

**Town of Thomaston
Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes-July 22, 2026**

Present: Tony Samela, Chair; Joe Fainer, Vice Chair; Richard Chandon, Secretary; Tanya Galpin, Tom Williams, Alternate

Absent: Nathan Vieira

Also Present: Spencer Luthy, Head of Facilities, Thomaston Public Schools; Bert Galpin, WPCA Supervisor, Rich Sileo, Thomaston First Selectman (7:05pm); Sara Walker, Recording Secretary

Call to Order: 7:00PM

Public Hearing: None

Minutes:

June 24, 2026, Regular Meeting

MOTION made by T. Galpin, Seconded by T. Williams to APPROVE the Minutes of June 24, 2026, Regular Meeting as presented. Motion passed with 1 abstained (R. Chandon).

Old Business:

- A. 380 Old Northfield Road-T. Adili sent commissioners the Amendments to Proposals sent by Tighe and Bond which were reviewed. Discussion ensued. No action is necessary.

New Business:

- a. Wetlands Application WP26-01 for the next phase of the Nature Center at 185 Branch Road (Thomaston High School).
Applicant: Spencer Luthy, Head of Facilities, Thomaston Public Schools
Spencer Luthy states during 2020 when schools were shut down, he and his crew started work on revitalizing the Nature Center located at the high school. He wishes to continue working on the site; clearing the area directly behind the rear parking lot. (Map provided and entered into the file). He states they would remove most of the trees and brush; leaving 2 oak, 2 sugar maple an Elm and anything over 20 to 30 feet as shade trees. Focusing on invasives and overgrowth; the area would be grubbed and stumps ground. Once that is cleared, the land would be graded, backfilled with topsoil and seeded. He reports there is about a 3-foot drop to the water at the edge. Vice-Chair Fainer asked if any native growth was noted. Mr. Luthy said none he could readily identify. Discussion ensued. Bert Galpin asked if his work in that same area could be added to this application. There is a pipe that drains into the pond at the back of the High School, it is $\frac{3}{4}$ full of silt which must be

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removed otherwise a significant rain event could cause it to surcharge into the rear parking lot of the school. The silt would be vacuumed out with the Vac Truck for minimum disturbance to the area. It was also suggested the cleaning of this pipe be added to the General Maintenance Permit for the WPCA.

MOTION made by J. Fainer Seconded by R. Chandon to ACCEPT Wetlands Application WP-26-01 for the next phase of the Nature Center Project at 185 Branch Road (Thomaston High School) and to allow the WPCA to clean out the accumulated silt from the runoff drainpipe that discharges into the pond at the back of the High School. Motion passed unanimously.

A site walk is scheduled for Saturday, July 25 at 8 am at the Nature Center at Thomaston High School.

A Public Hearing is Scheduled for the next Regular Meeting, Wednesday August 25, 2026. Permit Fee to be set at the next Regular Meeting.

- b. Discussion about the process of General Permits for Public Works and WPCA. Chair Samela states he met with the First Selectman and the Land Use Administrator regarding the spraying of herbicide and other work. He then opened the floor to First Selectman Sileo, who states he does not have anything to present because no one has been able to produce or locate a General Permit. He asks for guidance in finding it or helping to create a new General Permit. Discussion ensued.

It was clarified that the General Permit is for routine maintenance in wetlands such as removing brush from a culvert, mowing, clean up the area around a sewer drain or manhole. Spraying in or near a wetland, digging and adding materials is not a part of the General Permit.

First Selectman Sileo would like to use the General Permit as a teaching tool; something available to show to and teach staff. Chair Samela said he will reach out to T. Adili to help draft a new General Permit.

First Selectman Sileo asks the Commission if they would like an update on the Old Northfield Road project. He then explained the project to its beginning in brief for a newer member of the Commission; brought them to the present design progress as well as the mitigation required by DEEP as a penalty. It was clarified to First Selectman Sileo that if DEEP is signing off on the mitigation project, it does not need to come back before IWWC. First Selectman Sileo added that he is considering adding the installation of a small box culvert that needs to be installed on Old Northfield Road which is not on the current plan

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but abuts the current project area and is within the same body of water. He is hoping to have it added to the project so as not to disturb the area again. Discussion ensued.

- c. Conservation: Dog Park Preliminary Discussion-First Selectman Sileo reports there have been a few people coming to ask about Dog Parks in Thomaston. The town has determined there are three possible locations; and has tasked Amy Mckearney with gathering some resources and researching feasibility of the three sites. One being Nystrom's, the second is at Highwood Farms and the third is Electric Avenue. He points out this is very early in exploration and so he is not prepared to seat a committee yet.

Communications and Bills:

- a. Grants: Rec Trails: the Greenway Project is \$200,000 short because it was initiated a while back, and costs have gone up; but also, some of the federal funding was pulled back. The state came up with some dollars; the town applied for the grant to make up the difference. This is for the section of Greenway from Maple Street to Tony's Coffee Shop. No Award yet.
- b. ROPCD-NVCOG is working on drafting the plan.

Reports of Officers, Staff, and Committees:

- A. IWWC Report: Land Use Administrators report was reviewed by Commissioners.
- B. Review of Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Fee Income and Legal Budget-The budget closed out the fiscal year at 93%. The Commission asks T. Adili, Land Use Administrator, to send a message to the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance.

Adjournment:

MOTION made by T. Galpin, Seconded by R. Chandon to ADJOURN the meeting at 7:55PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sara Walker
Recording Secretary