

Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2026

Remote meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Chair Carolyn Nielsen, Henry (Bob) Hidell, Robert Mosher, Douglas Troyer and Philip Edmundson

Members Absent: Nina Villanova and Thomas Roby

Staff Present: Shannon Palmer, Conservation Officer

Chair Nielsen opened the meeting at 6:30PM and read the following statement:

“This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 and all other applicable laws temporarily amending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording.”

Workshop: Town of Hingham/MassDOT Route 3A Improvement Project, JR Frey, P.E. and Eric Carlson, P.E.

Meeting Exhibits: Route 3A Improvement Project Power Point Presentation by J.R. Frey dated March 2, 2026

JR Frey, PE, Town Engineer, introduced the discussion and the Route 3A Task Force and design team from GM2.

Mr. Frey presented the power point presentation to the Commission which described the project history, proposed improvements to Route 3A (including safety improvements, road way reconfiguration, and the construction of a share use path), and the Article 97 land issues. The primary purpose of the workshop was update the Commission on the project status and inform the members about the required legislative process to address the Article 97 land takings that are necessary to complete the roadwork and SUP. In accordance with EOE requirements, the change in use of the Article 97 parcels will need to be mitigated. A vote at Town Meeting is also required to proceed with the project and land disposition. The Commission will be asked to vote at a future meeting in March. A Notice of Intent is expected to be filed in the spring for the proposed work.

Following the presentation, the Commission members had the following comments and questions:

Commissioner Hidell questioned the existing Right-of-Way (ROW).

Mr. Carlson responded the width varied.

Commissioner Hidell questioned if the Commission would be granting easements or transfer of ownership of the land. He also inquired about the anticipated liability the Commission may have if an easement granted.

Mr. Frey responded that would be determined by the MassDOT ROW team. He added recent discussions have been centered on a permanent easement. He stated the Commission would have no liability explaining the town would be responsible for maintenance of the shared use path and retaining walls.

Commissioner Hidell questioned if that would be noted in the easement.

Mr. Frey stated he would confirm.

Commissioner Hidell questioned the drainage along the shared use path and whether it would discharge into conservation land.

Mr. Frey responded there would be no concentrated drainage or drainage structure along associated with the path.

Chair Nielsen expressed gratitude for the proposed repairs and improvements.

Commissioner Edmundson questioned how the Commission acquired the specific parcels involved and if there were any restrictions.

Ms. Palmer responded she would need to research the acquisition history.

Mr. Frey responded that if there were any restrictions they would be shared with the Commission. He noted that one parcel off Martins Lane is known to have a deed restriction but review by the town attorney would be needed.

Commissioner Edmundson requested history of the parcels for the next meeting.

Commissioner Troyer asked if the petition had been drafted.

Mr. Frey responded that it had not yet been finalized and that they were working on the language

Ms. Palmer explained that this discussion may seem premature as the Commission has not reviewed an application, however this is the process necessary to for project to proceed. She stated that the Commission will need to consider the land swamp and potential Article 97 mitigation for any land that may be relinquished. She asked Chair Nielsen if the Commission has sufficient information to be ready to vote at the next meeting.

Chair Nielsen questioned whether any options have been identified for consideration.

Ms. Palmer responded they are actively reviewing potential options for mitigation.

Mr. Frey added considerations could include private property, exchanges of town property or payment in lieu to find land at a future date.

Commissioner Hidell commented that he was on board with the proposal.

Chair Nielsen agreed, noting any improvements to public safety was an asset to the community.

Chair Nielsen reiterated that this was an important project and expressed gratitude for coming before the Commission during the process.

Adjourn

Motion: Chair Nielsen moved to adjourn the meeting.
The motion passed by roll call vote 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47PM

Approved on: March 9, 2026