

September 8, 2026

Shannon Palmer
Conservation Officer
Hingham Town Hall
210 Central Street
Hingham, MA 02043

**RE: Response to Review Comments
Proposed Single Family Home Raze and Rebuild
55 Whiton Avenue
Hingham, MA 02043**

Dear Shannon:

The purpose of this correspondence is to respond to outstanding review comments related to the project at 55 Whiton Avenue.

The following responses in **bold** follow each comment for your review and consideration:

Comments by Shannon Palmer, Conservation Agent, dated 8/20/26

1. The narrative includes a performance standards analysis documenting compliance with the Hingham Wetland Regulations including work in a Coastal Bank. It is important to note that the proposed vegetation management plan will improve the resource area values by removing invasive vegetation and restoring a native plant community which will improve bank stability, reduce the potential for erosion, filter pollutants and improve water quality, increase species diversity, and enhance wildlife habitat. Please also document compliance with the Wetlands Protection Act Regulations, 310 CMR 10.30 for work on Coastal Bank and 10.32(3)-(6) for work within 100 feet of a Salt Marsh (usually requested by DEP).

Response: The narrative now addresses these performance standards from the Wetland Protection Act.

2. Please explain how the proposed alteration size of Coastal Bank (150 LF) was calculated.

Response: The alteration size of the Coastal Bank listed in WPA Form 3 is the approximate width of the vegetation management parallel to the top of Coastal Bank. WPA Form 3 requires the alteration of a Coastal Bank to be listed in linear feet. The actual square footage of alteration on the Coastal Bank for vegetation management is approximately 3,230 SF. Note that this does not include the removal of the existing stairway or dock construction, which was approved under a separate Order of Conditions.



HANOVER OFFICE:
427 Columbia Road
Hanover, MA 02339
781-826-9200

PLYMOUTH OFFICE:
362 Court Street
Plymouth, MA 02360
508-746-6060

MARINE DIVISION:
26 Union Street
Plymouth, MA 02360
508-746-6060

FALMOUTH OFFICE:
448 N. Falmouth Highway Unit A
North Falmouth, MA 02556
508-563-2183

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3. There are numerous native trees and shrubs on the site including staghorn sumac, river birch, and sugar maple including within the mitigation area that are not sufficiently addressed in the narrative or VMP. Staff recommends the plan clearly identify the existing native species to be preserved, protection measures during construction, etc.

Response: This is now addressed in the Vegetation Management Plan. All of these native species within the vegetation management area shall be retained. They will be identified and marked with high-visibility flagging / labeling to designate them for preservation.

4. Please submit a full size Vegetation Management Plan.

Response: A full size Vegetation Management Plan is included in this response.

5. Staff recommends the VMP differentiate the Buffer Zone and Coastal Bank management areas on the plan. Also, separate the suggested “Native Species List” as the plant species, sizes, and spacing may be different for the two areas. In accordance with CZM’s Coastal Landscaping guidance, restoration efforts on the Bank would benefit from a greater density of grasses (plugs preferred), perennials, and shrubs to quickly stabilize the bank after removal of invasives and prevent recolonization. Trees should be limited to the Buffer Zone.

Response: The Vegetation Management Plan has been revised to include all these items. The buffer zone and coastal bank management areas are now differentiated, and proposed trees will be limited to the Buffer Zone.

6. If erosion control (biodegradable blanket) or sediment control will be needed for vegetation management activities, please include in the VMP and show on plan.

Response: An erosion control biodegradable blanket will be used if necessary to stabilize the exposed soils until revegetation is completed. This is included within the VMP and a detail has been provided on the Site Plan.

7. The birch trees on the eastern property line appear to be impacted by proposed grading, however, are not shown as trees to be removed. Staff recommends grading be adjusted to avoid impacts to the root systems and tree protection measures be shown on the plan as applicable.

Response: The grading over these birch trees shall be minimal, with a maximum filling of approximately 0.5 feet around each stump. Adjustments to the grading have been made to reduce the amount of fill required around the stumps even further. In coordination with our landscape architect, we believe that these trees will not be negatively affected by this grading. These trees are labeled as “to remain if possible” on the Landscape Plan and tree protection fencing is now shown on the Site Plan with a detail . If during construction it becomes necessary to remove any of these trees, appropriate mitigation measures will be provided.

8. The landscape plan includes numerous native trees and shrubs however it would be helpful to have a Tree Removal and Replacement table on the site plan (in accordance with the Commission's Tree Removal Policy) to clearly identify the species and number of trees being removed and replacement tree species and size.

Response: A tree mitigation table is now included on the Site Plan. All tree species are shown on the Landscape Plan by Tricia Van Buskirk.

9. Please provide a Buffer Zone Mitigation table identifying the alterations within the Buffer Zone, ratios, and proposed mitigation in accordance with the Buffer Zone Mitigation Policy.

Response: A buffer zone mitigation table including ratios is now included on the site plan.

10. The project will result in an increase of 2,146 SF of new impervious in the 100 foot buffer and proposes a 1,425 SF planting area in the Buffer Zone (less than 1:1 ratio) and significant replanting of the Coastal Bank. The Commission will need to determine if the proposed VMP for the Coastal Bank sufficiently mitigates new impacts within the Buffer Zone.

Response: 1:1 Mitigation is now provided within the buffer zones in addition to the replanting of the Coastal Bank.

11. The plan details are somewhat difficult to read due to shading. Please remove crosshatching (keep outline) from the planting area so the contours, etc. are visible. Also, the shading for the 'areas to be infiltrated' is too similar to the new structure outline shading.

Response: The transparency of the planting hatch has been adjusted so that existing grading and proposed contours are visible. The hatch pattern for the area to be infiltrated has been changed.

12. Please label the resource area "Top of Coastal Bank".

Response: The resource area label has been revised.

13. Please provide a detail for splash pad located in close proximity to the Coastal Bank. Staff recommends the landscape plan account for the pad and potential for erosion.

Response: A detail is now provided on the Site Plan and Panicum virgatum (switchgrass) has been added around the outlet to prevent any potential for erosion.

14. Staff acknowledges the efforts to increase the setback of the structure to the resource areas and minimize impervious in the 50 foot Buffer Zone however it appears there may be opportunities to shift the structure and/or patio to further reduce alterations in the 50'. Also, there is a significant increase in impervious area in the 50-100 foot Buffer Zone to Coastal Bank (and a total of 5,832 SF). Staff recommends alternative layouts to design be considered for the house and driveway to reduce impervious in the Buffer Zone, a protected resource area under the Wetland Bylaw.

Response: The proposed dwelling is located as far away from the Coastal Bank as possible given the restraints of the site. The placement of the dwelling takes advantage of an existing non-conforming setback which allows for the dwelling to be located closer to the front property line than typically allowed. Alternative layouts for the site were considered, but the layout proposed with this application has been deemed the most effective in pulling the structure as far away from the Coastal Bank as possible while also not increasing impervious area in the 50-foot buffer to the Bank.

The paved driveway placement off Paige Street is necessary due to the very steep grades coming off Whiton Avenue. The existing paved driveway is very steep and located entirely within the 50-foot buffer with no stormwater controls. The proposed paved driveway will be within the 50-100-foot buffer only with a much more manageable grade for access and will be equipped with stormwater controls to mitigate runoff.

These improvements combined with additional stormwater management on the site and the extensive Vegetation Management / Mitigation Plan is intended to substantially improve the site and its Resource Areas.

15. An exhibit showing an overlay of the existing and proposed structure would be helpful for visualization purposes and to fully assess the proposed alterations in the Buffer Zone.

Response: An exhibit showing an overlay of the existing and proposed structures is included in this response.

We appreciate the thoughtful review and comments and look forward to presenting the revised materials to you and the Board at our hearing scheduled on 9/15/26.

Merrill Engineers and Land Surveyors



Brendan Sullivan
Project Manager
Enclosures
cc: C. McDowell
File 25-117.1