing Cornerstone Church, requested an extension for their project. Mr. Drake explained they had done very limited preliminary grading to create a rough driveway access off Mill Street and had worked closely with the previous administrator to ensure compliance.

The commission noted that while the state permit could be extended for three years, their local bylaw only allows extensions of one year at a time.

*Motion by Dr. Oettinger to extend the permit for one year. Seconded by Mr. Hoffman.
Motion passed unanimously.*

5.) Request for a Certificate of Compliance: MassDEP #39-0895, 37 Vine Street, Manchester-By-The-Sea

Michael Kirk presented his completed project, which included an inground swimming pool, patio, and plantings. Ms. Barstow confirmed she had visited the site and verified the work was complete according to plans, with the only change being that there was no covered driveway, it was just gravel making the area more pervious than originally planned.

Mr. Kirk showed photos of the plantings that were installed at the beginning of the project, including red maple trees, viburnums, and witch hazel in the vegetated swale, demonstrating good establishment over the past two years.

*Motion by Dr. Oettinger to grant the Certificate of Compliance. Seconded by Dr. Hayes.
Motion passed unanimously.*

Minutes for Review

The commission reviewed the minutes from January 13th, 2026. Dr. Hayes noted one correction regarding the spelling of Richard Bedell's name on page 3.

*Motion by Dr. Oettinger to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Dr. Hayes.
Motion passed unanimously.*

New/Other Business

Chair Gang reported that Sue Croft is preparing a grant application for MVP funds to replace the previously lost BRIC grant for culvert and pond restoration. The MVP grants could provide up to \$5 million in funding. The commission agreed to provide enthusiastic endorsement for the grant application.

Dr. Oettinger reported on a town-owned parcel of approximately 900 square feet at 1 Elm Street that abuts Sawmill Brook. A property owner is seeking to have the town relinquish ownership of this land, which would require town meeting approval. The commission discussed whether this small parcel, which includes armored banks on the waterfront, should have conservation restrictions or other protections.

Mr. Hoffman raised concerns about waterfront lighting regulations, suggesting that future projects should be required to submit lighting plans to evaluate potential impacts on fish and wildlife.

Ms. Barstow informed the commission that she has jury duty on February 24th and may not be able to attend the next meeting but will try to make arrangements.

Chair Gang announced that he would be undergoing hip replacement surgery before the next meeting.

Adjournment

Motion by Dr. Hayes to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Hoffman. Motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting was scheduled for February 24th, 2026.