

***NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION*****Meeting Agenda****Online meeting****5:00 PM, January 13th, 2026****Approved 2-12-2026****Welcome, Call to Order and Citizen Speak**

Vice Chair Steve Park called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM on Tuesday, January 13, 2026. He noted that the meeting was not being broadcast live but would be available on demand at wellesleymedia.org in the future. Vice Chair Park introduced the commissioners present: Bea Bezmalinovic, Michael D'Ortenzio, Tom Hammond, and NRC Director Brandon Schmitt. He noted that Chair Jay McHale was away and would not be joining the meeting.

Vice Chair Park asked if there were any citizens present who wished to speak. There were none.

Annual Town Meeting Updates: Land Conservation/stabilization funds

Michael D'Ortenzio led the discussion on the land conservation plan that he had drafted and circulated to the board members. He noted that it was a comprehensive 40-page document and sought feedback from commissioners before sending it to Pete for final formatting.

Commissioners expressed general support for the plan's structure and organization. Director Schmitt suggested adding language about strategically important properties that may be small in size but have conservation value, such as single-family lots adjacent to conservation areas, which might not be well captured by the current weighting system that prioritizes by size.

Commissioner Bezmalinovic recommended strengthening the executive summary, suggesting that a robust 2-page summary would be essential since many people would only read the summary rather than the full report. She emphasized that the summary should highlight the table of priority parcels, as this represented the core of the plan.

The commission discussed how to present the prioritized parcel list in the final document. Some concerns were raised about whether publicly listing specific parcels might affect property values or create challenges with property owners. Director Schmitt suggested that the list demonstrates the commission's methodology and priorities without representing an active effort to acquire specific properties. The consensus was that the value of transparency outweighed potential concerns, though the presentation might be adjusted to include examples rather than a comprehensive ranking.

The discussion then shifted to the warrant article for Town Meeting. Commissioner Bezmalinovic suggested a two-step approach for Town Meeting:

- First, have Town Meeting affirm the need for a conservation plan with targets for acquisition
- Second, address the funding mechanism (stabilization fund)

This approach would make it more likely to gain support for the financing aspect by first establishing broader agreement on the need for the plan itself. Mr. D'Ortenzio agreed to draft motion language that would incorporate this two-step

process while removing the specific language about dedicating percentages of fees to the fund, which might be too detailed at this stage.

The commission also discussed potential meetings with the Select Board, Advisory Committee, and possibly the Community Preservation Committee to discuss the plan and financing before Town Meeting. They noted that the timeline was tight with their next meeting on January 29th, possible Advisory Committee discussion on February 4th, and potential Select Board meeting around February 3rd.

Regarding funding, Mr. D'Ortenzio mentioned their previous \$50,000 capital request to make an initial deposit into the stabilization fund. The commission discussed whether this was the right approach or if the money might be better placed in the conservation fund for planning and due diligence. They agreed to discuss this further with the Select Board at their upcoming meeting.

Climate Emergency

Before adjourning, the chair read the climate emergency declaration that the NRC had resolved to include at every meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Bezmalinovic moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner D'Ortenzio.

The motion passed by roll call vote: Bezmalinovic - yes, D'Ortenzio - yes, Park – yes, Hammond - yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 PM.

Materials Referenced

Warrant Article Language

Draft Land Conservation Plan