

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION MINUTES
7:00 p.m. June 12th, 2025

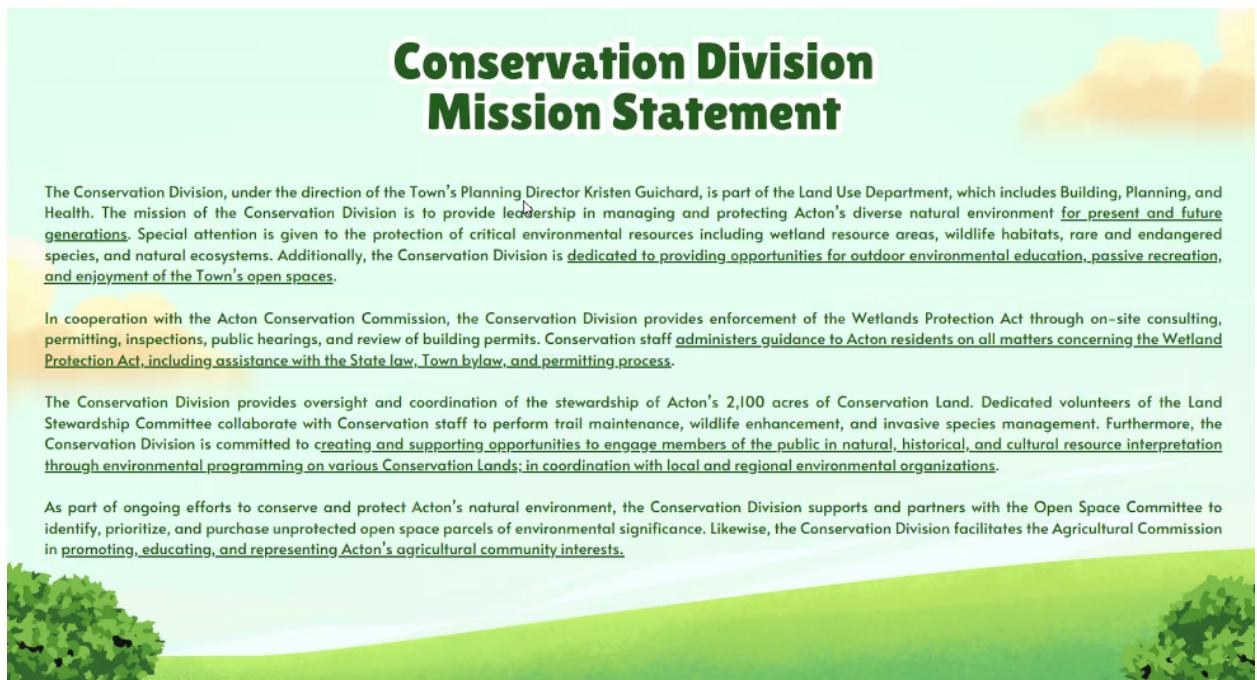
Present:

X	David Martin, liaison		Suravi Bhatia, student
X	Melissa Kaplan Morse, co-chair	X	Wanjiku Gachugi, liaison
X	Sunanda Pepalla, clerk	X	Zayd Dhashageer, student
X	Diane Randolph Jones, co-chair	X	Jack Dirstine
X	Sandra Hinds		

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Special Business

1. Town Conservation Presentation by Ian Bergemann



The graphic features a green background with a blue sky and a yellow cloud in the upper right. In the center, the text "Conservation Division" is written in a large, bold, green serif font. Below it, "Mission Statement" is written in a slightly smaller, bold, green serif font. The text is white with some green highlights. At the bottom, there is a stylized illustration of a green hillside with a few small trees and bushes.

Conservation Division
Mission Statement

The Conservation Division, under the direction of the Town's Planning Director Kristen Guichard, is part of the Land Use Department, which includes Building, Planning, and Health. The mission of the Conservation Division is to provide leadership in managing and protecting Acton's diverse natural environment for present and future generations. Special attention is given to the protection of critical environmental resources including wetland resource areas, wildlife habitats, rare and endangered species, and natural ecosystems. Additionally, the Conservation Division is dedicated to providing opportunities for outdoor environmental education, passive recreation, and enjoyment of the Town's open spaces.

In cooperation with the Acton Conservation Commission, the Conservation Division provides enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act through on-site consulting, permitting, inspections, public hearings, and review of building permits. Conservation staff administers guidance to Acton residents on all matters concerning the Wetland Protection Act, including assistance with the State law, Town bylaw, and permitting process.

The Conservation Division provides oversight and coordination of the stewardship of Acton's 2,100 acres of Conservation Land. Dedicated volunteers of the Land Stewardship Committee collaborate with Conservation staff to perform trail maintenance, wildlife enhancement, and invasive species management. Furthermore, the Conservation Division is committed to creating and supporting opportunities to engage members of the public in natural, historical, and cultural resource interpretation through environmental programming on various Conservation Lands; in coordination with local and regional environmental organizations.

As part of ongoing efforts to conserve and protect Acton's natural environment, the Conservation Division supports and partners with the Open Space Committee to identify, prioritize, and purchase unprotected open space parcels of environmental significance. Likewise, the Conservation Division facilitates the Agricultural Commission in promoting, educating, and representing Acton's agricultural community interests.

Ian Bergemann, Community Conservation Specialist, presented a detailed overview of the activities that the Conservation Commission undertook during the last year.

Commissioners provided several suggestions about how to approach Ian's work through a DEI lens. Ian eagerly accepted these ideas, and the Commission may provide additional recommendations at a future meeting.

2. Updates from the Co-Chairs and DEI Director Office

- Juneteenth (June 19, 2-4 pm)
- Acton Pride Festival (June 21, 12-3 pm)
 - Jack and Melissa will be at the table
- Continue with same meeting time in the fall
 - Second Thursday@7pm
- Thank you Zayd for your contributions to the DEIC as you graduate from HS to begin college!!
- Reviewed DEIC ICE resource document to be posted on the DEIC website.
- Juneteenth Details
 - Start at Acton Congregational Church (ACC) and walk/drive to Acton Woman's Club)
 - Secured speaker: Ray Anthony Shephard (Writer and History Teacher)
 - Nancy Barnes, ACC member, will play piano and sing "Lift Every Voice"
 - Local tour guide, Amy Cole, will present local Acton history of abolition and tie in with Minister Woodbury at the Acton Woman's Club (AWC) and ACC
 - Diane Randolph Jones will present how horse culture connects with the celebration of Juneteenth
 - Refreshments: Juice and cookies sponsored by AWC
 - Melissa requested that Commissioners attend and volunteer since event sponsored by Commission
- Pride Festival Details
 - Melissa and Jack to staff the table.
 - Provide candy and bracelets.
 - Handouts and QR Codes available:
 - Recruitment flyer
 - LGBTQ+ resources
 - Immigration resources (since translated DEIC statement not yet available)

Closing Items

- May minutes approved (Motion Sunanda, Seconded Sandra)
- Meeting adjourned (Motion Diane, Seconded Zayd)
- DEI meetings to resume in September.