

Acton Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 5 2025
6:15 PM
Room 204 & Zoom

Present: James Colman (Vice-Chair), Peter Hocknell, Amy Green, Jillian Peters, Zyvia Chadzynska

Absent: Terry Maitland (Chair), Kate Warwick

Conservation Agent: Olivia Barksdale

Public Concerns and Regular Business

Hearing opened: 6:14pm

6:15PM Kelley's Corner

Ryan Davison from the Department of Transportation addressed the Commission regarding the status of the Kelley's Corner project. He reported that he had visited the site earlier that morning but had not met with Patrick, who oversees the site daily. Ryan stated that the major issue across from Roche Brothers appeared to be adequately mitigated, noting the installation of curbs and sidewalks that would help channel water into the drainage system.

Commissioner Amy Green provided additional feedback, noting that the area across from Stop and Shop near the daycare still needed attention, with riprap extending over erosion controls. Green also mentioned that not a single SWPPP report since August had noted any deficiencies with erosion controls, despite obvious issues observed during site visits.

Ryan acknowledged that contractors often treat SWPPP reports as "boilerplate items" and committed to ensuring Patrick reviews these reports more thoroughly going forward. He suggested that Commissioners copy him on communications about site issues so he could provide oversight.

Green requested that the DOT have state surveyors conduct as-builts for three specific areas of concern: across from Roche Brothers, by the daycare, and across from Not Your Average Joe's. Ryan agreed to request this from his survey department.

The Commission agreed to schedule another site visit after November 18th to assess current conditions.

Amy Green left at 6:39pm. The Commission still met quorum with Peter, Jillian, Jim and Zyvia.

6:33PM Notice of Intent–Public Hearing–Stow Street

Kristen Antunes from Nitsch Engineering presented the proposed shared use path along Stowe Street. The 8.5-foot-wide path would run approximately 650 feet from Maple Street,

providing connection between the Assabet River Trail, South Acton Commuter Rail Station, and eventually to Jones Field. The path was designed on the north side of Stowe Street to avoid utility poles, , and enhance safety by eliminating the need for mid-block crossings.Kristen described the resource areas affected, including bordering vegetative wetlands, bank to intermittent stream, and riverfront areas. The project would include drainage structures with modular pretreatment chambers providing 70% TSS removal, as well as tree replacement and wetland restoration efforts to minimized wetland impacts.

Vice-Chair James Colman expressed concern that the path does not extend all the way to the playground and would end before reaching the Fort Pond Brook crossing, potentially resulting in a "sidewalk to nowhere." Commissioner Peter Hocknell echoed these concerns, questioning the value if the connection to Jones Field was not completed.

Claire Siska, a resident from 14 Stowe Street, spoke in favor of the project, citing extreme safety concerns for pedestrians walking from the train station to Jones Field. She noted that residents had been waiting ten years for this sidewalk and emphasized its importance even as a partial solution.

David Martin from the Transportation Advisory Committee explained that sidewalks in town are typically built in phases and that this segment would primarily serve commuters from the train station. He stated that getting the Commission's approval for the north side location was necessary to inform future bridge design decisions.

Dean Charter also spoke in support, noting that the vegetation being removed was primarily invasive euonymus, that the partial sidewalk would still provide significant safety benefits, and that the upcoming relocation of the Acton Food Pantry to Maple Street would increase traffic in the area.

The hearing was continued to November 19th at 6:15 PM, with plans for a site visit to be scheduled.

7:04PM Notice of Intent–Public Hearing–86 Hayward Road

Brian Dunn from MBL Land Development and Permitting presented on behalf of the Harts Corporation for a septic system repair, deck replacement, and tree removal at 86 Hayward Road. He explained that the project includes:

1. Installation of a state-of-the-art Presby septic system
2. Replacement of an existing deck at the rear of the home, with steps relocated to the right side as previously requested by the Commission
3. Replacement of deteriorating wooden retaining walls
4. Removal of 16 trees (one tree was preserved at the Commission's request) with a detailed restoration plan including 16 replacement trees (8 black gum and 8 river birch) plus additional native shrubs
5. Installation of a 6-foot high vinyl fence along the property boundary
6. Addition of wetland seed mix in the restoration area

Brian stated that all previous Commission requests had been addressed, including a detailed arborist report explaining the safety concerns with the trees, particularly those whose root systems would be compromised by the septic system installation.

The Commission discussed the proposed fence placement, with Chair Colman requesting that it be installed at least 6 inches off the ground to allow wildlife passage. Commissioner Chadzynska requested 2 years of monitoring for the newly planted trees and vegetation.

Motion: Commissioner Peter Hocknell moved to issue an Order of Conditions for 86 Hayward Road with standard conditions 18 and 19 struck through, with a special condition that the perimeter fence have a gap from the ground up to the bottom of the fence of not less than 6 inches, and with 2 years of monitoring for the newly planted area. Commissioner Zywia Chadzynska seconded the motion.

Vote: Peter Hocknell - Aye, Zywia Chadzynska - Aye, Jillian - Aye, James Colman - Aye. Motion carried.

7:19PM Certificate of Compliance- 249 Pope Road

Conservation Agent Olivia Barksdale presented her site visit findings for 247-249 Pope Road, which involved the construction of two single-family houses, she confirmed that the special conditions had been met:

1. The 2-3 foot diameter boulders spaced 10 feet apart along the property line were in place
2. A "no mowing, no dumping" sign had been installed (though she requested it be relocated and reoriented for better visibility and installed with a 4x4 post)
3. Tree monitoring had been completed, with 7 out of 8 trees in good health
4. The agent had been in contact with the real estate agent regarding notifying new owners about the property conditions

Motion: Commissioner Peter Hocknell moved to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 247 and 249 Pope Road. Commissioner Jillian seconded the motion.

Vote: Peter Hocknell - Aye, Zywia Chadzynska - Aye, Jillian - Aye, James Colman - Aye. Motion carried.

7: 24 PM Administrative Updates

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion: Commissioner Peter Hocknell moved to accept the minutes of October 1st. Commissioner Jillian seconded the motion.

Motion: Commissioner Peter Hocknell moved to accept the minutes of October 15th. Commissioner Zywia Chadzynska seconded the motion.

Review Standard Conditions

Item was not discussed

Review Hazard Tree Policy

Item was not discussed

Enforcement Order updates

7:29 Close Hearing

Motion: Commissioner Peter Hocknell moved to close the meeting. Commissioner Zywia Chadzynska seconded the motion.

Documents and exhibits used at this meeting

11-05-2025 Meeting Information ...

<input type="checkbox"/>	Type	Title	Owner	Modified Date	Size	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/>	DOC	Minutes for ConCom 10_01_25 Draft.docx	obarksdale	11/03/25	100 KB	  
<input type="checkbox"/>	DOC	Minutes for ConCom 10_15_25 Draft.docx	obarksdale	11/03/25	125 KB	  
<input type="checkbox"/>	DOC	247-249 Pope Road COC	obarksdale	11/03/25	0	  
<input type="checkbox"/>	DOC	86 Hayward Road NOI House improvements	obarksdale	11/03/25	0	  
<input type="checkbox"/>	DOC	Kelley's Corner	obarksdale	11/03/25	0	  
<input type="checkbox"/>	DOC	Policies - Standard Conditions	obarksdale	11/03/25	0	  
<input type="checkbox"/>	DOC	Stow Street NOI Mixed use path	obarksdale	11/03/25	0	  

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