



SUDBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 6, 2025

Present: David Henkels, Chair; Ken Holtz, Vice Chair; Jeremy Cook; Luke Faust; Bruce Porter; Kasey Rogers; Mark Sevier (7:02 PM); Harry Hoffman, Associate Member; and Lori Capone, Conservation Coordinator

The meeting was called to Order by Chair Henkels at 7:00 PM via roll call.

Other Business:

Chair Henkels announced that the Notice of Intent application for 188 Newbridge Road would not be discussed until the meeting of January 27, 2025.

Minutes:

December 16, 2024

On motion by Comm. Faust to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2024 meeting, seconded by Comm. Porter, with Comm. Cook and Comm. Holtz abstaining due to absence at said meeting, via roll call the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Wetland Applications:

Notice of Intent: 182 Wayside Inn Road, DEP #301-1434

Chair Henkels resumed the Hearing for the project to install a gravel driveway and stream crossing after-the-fact, renovate and expand an existing garage, construct an accessory out-building, exterior pool, and replace an existing culvert within the 100-foot Buffer Zone and 200-foot Riverfront Area, pursuant to the Wetlands Protection Act and Sudbury Wetlands Administration Bylaw. Andrew Leverone was the applicant. This Hearing was continued from November 18, 2024.

On motion by Comm. Cook to continue the Hearing to March 10, 2025, seconded by Comm. Sevier, via roll call the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Minor Modification:

Camp Sewataro: 1 Liberty Lane, DEP File #301-1366

Chair Henkels began the meeting for the request to modify the threshold for use of PAC and algacide treatment to pro-actively prevent future cyanobacteria blooms.

Coordinator Capone explained that the previous summer had seen significant challenges with algal blooms across Massachusetts ponds, including at Camp Sewataro, which led to the closure of the swimming pond for the entire summer. She noted that Water and Wetlands, the consultant managing the ponds, had developed a proactive strategy to address these issues.

Coordinator Capone provided background on the two man-made ponds at Camp Sewataro: a swimming pond with a gunite-lined basin and a natural-bottom fishing pond, both hydrologically connected through a pumping system. The ponds are jurisdictional resource areas. She detailed the aeration systems already installed to minimize chemical treatments, the implementation of EutroSORB filters to reduce phosphorus levels, and the challenges faced due to phosphorus as a limiting factor for algal growth.

Coordinator Capone outlined the camp's request for three modifications to the Order of Conditions.

1. A pro-active PAC treatment would target only the swimming pond to bind and settle phosphorus, with sediment removal occurring approximately every seven years. The camp proposed stopping water transfers between the swimming and fishing ponds during this treatment.
2. The camp also requested lowering the threshold for algaecide treatment from 20,000 cells per mL to 10,000 cells per mL in the swimming pond, addressing clarity and skin irritation issues. The fishing pond would retain its threshold of 20,000 cells per mL.
3. Finally, the camp sought to eliminate the 48-hour notification period for treatments while committing to timely updates to the office.

Coordinator Capone emphasized the increased monitoring frequency by the camp, which would allow for timely responses to algal growth. She concluded that the proposed changes were minor and did not necessitate a full Amendment, qualifying them as a minor modification.

Chair Henkels thanked Coordinator Capone for her detailed summary and invited Emmy Niinimaki to introduce herself and share further insights.

Ms. Niinimaki, Director of Operations at Camp Sewataro, acknowledged the lessons learned from the challenges of the past summer and shared that the camp had established a relationship with a lab to enable weekly or more frequent water testing. This testing would help them monitor conditions closely and communicate with Coordinator Capone to ensure timely coordination if treatment became necessary.

Chair Henkels invited questions from the Commissioners.

Comm. Holtz recalled earlier discussions about treatment options and raised concerns about potential problematic treatments. He questioned whether the proposed removal of the 48-hour notification period should apply universally or only to time-sensitive treatments like algaecide. Coordinator Capone clarified that the camp would still notify the office before conducting treatments, even without the 48-hour requirement. She emphasized the urgency of algaecide treatments due to the rapid escalation of algal cell counts, suggesting that the 48-hour notice could remain for other treatments. Ms. Niinimaki confirmed that only PAC and algaecide treatments were permitted under the current Order of Conditions.

Comm. Rogers asked about the duration of the waterflow separation between the swimming and fishing ponds. Emmy clarified that the separation would last 48 hours following treatment. Coordinator Capone explained that the chemicals used would become inert within that timeframe. Comm. Rogers also inquired about potential impacts of phosphorus treatment sediment being stirred up by swimmers. Coordinator Capone noted that while sediment could be resuspended, it would likely not result in significant negative effects on the fishing pond due to the tightly bound nature of the sediment and the presence of algae in both ponds. Ms. Niinimaki added that the spillway, where water could overflow, was one of the deepest parts of the swimming pond.

Comm. Porter raised concerns about the chemical interactions and sediment concentrations resulting from treatments. He asked whether soil testing of the pond bottoms had been considered. Coordinator Capone confirmed that soil testing was a condition of the Order of Conditions and had already been conducted following a PAC treatment during the past summer. She explained that soil testing would continue with any future treatments.

Comm. Sevier initiated a discussion about the source of algae in the swimming pond, questioning whether the inlet contributed to its growth. Ms. Niinimaki explained that algae proliferation was likely due to conditions such as a heavy phosphorus load and high temperatures, describing the past summer as a "perfect storm" for cyanobacteria. Coordinator Capone added that while many species of algae coexist and regulate each other, certain conditions allow cyanobacteria to dominate.

Chair Henkels asked about sediment removal from the swimming pond and whether testing had revealed anything unusual. Ms. Niinimaki clarified that sediment removal occurs every six to eight years and was last completed in the fall of the previous year. She noted that no additional soil testing was conducted during sediment removal, and

only water testing via boat was performed following treatments. She added that the only unusual findings were objects that had fallen into the pond over time.

On motion by Comm. Porter to approve the minor modification for the PAC and algaecide treatment thresholds, seconded by Comm. Sevier, via roll call the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Other Business:

Warrant Articles

Coordinator Capone outlined three standard Warrant Articles for the upcoming Town Meeting, all related to the Conservation Commission's ability to collect and expend funds from specific accounts.

The Wetlands Fund account, funded by fees collected under the local Wetlands Bylaw (not the State Act), currently holds approximately \$83,000. The article would authorize up to \$50,000 in expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year. These funds are designated for administering the wetlands bylaw and may cover costs such as consultant fees or legal representation in the event of an appeal.

The Trail Maintenance Fund, funded by annual fees from Agricultural Licenses, this account currently has \$33,000. The article would authorize up to \$15,000 for trail maintenance in the next fiscal year. Coordinator Capone noted that funds from this account have been used only once, to partially fund the purchase of a brush hog.

The Forestry Account was established years ago to handle potential income from forest cutting on conservation land. This account remains unfunded as no such activities have occurred. The article would allow for expenditures of up to \$10,000 annually for land management if funds are generated in the future.

Chair Henkels invited questions from Commissioners and the audience.

On motion by Comm. Holtz to submit the Warrant Articles, seconded by Comm. Cook, via roll call the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area Memorandum of Understanding

Chair Henkels introduced the next item on the agenda, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA).

Coordinator Capone provided an overview of the MOU, explaining that it is a collaborative effort involving over 40 entities in the region to address invasive species. She stated that the agreement was first enacted in 2009, with Sudbury as one of the original signatories. The updated MOU aims to ensure coordinated efforts and mutual support among participants in managing invasive species across the SuAsCo (Sudbury-Assabet-Concord) region.

Coordinator Capone highlighted that the MOU includes a provision to establish a regional coordinator position. This position is currently fully funded and housed by the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT), and no monetary contributions are being requested from other entities. She emphasized that Sudbury has benefitted from the program through initiatives like the Weed Warriors program, which trains individuals to identify and remove invasive species. Coordinator Capone noted that Town Counsel had reviewed the updated MOU and found no issues or concerns. She recommended that the Commission continue its participation by signing the renewed agreement.

Chair Henkels invited questions from the Commissioners and the audience. No comments or concerns were raised.

On motion by Comm. Sevier to enter into the CISMA MOU, seconded by Comm. Porter, via roll call the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Adjourn Meeting

On motion by Comm. Porter to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 PM, seconded by Comm. Sevier, via roll call the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.