



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

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Public Meeting – Monday, March 9, 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; Kathryn Hess; Erum Sattar; Lorie Graham; Jim Gerstle, Associate; Sean Bedingfield, Associate

Absent Commission Members: Khyati Saraf

Attendees: Lena Frappier, DPW; Kara Falise, DPW; Lucica Hiller, DPW; Laura Jasinski, Charles River Conservancy; Davis Bacon

David Lyons, Chair opened the meeting.

7:00 – Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Control Plan Presentation Department of Public Works

Lucica Hiller, Senior Project Manager in the Engineering Division, presented an overview of the updated CSO Control Plan being jointly developed by Cambridge, Somerville, and the MWRA.

She explained that:

- Cambridge’s combined sewer system dates back over 150 years and carries both stormwater and wastewater.
- During heavy rainfall events, system relief structures discharge combined sewer overflows into the Charles River and Alewife Brook.
- Pollutants of concern—especially bacteria—pose risks to ecological and human health.
- Cambridge has implemented decades of sewer separation and stormwater improvements, now achieving approximately 55–60% system separation.

Lucica reviewed historical work including West Cambridge sewer separation, Huron Ave improvements, Concord-Alewife (Cam 400) work, Port Infrastructure Project, Broadway–Hampshire separation efforts, and newly completed stormwater infrastructure such as tanks and green infrastructure installations.

She explained the joint updated CSO Control Plan (2021–present), noting that:

- Climate-adjusted rainfall modeling is incorporated using a “2050 future typical year.”
- Larger and more frequent storms will increase pressure on the system.
- The planning process evaluated multiple “levels of control,” ranging from reduced activation frequency to achieving zero CSOs in typical and design storm scenarios.
- Forty-plus alternatives were analyzed using combinations of sewer separation, green infrastructure, tanks, tunnels, and pipe conveyance improvements.

Lucica summarized the draft recommended alternative for Alewife Brook:

- Two new storage tanks: one near Doughboy Field and one near the Alewife Wetland
- A one-mile micro tunnel leading to the Alewife Brook Pump Station
- Sewer separation in targeted areas
- Upsizing conveyance pipes along Sherman Street and Ringe Avenue
- Green stormwater infrastructure to be incorporated when roadways are opened
- Estimated construction duration of 13–18 years following regulatory approval

She noted that significant coordination with DCR will be required and that construction impacts may include temporary access restrictions and selective tree removal.

Commissioners asked questions about coordination with the MBTA/Red Line redevelopment area, future development impacts, and system interactions. Staff noted that development-triggered I/I mitigation can be strategically aligned with long-term CSO goals.

Lucica reviewed the Charles River recommendations, including:

- A 2.5-million-gallon storage tank at CAM-5 (location TBD)
- A 10.1-million-gallon storage tank at Magazine Beach for Cottage Farm flows
- Partial sewer separation (approx. 80 acres) in Cambridge, enabled by recent Broadway drainage upgrades
- Additional separation and storage elements led by MWRA in Boston
- Green infrastructure integration where feasible

She highlighted anticipated construction impacts at Magazine Beach, including temporary loss of recreational access and the need for odor control facilities.

Laura Jasinski commented on the value of past CSO investments and asked whether a cost analysis had been done on the impact of continued sewage discharge.

Lucica noted that impact-cost analysis has not been completed; the current focus is EPA’s financial capability assessment.

Lucica introduced the new Advisory Committee and encouraged applications.

Key details:

- Minimum quarterly meetings
- Five-year terms
- Early work will focus heavily on the CSO Control Plan during its approval and implementation phases
- Application links will be circulated by staff

Commissioners asked several questions about committee scope and expectations.

7:55 – Approval of Meeting Minutes- February 23, 2026

Motion: Kathryn moved to approve the minutes.

Second: Elysse

Vote: 7 – In Favor, 1 – Absent

David – Yes

Elysse – Yes

Kathryn – Yes

Erum – Yes

Lorie – Yes

Jim (Associate) – Yes

Sean (Associate) – Yes

Minutes approved.

7:58 – Discussion of Advisory Committee Representation

The Commission discussed representation on boards and committees:

- Kathryn expressed interest in serving on the new CSO and Stormwater Management Advisory Committee, citing her hydrology background.
- The Commission supported nominating Kathryn Hess for this role.
- Fresh Pond Advisory Board representation will be revisited at the next meeting; Jim will review his schedule before confirming.

David provided a brief update on CPA Committee work and upcoming funding discussions.

8:05 – Upcoming Meeting Items

Jennifer notified the Commission that the next meeting will include:

- Fresh Pond amendment to their vegetation management plan to include alum treatment.
- An informational presentation from Eversource regarding upcoming work at Magazine Beach is anticipated at a later meeting, followed by a Notice of Intent.
- A review of advisory board assignments

8:07 – Adjournment

Motion: David moved to adjourn.

Second: Elysse

Vote: 7 – In Favor, 1 – Absent

David – Yes

Elysse – Yes

Kathryn – Yes

Erum – Yes

Lorie – Yes

Jim (Associate) – Yes

Sean (Associate) – Yes

Meeting adjourned.