



TOWN OF
DEDHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

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MEETING MINUTES

Board/Committee: Conservation Commission

Meeting Date, Time: December 4th, 2025

Meeting Location: Zoom

Members in Attendance:

- Erik DeAvila, Chair
- Stephanie Radner, Vice Chair
- Elena Taurasi, Clerk
- Leigh Hafrey, Associate
- Nathan Gauthier, Associate
- Elizabeth Yntema, Associate
- Matthew Layne, Resource Associate Member
- Sophia MacKinnon, Resource Associate Member

Town Staff in Attendance:

- Meredith Confrey, Conservation Agent
- Leonel Lainez, Environmental Specialist

Minutes Prepared By: Leonel Lainez

Minutes Approved: December 18, 2025

Chair DeAvila called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40 and the Dedham Wetlands Bylaw.

1. Public Comment

Chair DeAvila opened the floor for public comment. No members of the public raised their hands for comment.

2. New Application

2.1. 637 East Street – DEP 141-0653- Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD)

Applicant: Giorgio Petruzzello, Supreme Development, Inc.

Representative: Michael J. Carter, P.E, President GSG Associates, Inc.

Michael Carter from GSG Associates introduced himself as the engineer for the project, representing the applicant Giorgio Petruzzello of Supreme Development. Mr. Carter explained that they were before the Commission to confirm the resource areas on the parcel, specifically

the Riverfront Area, bordering vegetative wetlands, and the locally regulated Undisturbed Buffer Area.

Mr. Carter began his presentation by sharing his screen and showing a USGS map of the property location. He pointed out that the parcel was located off East Street, bordering Wentworth Street and Michaels Drive. He highlighted a blue line on the USGS map indicating Riverfront Area to East Brook and noted there was a large swamp area bordering the river. He also mentioned that a portion of existing wetlands are deemed MassDEP Restricted Wetlands. Mr. Carter explained that the parcel consisted of an approved subdivision from 1973 with 23 lots, noting that the land had been already developed in some portions and was not untouched.

Switching to an aerial image taken by drone about a week and a half before the application submission, Mr. Carter showed the current state of the site. He pointed out East Street, Wentworth Street, and the subdivision layout with lots that are recorded at the registry of deeds and taxed as individual parcels. Mr. Carter detailed that water and sewer infrastructure had been installed in the roadways around 2000, though he noted they would likely need replacement after sitting for 20 years. He showed the Commission various historical images from Google Earth, starting from 1995, to demonstrate the site's evolution. In the 1995 image, he pointed out some disturbance visible despite the poor quality, and by 2000, the site had been "completely stripped" as they were starting the subdivision. He highlighted a wetlands replication area that had been approved as part of the 2000 plan, speculating that it was required due to some disturbance done prior to 2000. Mr. Carter showed how the project was then abandoned, and trees started slowly reforesting the land by 2003. He pointed out an important feature from 2005 - an infiltration basin that still existed and was maintained with grass, mowed regularly, with structures and drainage in place. He emphasized this was constructed as part of an earlier Order of Conditions.

Showing a 2023 aerial image, Mr. Carter noted it was particularly useful because the timing helped define the stream clearly. He explained they had located the stream about 100 feet in and had GPS'd its location. He pointed out how the stream meandered through the property and speculated that based on historical pictures and evidence from 1973 registry files, the stream might have taken a different path at one point. He mentioned that the wetlands report noted beaver dams in the area which could have impacted hydrology over the years.

Moving to the filing plan, Mr. Carter explained that the wetlands were flagged in May of the current year, with flags numbered A1 through A89 shown as the blue line on the plan. He identified various features including the 100-foot buffer (green line), the 35-foot undisturbed buffer or UBA (red line), and the Riverfront Area to East Brook. He described how they had difficulty getting to East Brook since the cattails in the area were about 8 feet high and underwater, therefore to determine the 200-foot riverfront buffer (shown in purple) they used both the 2023 aerial map and their own field observations.

Pointing out contour lines on the plan, Mr. Carter described large mounds from when construction started that were presently onsite, noting that there were quite a few trees over 6"

diameter at breast height (DBH) growing in these mounds. He characterized the whole site as disturbed and left as an unfinished subdivision.

Regarding the UBA calculations, Mr. Carter explained they had taken existing contours and calculated slopes using elevations, doing cross sections at every flag and line between to make their determinations. He presented a detailed table showing their UBA calculations, including cross sections, elevations, and slopes. Mr. Carter also acknowledged that when walking the site, it would be clear that the whole area had been disturbed right up to the wetlands, referencing the 2001 image. He mentioned they would see old erosion control measures, including silt fence, likely from work on the replication area. Mr. Carter then showed several photographs of current site conditions, including construction debris, a precast manhole with a tree growing in it that he estimated had been there 20-25 years based on the tree size, an old barn on site that would be coming down, and clay pipe from sewer installation with trees growing through it.

Commissioner DeAvila acknowledged the complexity of the old site. He clarified that the request currently before the Commission was just to determine resource area limits, which Mr. Carter confirmed. Mr. Carter suggested that during the site visit, they might want to make some determination about potentially making adjustments to the existing calculated UBA.

Commissioner DeAvila asked about next steps, and Mr. Carter confirmed that once they had the confirmed Order of Resource Area Delineation from the Commission, they would come back with a proposal based on the limits and performance standards set forth from the delineation. He pointed out that the stormwater basin was all within the 100-foot buffer and some in the UBA. They would need to come back before the Commission for the final subdivision design, and obtain Orders of Conditions for the roadway and individual lots.

Commissioner Radner raised her hand and asked about the restricted wetlands Mr. Carter had mentioned. Mr. Carter showed a line on the plan marked as "limited do not disturb wetland restriction" and explained that according to the deed, which was 40-50 years old from when they did the subdivision, it followed the wetland line. He clarified that it was specifically designated by the state to protect the resource area that feeds into the stream. Commissioner Radner acknowledged this would not be entirely within their purview but suggested it would be worth looking into and getting a copy of the deed. She then raised the issue of the large mounds with trees growing on them, noting that it would be helpful to confirm the date when the mounds were dumped. She pointed out that some mounds may have been there for decades, but others appeared more recently since the house at 637 East came down.

Commissioner Radner expressed concern about a confusing issue from when this came up 7-10 years ago with a different applicant. She explained that determining what constituted existing conditions versus proposed conditions was challenging because the previous applicant had tried to use conditions from 1973 as existing conditions despite the additional work that's been completed since then. She acknowledged this was a different applicant and would be treated as a brand new application, although the site history makes the delineation very complex.

Commissioner Gauthier explained his knowledge of the property's history, noting that the previous applicant did a fair amount of work to the property without the Commission's permission, which makes it difficult to determine the natural conditions of the site. He acknowledged the challenge of determining what constituted unauthorized development or development that happened after the original project was approved. He expressed uncertainty about the rules regarding how long unapproved work could exist before becoming existing conditions.

Regarding the Undisturbed Buffer Area, Commissioner Gauthier expressed concern about moving it without knowing if it met their criteria for retaining walls or pavement. He also requested information about how the current wetland delineation compares to previous delineations reviewed by the Commission and strongly recommended third-party review due to the size and complexity of the lot. Mr. Carter stated that Bill Emmanuel from Wetlands Management flagged the wetlands in May of this year and added that the wetland line is almost identical to previous delineations with very little movement. He offered to provide a site plan with an overlay of the previously approved wetland line to show the comparison.

Commissioner Radner stated that a lot had gone on with the previous owner of this property and clarified she didn't think any work under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission was done without permits. Ms. Radner mentioned reading meeting minutes from the 1990s indicating something was supposed to be done regarding restoration that may or may not have been completed but added that there are no current violations on this property that she is aware of. Commissioner Gauthier interjected that they had gone out multiple times because the owner was moving dirt around without permission. Commissioner Radner acknowledged this but noted much of it was outside the resource area. She agreed it should all be weighed in the big picture for the parcel's history.

Commissioner DeAvila asked if any test pits had been recently completed on the site. Mr. Carter confirmed no test pits have been completed yet, explaining their primary goal is to confirm the wetland delineation before moving forward with any design.

Commissioner DeAvila opened the floor to members of the public.

Gianna Gioioso of 661 East Street raised her hand and asked about the existing stormwater basin, asking if they planned on filling this basin in. Mr. Carter clarified they weren't planning to do anything to the basin at this point, explaining they were just trying to get the resource area line confirmed by the Conservation Commission. He noted he was only mentioning the existing infrastructure for historical purposes and that they would need to eventually file Notices of Intent and Major Stormwater Management Permits for any proposed work on the site. Ms. Gioioso expressed her concern about ponding in the basin after rainstorms and in her backyard. She worried that if they took away the basin and if the street elevation was higher than Wentworth Street, it would all drain into her property. Chair DeAvila reminded everyone that this meeting was just to find determine the wetland boundaries, with no plans before them yet.

Kylie Calzone of 49 Wentworth Street, whose property abuts 637 East Street, raised a point about an intermittent waterway behind Wentworth Street where the two properties meet. She noted this didn't appear on any wetland delineation maps but was shown as a drain easement on the 1972/73 subdivision plan. Ms. Calzone had sent photos to Conservation Agent Meredith Confrey showing water flowing in spring through a pipe at the end of Wentworth Street before reaching the basin. She mentioned that she and her neighbors maintained this waterway even though it wasn't on their property to prevent their backyards from flooding, though further up and down Wentworth it wasn't maintained and water pooled all spring. Mr. Carter responded by showing the 1972 plan, explaining there was a 10-foot easement on the residents' property and 10 feet onto the subdivision lots. The original intent was to collect water and bring it down to the basin. He noted that originally in 1973 they discharged directly into the resource area, but by 2001 the detention basin was constructed. He assured this would be addressed during the development phase and they were well aware of this issue.

Conservation Agent Confrey added that she had uploaded the photos Ms. Calzone shared to Dropbox and suggested that the Commission could have the third-party reviewer examine whether it would meet the definition of an intermittent waterway. Mr. Gauthier asked about the drainage easement details and requested it be included on their delineation maps. Mr. Carter confirmed there was a drainage easement recorded at the Registry of Deeds on their lots and he believed also on the residents' lots, agreeing to add it to the plans.

Chris Walkey of 51 Wentworth Street, Ms. Calzone's neighbor, reiterated the significant amount of water moving east to west down gradient after every storm. He stressed that the ANRAD couldn't be complete without a third party examining this issue. He raised additional concerns about whether the May 2025 surveyor was aware they were in a severe drought and how that would affect water lines, vernal pools, and other features. He noted this area had been under water restrictions for two years with drought conditions that would presumably make wetlands appear smaller than normal.

Commissioner DeAvila explained that wetland scientists factor in soil data to determine the wetland line in addition to other wetland indicators like vegetation and hydrology. Mr. Walkey noted he didn't see soil samples in the report and didn't see determination of mean annual high water mark, which the report attributed to beaver activity. He listed these as additional questions for peer review: the possible intermittent waterway, soil samples to account for drought, and final determination of mean annual high-water mark, stating these were all requirements for ANRAD approval.

Mr. Carter responded that he believed the wetland data sheets had been provided to the Commission. Regarding the drought, Mr. Carter explained the delineation was based on vegetation and soil samples. He described walking along the detention basin where the wetland line was basically at the bottom of the slope, noting that when flagged, Bill Emmanuel reported he couldn't get out there because it was underwater, likely due to beaver dams.

Commissioner Radner commented that given the pictures in Dropbox and the history dating back to the 1970s of water being diverted along the back of those properties, there should be consideration of a potentially new resource area. She noted that decades of water flow could have developed hydric soil properties and vegetation worth examining. While acknowledging the ANRAD showed previously known areas with flags, she suggested there could be more wetland created as a result of the flowing water, recommending this be considered during third-party review.

Commissioner DeAvila noted they had a request for peer review with a quote of \$7,000 from Horsley Witten. Agent Confrey confirmed she had received the quote from Horsley Witten Group for the full peer review and had spoken with the applicant earlier that day about whether he was comfortable with that quote or wanted additional quotes. Mr. Petruzzello had agreed to move forward with this peer review, and Agent Confrey noted Horsley Witten had done other peer reviews for the Town of Dedham and they were great to work with.

Commissioner Radner suggested they should request funds up to \$10,000 for peer review in case the quote increased, which Mr. Gauthier supported, noting the applicant would only pay what was actually invoiced.

Agent Confrey raised a logistical question about whether to send the plans to peer review immediately or wait for minor changes based on tonight's feedback, including investigating the potential intermittent waterway and adding easements to plans. She suggested it might save time and money to have the applicant make those changes first.

Mr. Carter agreed this seemed reasonable and suggested having Bill Emmanuel coordinate with the peer reviewer to walk the site together. He noted that neighbors had raised a valid point about what Commissioner Radner suggested might be a new resource area created over 30-40 years. He offered to have Mr. Emmanuel examine it as soon as possible but emphasized Mr. Petruzzello would like to keep things moving, especially with winter weather approaching. Agent Confrey confirmed that site visits with the applicant's wetland delineator were included in the peer review quote.

Commissioner DeAvila asked for verification about whether the drainage easement was private or under the Town of Dedham. Mr. Carter explained the easement remained with the properties themselves, noting there were 10-foot easements on lots 42-46 on the applicant's property and 10-foot easements on abutting Wentworth properties. Ms. Calzone clarified that looking at the lot plan, the easement appeared to go all the way to lot 41 on the development side. Mr. Carter confirmed this and agreed to add it to the plan.

Agent Confrey suggested it might be most beneficial to schedule a commission site visit after receiving the first peer review report, when they could compare the original delineation with any adjustments the peer reviewer suggested. However, she offered to coordinate with the applicant to arrange an informal walk for Commissioners before the peer review report is ready, just for

Commissioners to get a high-level understanding of the property. Mr. Carter confirmed the applicant could meet anytime between the 15th and 24th of December.

The Commission authorized Agent Confrey to request a sum of up to \$10,000 from the applicant for peer review.

Motion by Commissioner to authorize up to \$10,000 from the applicant for peer review for DEP 141-0653. Second by Commissioner Gauthier. All Commissioners present voted “aye”, and the motion passed by a 6-0 vote.

Commissioner Radner suggested continuing to their next meeting to leave it available in case something came up, noting that anyone in the public watching should keep an eye on agendas.

Mr. Walkey asked about the best way to follow along with agendas and meetings. Commissioner DeAvila explained the town website had calendar events, and Agent Confrey added that folks could subscribe specifically to Conservation Commission meeting alters to receive only their agendas. Commissioner DeAvila initially suggested following Planning Board agendas too, but Agent Confrey clarified this wouldn't go to Planning Board since the subdivision plan already existed with lots laid out. Mr. Carter confirmed they would only need to go to Planning Board for an ANR (Approval Not Required) if they changed lot lines.

Agent Confrey added that any Major Stormwater Management Permits would go through the town's Stormwater Manager rather than Conservation Commission. Elena asked if site visits would be posted, and Agent Confrey confirmed they would post the site visits to the Town Calendar.

Motion by Commissioner Radner to continue the project to the next hearing for DEP 141-0653. Second by Commissioner Gauthier. All Commissioners present voted “aye”, and the motion passed by a 6-0 vote.

3. Minutes

The Commission reviewed minutes from the November 20th meeting and December 1st Site Visit at Noble & Greenough School.

Motion by Commissioner Radner to approve the minutes from November 20th and December 1st. Second by Commissioner Gauthier. All Commissioners present voted “aye”, and the motion passed by a 6-0 vote.

4. Agent's Report

Agent Confrey began her report with providing updates on two grant applications she and Leo had been working on. The biodiversity grant, discussed at the last meeting, was due the day after Christmas with a quick turnaround. Since the last meeting, they had met with Joe Flanagan to

examine the site by CVS as a potential location for a rain garden and what they were calling a "pollinator pathway." She explained that while space was limited, the river's edge could be an excellent location for a pollinator trail with educational signage about various plants and their benefits. They were meeting with Joe the next day to discuss budgeting, hoping to keep work in-house to save money rather than using outside consultants. She invited commissioners to share any ideas about the parcel.

The second grant opportunity was the MassTrails grant, due mid-February. Agent Confrey, Leo, and Town Planner Jeremy Rosenberger met that week to evaluate options for best return on investment. This grant was more challenging as it required matching funds, though they could match with town staff hours up to a certain amount. The site under consideration was along Providence Highway where the Planning Board had conducted a study for creating a trail with parking adjacent to the Charles River. They were considering the first stage of that plan- obtaining a 90% design for parking and trail construction. She offered to send the plan to newer commission members who might not have seen it from 2-3 years prior.

Commissioner Hafrey asked if they were targeting one project, which Agent Confrey confirmed. Commissioner Hafrey suggested considering improvements to the town landing put-in as part of the water trail, noting people currently had to slog through mud. Agent Confrey acknowledged this as a good suggestion, agreeing a water trail would likely qualify, though she would need to check the RFP. She felt it would be more competitive to submit one application from Dedham but suggested they could consider that project for next year or other grant opportunities. She asked for specifics- whether it would be the dock itself, to which Mr. Hafrey replied that the dock had been problematic and the muddy conditions were concerning.

Agent Confrey then shared results from a national survey presented to Dedham residents at a recent Select Board meeting. The survey included specific callouts about the town's trails and open spaces, with these amenities receiving average reviews. She felt this was valuable information for helping the commission determine the best use of their time and limited budgets for future projects.

Lastly, Agent Confrey provided an update on the violation letter sent to the property on Court Street by Lowder Brook, as discussed at the last meeting. She reported excellent news: after sending the letter, the owner called almost immediately and committed to removing all trash over the weekend. She had visited the site that day and confirmed everything was gone. She expressed appreciation for the quick resolution, as these matters typically take months, and credited the quick deadline for prompting swift action. Commissioner Taurasi noted this had been on her list of questions for the evening and was pleased to hear the trailer was gone.

Commissioner DeAvila provided a brief update on the Open Space and Recreation Committee (OSRC) meeting from Monday. They had reviewed updates to the land and environmental inventory, including scenic resources, unique environments, climate change impacts, water resources, vegetation, soil and topography, fisheries, and wildlife with their MAPC consultant

Jiwon Park. He noted they had a productive session with Ms. Park successfully covering all material.

Commissioner DeAvila highlighted a particular concern from the meeting- a map showing climate change impact hotspots, with the Providence Highway corridor identified as an extreme hotspot. Sharing his screen to show the large red line through the middle of Dedham representing these hot spots, he expressed interest in approaching the Planning Board during public discussion to request they reconsider Providence Highway corridor developments to require more vegetation, plantings, or other cooling measures. Commissioner Radner responded that implementing such changes would require going to Town Meeting with an article to change zoning requirements. While acknowledging potential pushback due to costs and business development concerns, she felt the evidence made it a "no-brainer" and personally supported the idea.

Commissioner Yntema added that she had seen an article in The Guardian that day reporting New England was heating up faster than anywhere else in the United States except Alaska, which she found surprising and felt bolstered Chair DeAvila's point. Mr. DeAvila jokingly attributed it all to Providence Highway.

Leo then added that he and Agent Confrey had both passed their drone pilot certification tests. He excitedly announced they were now drone certified and planned on using the drone to capture footage of the invasive phragmites removal at Wigwam Pond the following week, describing it as their first drone project to document before and after conditions. He congratulated both himself and Meredith, noting the test required significant amount of studying. Chair DeAvila asked if they would be able to share the footage, which Leo confirmed they would.

Commissioner Radner noted they had briefly met the new Resource Associate Member Matthew at the last meeting but hadn't met Sofia yet. Sofia Mackinnon, the other new Resource Associate Member, shared that she was a senior at UVM from Dedham. She expressed that it was nice to meet everyone and enjoyed her first meeting. The Commissioners welcomed her.

The Commission then voted to adjourn, with all wishing each other Happy Thanksgiving.

Adjournment: Ended: 8:30pm

Motion by Commissioner Radner to adjourn. Second by Commissioner Hafrey. Vote: All in favor by 6-0 vote. Meeting adjourned.