



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

147 Hampshire Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Ph. 617.349.4680

Jennifer Letourneau, Director

jletourneau@cambridgema.gov

Public Meeting – Monday, June 16, 2026, at 7:00 PM Zoom MEETING MINUTES

The following meeting minutes were taken by Lena Frappier and are respectfully submitted.

Present Commission Members: Jennifer Letourneau, Director; David Lyons, Chair; Elysse Magnotto-Cleary, Vice Chair; Erum Sattar; Kathryn Hess; Lorie Graham; Khyati Saraf; Jim Gerstle; Juliet Simpson, Associate; Rob Vandenabeele, Associate

Attendees: Lena Frappier, DPW; Kara Falise, DPW; Simon Hildt, Eversource; Nora O’Keefe, Eversource; Grace Rumowicz, Green Cambridge; Katie Hutchens, Green Cambridge; Sarah Adkins, Green Cambridge; Chris Scott; Cynthia Hibard; Eppa Rixey; Liam Feeney, DPW; Luke Smith; Sergiu Vlad

David Lyons, Chair opened the meeting.

7:04 – Request for Determination of Applicability

Eversource Energy

Electric Anode Replacement (140 liner feet along West side of Greenough Blvd) Associated with the Charles River

Eversource proposes to replace 10 existing sacrificial anodes and a junction box associated with underground lines. Work occurs in the roadway shoulder within the 100-ft buffer zone to the Charles River.

Presentation:

- Work consists of replacing existing equipment (maintenance activity).
- Anodes installed by augering to 20–30 ft.
- Minimal excavation; soils reused as backfill.
- Erosion controls and stabilization proposed.
- Work area contains invasive vegetation.
- Proposed seed mix is a New England erosion control mix with straw as needed.
- Expected project duration: approximately 5 weeks.
- Lane closures may be required; details pending traffic control plan.

Staff Review & Recommendations:

Staff confirmed project meets exemption criteria for maintenance. Recommended conditions included:

- Install/inspect erosion controls.
- Limit staging area.
- Spill kit onsite.
- Reseed disturbed areas with approved mix.
- Proper disposal of invasive plant material (bag & trash).
- Require schedule and seed mix details.
- Handling groundwater during augering.
- Flood risk (mitigated due to Charles River Dam).
- Seed timing and viability.
- Disposal of invasive cuttings.
- Clarification of adjacent utilities on plans.
- Coordination with commuters due to lane closures.

Five members of the public were present with no comment.

7:31 – Motion: Kathryn moved to close public comment.

Second: Elysse

Vote: 7 – In Favor

David – Yes

Elysse – Yes

Erum – Yes

Kathryn – Yes

Khyati – Yes

Lorie – Yes

Jim – Yes

Rob(Associate) – No objection

Juliet (Associate) – No objection

Public comment closed unanimously.

7:34 – Motion: Elysse moved to issue a negative determination with the special conditions discussed.

Second: Kathryn

Vote: 7 – In Favor

David – Yes

Elysse – Yes

Erum – Yes

Kathryn – Yes

Khyati – Yes

Lorie – Yes

Jim – Yes

Rob(Associate) – No objection

Juliet (Associate) – No objection

The commission unanimously approved to issue a negative determination with special conditions.

7:35 - Notice of Intent

Green Cambridge

DEP File #123-329

Invasive Vegetation Management

Department of Conservation and Recreation Property

Acorn Park Drive associated with the Little River

Ecological restoration of 8+ acres of DCR land between Acorn Park Drive and the Little River. Work includes multi-year invasive species management and native restoration.

Presentation

- Area contains high-quality wetland habitat but heavy invasive cover (>50% in some zones).
- Work includes:
 - Hand removal of small woody invasives.
 - Cut-and-treat methods for larger stems (Garlon 3A).
 - Targeted Japanese knotweed treatment (multiple-year regimen).
 - Use of licensed applicators only.
 - Minimal soil disturbance.
 - Re-seeding and native plantings.
- Main access via DCR parking area.
- All work within BVW, BLSF, Riverfront Area, and buffer zone.
- No Priority Habitat impacts.

Staff Review & Recommendations:

- Staging limits.
- NOI + OOC copies onsite.
- 72-hour advance notices for each mobilization.
- Wetland-safe refueling/staging plan.
- Erosion controls where needed.
- Annual restoration monitoring reports.
- Proper disposal of invasive cuttings.
- Seed mix selection submitted for approval (seasonally appropriate).
- Requirement for stabilization (matting or watering plan) if soils are exposed during drought.
- Importance of seed mix selection (site-specific, wetland friendly).
- Ensure minimal bare-soil windows; stabilize same day when possible.
- Consider monitoring methodologies and possible academic partnerships.
- Project intended as multi-year and renewable; education component recognized as strength.
- Clarified staging area and access route via DCR lot.
- Commission expressed strong support for project's ecological and community benefits.

Public Comment:

- **Cynthia Hibbard (President of Green Cambridge):** Expressed full support for project's ecological and educational value.

- **Eppa Rixey (Board member of Green Cambridge):** Highlighted connections to Jerry's Pond project, stewardship partnerships, and long community history in the area.

Related Projects:

- Jennifer confirmed past projects have been successful.
- This NOI is part of a long-term stewardship plan they intend to sustain going forward.
- CPA (Community Preservation Act) funds have supported Green Cambridge previously.
- Just like their other Alewife stewardship work—this project will blend Parterre's professional ecological restoration work, youth crews (Mayor's Summer Youth, TerraCorps member), and community volunteers.
- Commission requested a site-specific seed mix plan and a soil-stabilization procedure, which Green Cambridge agreed to submit.
- Success monitoring must be annual, quantitative when possible, and submitted with renewal requests if the OOC is extended beyond the initial five years.
- Green Cambridge welcomed collaborations with academic partners for monitoring.

8:10 – Motion: Elysse moved to close public comment.

Second: Kathryn

Vote: 7 – In Favor

David – Yes

Elysse – Yes

Erum – Yes

Kathryn – Yes

Khyati – Yes

Lorie – Yes

Jim – Yes

Rob(Associate) – No objection

Juliet (Associate) – No objection

Public comment closed unanimously.

Seed Mix Clarification & Action Items

- Green Cambridge will submit a site-specific seed mix plan for Commission review.
- Seed mixes to be seasonally appropriate and tailored to wetland/upland transition zones.
- They will include options (e.g., fast-germinating erosion mix vs. New England Wildflower mix) depending on timing and ecological suitability.

Soil Disturbance & Stabilization Plan

Green Cambridge agreed to provide a simple written procedure describing:

- How exposed soil will be stabilized immediately after invasive removal
- When erosion matting vs. direct seeding will be used
- How moisture will be maintained during summer drought if needed
(Per Commission concerns about weeds establishing in disturbed soils.)

8:17 – Motion: Kathryn moved to issue an order of conditions with special conditions discussed

Second: Lorie

Vote: 7 – In Favor

David – Yes

Elysse – Yes
Erum – Yes
Kathryn – Yes
Khyati – Yes
Lorie – Yes
Jim – Yes

Rob(Associate) – No objection
Juliet (Associate) – No objection

The commission unanimously approved to issue an order of conditions with special conditions discussed.

8:18 – Commission Member Orientation Document

- Elysse is updating the new-member guidance packet.
- Jennifer will provide updated list of members and term details.

8:20 – Approval of Meeting Minutes- May 11, 2026

Motion: Jim moved to approve the minutes.

Second: Kathryn

Vote: 5 – In Favor, 2 - Abstain

David – Yes
Elysse – Abstain
Erum – Abstain
Kathryn – Yes
Khyati – Yes
Lorie – Yes
Jim – Yes

Rob(Associate) – No objection
Juliet (Associate) – No objection

The commission unanimously approved the meeting minutes

8:22 - Jerry's Pond Update

Jen provided site photographs and construction updates:

- All land-based helical piles installed; water-based piles pending.
- Decking area prepared; coir logs in place.
- Significant koi fish presence noted.
- Walkthrough for Commission will be scheduled.

8:26 – Administrative Topics

- David noted that the new Community Preservation Act funding cycle has opened, encouraged commissioners to share the opportunity with groups who may seek open space funding, and said he would circulate the CPA letter of intent to the Commission.
- Rob and Jen attended Fresh Pond Day; successful public engagement event.
- Next meeting: July 13, 2026.
- No agenda items yet; updates forthcoming.

8:31 – Adjournment

Motion: Elysse moved to adjourn meeting

Second: Kathryn

Vote: 7 – In Favor

David – Yes

Elysse – Yes

Erum – Yes

Kathryn – Yes

Khyati – Yes

Lorie – Yes

Jim – Yes

Rob(Associate) – No objection

Juliet (Associate) – No objection

Meeting adjourned.