

Acton Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

June 4th, 2025

7:15 PM

Hybrid Meeting (Room 9 & Zoom)

Present: James Colman (Vice-Chair), Peter Hocknell, Kate Warwick, and Zywia Chadzynska

Absent: Terry Maitland (Chair), Jillian Peters, Amy Green,

Conservation Agent: Olivia Barksdale

Public Concerns and Regular Business

7:18PM Public Concerns

Jake Crawley - Bow Hunting Proposal

Jake Crawley introduced himself and explained that he had been in contact with Olivia from the conservation department about proposing bow hunting on conservation land in Acton. He stated that he had been involved with similar programs in the towns of Weston and Harvard.

Mr. Crawley provided details about the proposed hunting season, which would run from the first Monday in October through December 31st, following Massachusetts deer hunting regulations. He emphasized safety measures, including a 500-foot setback from dwellings and restrictions near roads and trails.

Commission members asked several questions:

- Kate inquired about the hunting season dates.
- A question was raised about whether permission would be for Mr. Crawley individually or as a blanket approval.
- There were questions about the number of deer allowed to be harvested and the use of tree stands.

Mr. Crawley explained that the state regulates the number of tags issued and that he uses portable tree stands that are removed after each hunt. He also mentioned that having authorized hunters could help police the area against unauthorized hunting.

Commissioners expressed interest in the proposal but wanted more information:

- Mr. Colman suggested asking the conservation agent to contact Weston and Harvard for more details on their programs.
- There were questions about whether there is documentation of deer overpopulation in Acton specifically.

The commission decided not to make an immediate decision but expressed willingness to consider the idea further. They requested that Mr. Crawley maintain contact with Olivia for next steps and to gather more background information.

7:35PM Hazard Tree Removal – 7 Fernwood Road

Chia Chi, the owner of 7 Fernwood Road, and her interpreter Sharon presented a request for hazardous tree removal. They explained concerns about increasing tree falling, changing rainfall patterns, and potential danger to the house and people.

Commissioners reviewed two arborist reports and discussed the trees in question. There was some confusion about the exact types of trees identified in the reports.

After discussion, the commission agreed to allow the removal of trees numbered 1, 2, and 3, with specific conditions:

1. Leave stumps high enough to serve as wildlife habitat without posing a hazard.
2. For tree number 4, only prune branches facing the house rather than removing the entire tree.
3. Ensure that debris from tree removal is not thrown into the nearby creek or water.

Peter moved to permit the felling of trees 1, 2, and 3, leaving enough stump for habitat use, and to recommend pruning for tree 4. Kate seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8:02PM Notice of Intent- Public Hearing – 10 Triangle Farm Lane

Bruce Ringwald from Goldsmith Press Ringwald represented the homeowners for the property at 10 Triangle Farm Lane. He presented plans for constructing a new single-family house on an 11.89-acre lot.

Mr. Ringwald described the existing conditions, including a paved driveway, utility handholds, and two existing wells. He proposed installing a third well for geothermal use and explained the layout of the driveway and house in relation to wetland buffer zones.

The commissioners raised concerns about the driveway's proximity to wetland buffer zones. Jim requested alternative plans that would move the driveway further from the buffer zones. Other commissioners agreed that they would like to see options that minimize encroachment on the protected areas.

Mr. Ringwald agreed to prepare alternative plans and continue the hearing. The commission also expressed interest in conducting another site visit to better understand the proposed changes.

The public hearing concerning 10 Triangle Farm Lane was continued to June 18th at 7:25 PM.

8:20PM Notice of Intent- Public Hearing – 91 Newtown Road-Continued

The public hearing for 91 Newtown Road was continued to June 18th at 7:30 PM.

8:21PM Notice of Intent- Public Hearing – 820 Main Street

Robert Melvin from Stamski McNary represented the town of Acton for the culvert repair project at 820 Main Street. He presented updated plans and impact numbers for the project.

Mr. Melvin explained that the permanent alteration to wetlands was reduced to a small triangular piece covered by the retaining wall. The rest of the impacts were classified as temporary. He provided details on the replication area proposed and addressed comments received from the DEP.

The commission discussed the project and agreed that it was not a true stream crossing, which affected some of the applicable standards.

Peter moved to issue an order of conditions, striking conditions 18 and 19 since it is working in, and adjacent to, a stream, and adding a special condition for monitoring the restoration area for a period of 2 years to ensure plantings take root. Zywia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8:27PM Request for Determination of Applicability – 9 West Road

Pierce Newbury from 9 West Road presented plans for a deck and shed construction. He provided additional information about the shed location as requested in the previous meeting.

Mr. Newbury explained that the shed was already in place on an existing paved area at the end of the driveway. The commission discussed the fact that the shed had been installed without prior approval but agreed that its current location on the existing impervious surface was acceptable.

Regarding the deck, Mr. Newbury confirmed that the footprint remained unchanged from the previous presentation, with only a slight extension of the steps to meet code requirements.

Peter moved to issue a negative 3 determination, indicating that the project is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act but will not have a significant impact on the interests protected by the Act. Zywia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8:32PM Notice of Intent- Public Hearing – 60 Powder Mill Road- Continued

The hearing for 60 Powder Mill Road was continued to June 18th at 7:35 PM.

8:33PM Certificate of Compliance – 37 Squirrel Hill Road

Olivia presented information on the certificate of compliance for 37 Squirrel Hill Road. She explained that the original Notice of Intent was for the construction of a house, which had been completed. The two conditions - removal of hay wattles post-construction and placement of boulders at the hay wattle line - had been met.

Peter moved to issue a certificate of compliance for 37 Squirrel Hill Road. Kate seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8:35PM Order to Show Cause – 976 Main Street

Storage of organic matter in buffer zone

Ed Kennedy, one of the property owners of 976 Main Street, presented information about a berm that had been built along the edge of a pit on the property. The commission discussed the history of the site, which has been used as a gravel pit for many years.

Mr. Kennedy explained that the berm was created to block off the golf course (which they also own) and woodland area from the activity in the historic gravel pit area. He also mentioned that it was intended to create a more significant buffer from the wetlands.

The commission raised several points of discussion:

1. The exact location of the wetland boundary is unclear, as the site has not been professionally delineated.
2. The berm construction may be considered a violation of current bylaws, even though the pit predates many regulations.
3. There were questions about the current use of the area and whether it's still an active gravel pit.

The commission decided that more information and a site visit were needed before making a decision. They agreed to:

1. Arrange another site visit with as many commission members as possible.
2. Consider potential mitigation measures, such as additional plantings on the berm.
3. Postpone any decision until after the site visit and further discussion.

The matter will be revisited at a future meeting after the site visit has been conducted prior to the June 18th Meeting.

Administrative Updates:

- None

9:00 Meeting adjourned

Documents and exhibits used at this meeting:

06-04-2025 - Meeting Information

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<input type="checkbox"/>	 Edit	10 Triangle Farm Lane NOI
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<input type="checkbox"/>	 Edit	7 Fernwood Road Haz Tree
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