



CITY OF EASTHAMPTON
Conservation Commission
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Meeting Minutes (3/9/2026)

This meeting of the Easthampton Conservation Commission was conducted via remote participation online. Every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the City of Easthampton website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting. Should an interruption occur in which the online meeting ends abruptly, online meetings will not be restarted, and all agenda items will be automatically continued to the next scheduled meeting.

Commissioners: Julie Busa, Chair
Dan Buttrick
Jay Ryan (absent with notice)
Deborah August (absent with notice)
Hal Weeks
Sarah Carr
Heather Lohr

Agent: Eva Gerstle

Public: None

1. **Confirm Recording**
2. Call to Order² **6:00**
3. Public Concerns (Non-Agenda Items)
4. Public Hearings / Meetings³
 - a. Request for a Determination of Applicability for 20 & 30 Ballard Street (114-1-2, 113-1-3) for confirmation of the wetland boundary.
Commissioner Weeks motioned to continue this item to March 23rd, Commissioner Buttrick seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
Requests for Certificates of Compliance
5. Enforcement Actions
 - a. J. Gawle. 37 South Street (EO-2013-001).
 - b. G & F. Fiordalice, 476 East Street, Map: 158, Lot: 9. (EO-2022-002)
 - c. F. DeMarinis, 93 Northampton Street Rear, Map: 128, Lot: 113. (EO-2022-003)
 - d. J. Gawle & Signal Energy, 50 Florence Road, Map 115, Lot 2 & 5 (EO-2025-001)
6. Open Space Updates
 - a. Echodale West Orchard Area Invasive Management
 - b. Boruchowski Parcel
 - i. Natural Heritage Filing Discussion

The main next step for B-parcel is a site visit with NEMBA representatives to determine the slope and potential relocation of a new proposed trail onto existing tread. The Commission

discussed the bridge project at Boruchowski. Agent Gerstle showed images of a bridge done in Holyoke; the existing path involves bikes rolling through the water, and the required span is expected to be relatively large. The Commission noted that the relevant measurement is bankfull width for each of the crossings and then meeting with NEMBA volunteers in the field to collaborate on construction design. The hope for the bridge project was to use a volunteer-led approach.

Due to a Natural Heritage deadline, ground disturbance and installation of the bridge are restricted between April 1st and October 31st, meaning the installation is anticipated for November. The Commission discussed whether the bridge construction should be volunteer-led or folded into a potential machine-built trail project. The inclination was to hand-build the bridge since the location is not close to where machine trails would be constructed, although funding could be combined. Design complexity was noted, with concerns raised about using heavy materials like timber construction mats, which would require equipment to transport. Another bridge location was presented, described as a much smaller, truly intermittent stream crossing, which might require a different design than a standard bog bridge, perhaps by adding a layer of decking to solve the issue of parallel boards. The Commission decided that it would be more effective to involve the carpenter volunteers in the design process, and will need to determine if they can keep the bridge span under 30 inches to avoid having to install mandated handrails. The Commission intends to provide the wood through existing funding, and repair the Broadbrook Bridge railings at the same time. The Commission reviewed a previous bridge permitted under an RDA at Old Trolley Lines. This was used to discuss the feasibility of using an RDA for the Boruchowski intermittent stream crossing, considering that no ground disturbance over the bank might qualify it as a minimal impact project. The consensus was to first determine the design through the site visit and then proceed with the appropriate permitting.

c. Other Open Space parcels
Agent Gerstle showed the Oliver Street sign and the Commission oooooed and ahhhed. The Commission plans to consider a broader sign project, potentially collaborating with Parks and Recreation on a CPA application. A reference list of city-owned conservation areas has been added to the city's website, totaling just under 400 acres

7. Compliance Updates – Active Projects / Open Permits

- a. Pleasant Street Mills, various locations (MassDEP File #151-273). Infrastructure improvements. (Map:, Lot: Various Locations). Exp. 11/22/2028.
- b. Lathrop Community of Easthampton / 100 Bassett Brook Drive (MassDEP File #151-283). Invasive Plant Management. (Map: 104, Lot: 2). Exp. 06/26/2028.
- c. City of Easthampton / Nashawannuck Pond (MassDEP File #151-288). Aquatic Vegetation Management via herbicide/algaecide. (Map: 151, Lot: 166). Exp. 2/27/2029.
- d. One Industrial Lofts, LLC / 1 Ferry Street – Tract 1 (MassDEP File #151-0298). Ferry Street Mill Redevelopment Project. (Map: 135/131, Lot: 2/1). Exp. 12/11/2026.
- e. One Industrial Lofts, LLC / 1 Ferry Street – Tract 2 (MassDEP File #151-0324). Ferry Street Mill Redevelopment Project. (Map: 135, Lot: 2). Exp. 9/18/2028.
- f. R. Levesque Associates, Inc., 69 and 73 Loudville Road (MassDEP File #151-0309) for new 18-unit housing development. (Map: 140/139, Lot: 28, 29/11). Exp. 9/19/2028.

- g. W. Chicoine property, 108 Oliver Street (MassDEP File #151-0311) for new single-family home with one crossing. (Map: 125, Lot: 30). Exp. 12/20/2028.
- h. City of Easthampton, DPW (MassDEP File #151-0307) for routine maintenance activities. (Map:, Lot: City Wide). Exp. 2/27/2029.
- i. Beacon Solar, LLC, 50 Florence Road (MassDEP File # 151-314) for the large-scale solar project. (Map: 115, Lots: 2 and 5). Exp. 6/17/2027.
- j. Moove In Storage, Main Street Rear (9 Coleman Road, Southampton) (MassDEP File #151-0319) for expansion of self-storage facility. (Map: 164, Lot: 8) Exp. 5/16/2027.
- k. Haas Home Products, LLC, 65 Lovefield Street (MassDEP File # 151-0325) for single-family home redevelopment. (Map: 130, Lot: 14) Exp. 9/14/2028.
- l. Tasty Top Development, LLC, 93, 95, & 97 Northampton Street (MassDEP File #: 151-0322) for mixed-use development. (Map: 128, Lot: 112, 113, & 114) Exp. 1/23/2029
- m. Dodge Residence, 120 East Street (MassDEP File #: 151-0328) for pond/stream restoration. (Map: 111, Lot: 41) Exp. 5/9/2029
- n. City of Easthampton DPW, Emerald Place (Entire ROW) (MassDEP File #: 151-0329) for stormwater/pedestrian infrastructure improvements. (Map: ROW & 135, Lot: ROW & 242) Exp. 6/27/2029
- o. Our Lady of the Valley, 109 Everett Street (Stormwater Permit Only) for cemetery expansion. (Map: 146, Lot: 1) Exp. 6/27/2027
- p. Williston Northampton School, 40-50 Park Street (MassDEP File #: 151-0331) for Pond restoration and herbicide treatments. (Map:144, Lot:10) Exp. 3/03/2028
- q. Easthampton Parks and Recreation, Nashawannuck Pond (Mass DEP File #151-0332) for retaining wall construction (Map:157 Lot 83)
Agent Gerstle noted that this project has it's pre bid meeting in one week.
- r. New City Infrastructure Improvements (Stormwater Permit Only) for parks and road work. Exp 7/17/2028
- s. Mass Audubon, Arcadia,(MassDEP File # 151-0335) ecological restoration invasive plant removal (Map 107-1&2, 112-5). Exp 8/12/2028
- t. Norwich Properties, LLC (MassDEP File # 151-0334) for a new housing development at 35 Pleasant Street (Map: 136 Lot: 1) Exp. 9/17/2028
- u. MassDOT, Route 5, (MassDEP File #151-0333) for shared use path and additional parking construction Exp. 10/6/2028
The Commission was notified that this project intends to begin this summer.
- v. The Community Builders, Inc, 385 Main Street (MassDEP File# 151-0330) for a new housing development (Map: 154, Lot: 32-1). Exp 10/23/2028
- w. RDA/DOA Project Updates:
 - i. Hartnett Manhan Memorial Forest

8. General Business

a. Meeting Minutes: 2-23-2026

Commissioner Carr motioned to approve the minutes, Commissioner Weeks seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Wetlands Ordinance Discussion

Agent Gerstle presented the Ordinance to the public. The Slides are attached to these minutes.

Tom Lautzenheiser, Mass Audubon ecologist, affirmed the diligent, multi-year process of writing the Ordinance, noting that the goal was to take the best ideas from other ordinances and create a document that is more protective of wetlands functions and values. The Ordinance aims to guide development away from high-risk areas, such as the 500-year flood plain, to avoid future issues like basement flooding. Lautzenheiser

noted that this Ordinance supports well-sited development and is sensitive to climate change.

The City Council President, Councilor Denham, offered to introduce the Ordinance to the council, where it will be immediately sent to the Ordinance Subcommittee. The Ordinance Subcommittee meeting is expected possibly at the end of March or early April, and the Agent Gerstle encouraged Commissioners to attend to support the presentation. The Commission will also make an effort to increase public awareness of the upcoming sessions via the city's social media channels and through an announcement at the March 18th City Council. The Commission will introduce this Ordinance at two more meetings, March 23 and April 13.

Dog Park Presentation

Bill Cannon, a landscape architect, presented the proposed dog park project, detailing that they have been working with the "Friends of the Dog Park" Committee for a couple of years to identify a suitable site. The Committee decided to focus on the Nonotuck Park site, a wooded, 1.5-acre next to the pool.

The Commission concurred with the focus on erosion and sediment control and low-impact development for runoff control, and expressed an appreciation for the heads up about the forthcoming Stormwater permit application. Chair Busa emphasized the need for realistic modeling regarding runoff, noting that hard-packed dirt or mud could be a concern, and asked for consideration of bacteria and waste issues associated with a Dog Park.

The Conservation Commission received the Eversource annual yearly operating plan for vegetation removal.

9. Motion to Adjourn

Commissioner Buttrick motioned to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Weeks seconded the motion.

7:32pm



Draft Easthampton Wetlands Ordinance Introduction

March/April 2026



Easthampton Wetlands Working Group

- Began this draft in 2022
- Driven by the shortcomings of the Wetlands Protection Act in the post-pandemic development boom
- Driven by changing climate & anticipating future floods
- 220 MA Municipalities have adopted Wetlands Bylaws/Ordinances (out of 351)
- “nothing contained in 310 CMR 10.00 should be construed as preempting or precluding more stringent protection of wetlands or other natural resource areas by local by-law, ordinance or regulation” - Wetlands Protection Act Regulations

Wetlands Protection Act

State Regulations

Vegetated Wetlands



- Bordering Vegetated Wetlands are protected (defined by soils, plants, hydrology)
- **No** protections for Isolated Vegetated Wetlands
- 1:1 replication requirements

Proposed Wetlands Ordinance

Local Easthampton Ordinance

- Isolated Vegetated Wetlands larger than 400 square feet have same protections as Bordering Vegetated Wetlands
- 2:1 replication requirements for total wetland (Bordering & Isolated) impacted

Wetlands Protection Act

State Regulations

Land Subject to Flooding

→ For floodplains of streams: boundary set as 100 Year floodplain from most recent FEMA map

→ For Isolated Land Subject to Flooding, uses outdated precipitation numbers



Proposed Wetlands Ordinance

Local Easthampton Ordinance

→ For stream floodplains, boundary set as 500 year floodplain OR extent calculated with future climate data

→ Isolated LSF, use future precipitation estimates to determine extent

Wetlands Protection Act

State Regulations

Intermittent
Streams

→ Only protected
downstream of
Wetlands

Proposed Wetlands Ordinance

Local Easthampton Ordinance

→ Protected along the full
reach of the stream,
including upgradient of
wetlands



Wetlands Protection Act

State Regulations

Vernal Pools

→ Not protected unless certified and located in other wetland types



Proposed Wetlands Ordinance

Local Easthampton Ordinance

→ Protected with boundary 100 feet out from high water line

→ Presumed significant to habitat protection without breeding evidence required.

Wetlands Protection Act

State Regulations

Proposed Wetlands Ordinance

Local Easthampton Ordinance

Buffer Zone

→ Advisory 100 feet, not regulated directly

→ 100 Feet regulated zone

→ Inner 50 foot No Disturb

→ Outer 50 foot limited work allowed

→ Relief is possible if alternatives are worse for resource areas



Ordinance requires a Climate Impact Narrative considering:

- Prevention of storm and flood damage
- Resilient plantings
- Localized heating & cooling
- Carbon sequestration and storage



No changes to:

- Riverfront Area
 - Land Under Water
 - Bank
-
- Timelines
 - Hearing Process
 - Most Conservation Commission Procedures

Added procedural changes:

- Ability to fine if enforcement orders are not complied with
- Modest additional fees
- Commission can require Wildlife Habitat Assessment for any project
- Simple additional Form E to cover new resource areas

Questions?

