

Town of Winchester

Board of Selectmen - Regular Meeting

Monday August 3, 2026

Winchester Town Hall - Hicks Room

Noticed in Town Clerks Office and on Towns Website

Item 1 **Call to Order**

Meeting called to order by Mayor Todd Arcelaschi at 7pm

Attending Members	Todd Arcelaschi (Mayor)	Paul Marino (Selectman)
	William Hester (Selectman)	Kevin Bishop (Selectman)
	Troy Lamere (Selectman)	Cheryl Heffernan McGlynn (Selectwoman)

Absent Excused William Pozzo

Staff Members Paul Harrington (Town Manager)
Glenn Albanesius (Town Clerk)
Jim Rollins (Public Works Director)

Item 2 **Pledge of Allegiance** The Pledge was recited

Item 3 **Agenda Review** - No changes requested

Item 4 **Approval of Minutes**

* Minutes of Regular Meeting on July 20, 2026

Motion - Sel. Lamere / Sel. Hester

Vote to approve - Unanimous (6 - 0)

Item 5 **Citizens Comments** - The following people addressed the Board

* Candy Perez * Tess Herman

* Steve Molinelli * Frank Oliveri

Item 6 **Town Manager's Report** - Town Manager Paul Harrington reported on the following topics.

* The DEEP "State of the Bears" presentation was taped so it can be watched on YouTube.

* A recent meeting between Town Staff and Winchester Center residents resulted in a concerted effort to curtail illegal dumping and firearm use along Old Waterbury Turnpike and Danbury Quarter Road. Access control, new signage and increased PD patrols should help mitigate the the increase of prohibited activities.

* The downtown sidewalk project has hit yet another snag. The State of CT has ruled that the Town must rebid the work since the original bid winner failed to commence construction. Since Grant monies were part of the project's funding the Town's request to award the original bid to another vendor was denied.

* Our Speed Camera's are soon to be installed. An encroachment permit is the last part of the siting puzzle. The managing vendor - Sitestream anticipates installation to begin by mid August.

* Winsted will NOT be installing any "FLOCK" camera's.

* Winchester was awarded \$612,500.00 towards the replacement of the Newfield Road bridge over Fox Brook. The balance of the project will be funded by 2022 Road Bond money.

* Twenty nine properties will be put up for sale as part of the recently approved Tax Auction.

* Our Police Department will be receiving funds from the 2024 US Department of Justice Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant. This money will pay for 7 replacement ballistic vests.

- * Winchester has chosen Vision Government Solutions to produce the Town's 2027 Re-valuation. Staff is also working on a new GIS Assessment Mapping tool that will help improve the identification of trends and potential valuation outliers.
- * The Bridge Street intersection will begin its transformation in the coming weeks. The design will maintain current traffic direction but help improve pedestrian access.
- * Downtown chip sealing will finally begin this week as the weather had impacted the start date. A revised work schedule will be announced that will include future parking restrictions.
- * Early voting for the Democrat Primary has begun here at Town Hall. The actual Primary vote will be held on August 11th. Voting hours are posted on the Town's website.

Item 7 **Correspondence** - Town Manager Harrington offered 2 letters addressed to the Board

- * Letter from Inland Wetlands Commission Chairman - Steve Molinelli
 - * Letter from Inland Wetlands Commission Members
- Mayor Arcelaschi asked that both letters be entered into the record and reflected in the Meeting Minutes

Item 8 **Boards and Commissions** -

- * A Letter of Resignation was received and accepted from the following volunteer.
Kevin Burgio from the Conservation Commission
- Kevin's time and service to the Town is acknowledged with gratitude.

Item 9 **Unfinished Business** - None

Item 10 **New Business** -

A) Holabird Avenue Project Presentation

- * Public Works Director Jim Rollins gave a brief update of the pending Holabird Avenue Drainage and Repaving Project. In summary he explained that estimated costs are at \$3,274,800 but will be finalized at the bid which is expected to go out in December of this year. LOCIP grant funds will be used with the balance coming from the Town's 2022 Road and Infrastructure Bond. Work is planned to commence in the Spring of 2027.

B) Renaming of Streets

- * Town Manager Harrington reported that he had reached out to all the major travel related Department Heads (Fire / Police / Public Works / EMS) for their input regarding a proposed street renaming initiative to honor the Town's Veterans. Feedback confirmed that renaming would be time consuming and potentially expensive. This reality prompted discussion about shifting the focus to renaming a Town Park or Building. This suggestion seemed to foster unity amongst Board members as a more realistic path forward.

C) 26-42 Bid Waiver for Police Consulting Services

Motion Statement - "I move that the Board of Selectmen waive the Town's standard bidding and procurement requirements in the best interest of the Town and authorize the Town Manager to execute an agreement with Daigle Law Group, LLC." Town Manager Harrington confirmed that project spending would not exceed the budgeted \$55,000.00

Motion - Sel. Hester/ Sel. Lamere

Vote to approve - Unanimous (6 - 0)

D) Dock Ordinance Chapter 380 Proposed Changes

Selectman Marino presented a detailed proposal that would in essence move "Dock and Mooring" issues away from the Inlands Wetlands Commission over to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review and possible judication. The presentation included historical events, full disclosure by Sel. Marino and a suggested Ordinance change that he felt would provide special "Dock and Mooring" circumstances relief.

Initial interrogation gave way to open discussion and ended with requests that the Town Manager seek a professional ruling as to whether the proposed change would meet legal standards.

E) 26-05 Resolution to Accept Newfield Road Local Bridge Funding

Town Manager Harrington explained that the Connecticut Department of Transportation has awarded Winchester with a State Local Bridge Program Grant for \$612,500.00.

Sel. Bishop read the Resolution text that authorized the Town Manager "to execute any and all agreements, contracts, and documents necessary to accept and administer the CTDOT State Local Bridge Program grant for the replacement of Bridge No. 162008 (Newfield Road over Fox Brook)"

Motion - Sel. Bishop / Second - Sel. Hester

Vote to approve - Unanimous (6 - 0)

Item 11 Citizens Comments - The followed people addressed the Board

* Frank Oliveri

*Steve Molinelli

* Willie Pratt

* Candy Perez

* Mary Ann Marino

* Tyler Asbury

Item 12 Executive Session

A) Discussion regarding Sale of Town Owned Properties, 132 Florence Street and 19 Hill Street

Motion to enter Executive Session taking the Town Manager Paul Harrington at 8:59pm

Motion - Mayor Arcelaschi / Second - Sel. Hester

Vote to approve - Unanimous (6 - 0)

The Board returned from Executive Session at 9:54pm

Item13 New Business

A) Possible Action regarding Sale of Town Owned Properties, 132 Florence Street and 19 Hill Street

An initial motion was offered to have the Town Manager enter into a contract for 132 Florence

Street with a meeting at 6:30pm on September 8th. This motion was amended to set a Town

Meeting for the sale of 132 Florence Street to be held on September 8th at 6:30 in the Hicks Room.

Motion - Sel. Hester / Second - Sel. Marino

Vote to approve - Unanimous (6 - 0)

Item14 Selectmen's Comments -

Mayor Arcelaschi -

Expressed deep concern with the recently passed Public Act 26-42 prohibiting Police prescence within 250 feet of poll locations.

Item 15 Adjournment

To adjourn the meeting at 9:58pm

Motion - Sel. Lamere / Second - Sel. Heffernan McGlynn

Vote to approve - Unanimous (6 - 0)

ATTEST:

Glenn Albanesius, Town Clerk

These Minutes are subject to formal approval at the next scheduled meeting. Any amendments, corrections or revisions will be noted in the next Meeting Minutes.

31 July 2026

Town of Winchester Board of Selectmen
338 Main Street
Winsted, CT 06098

RE: Response to Request for Waiver Language in Section 162 Dock and Mooring Ordinance

Dear Members of the Board of Selectmen:

In October and November, 2025, the seated Commissioners of the Town of Winchester Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWWC) have thoroughly reviewed and discussed the Board of Selectmen's request to add waiver language to the Dock and Mooring Ordinance (Chapter 380). This language is currently redlined in orange in a related attachment to the BoS Agenda for the regular meeting on August 3, 2026. After careful consideration, we are writing this letter to respectfully but firmly oppose the suggested changes and to strongly discourage the Board from moving forward with this adjustment.

Our concerns regarding the proposed waiver language are significant and multifaceted:

Existing Enforcement Authority and Regulatory Inconsistency

An overarching concern with the proposed waiver language is that it would undermine the Commission's existing enforcement authority and create regulatory inconsistency. Under current regulations, the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWWC) possesses the authority to require any applicant to bring their waterfront into full compliance with existing standards if that waterfront is found to be out of compliance at the time their application is reviewed.

This existing enforcement mechanism serves several critical purposes: it ensures consistent application of standards, provides a clear pathway for correcting non-compliant structures over time, and maintains the integrity of the regulatory framework. When property owners come before the Commission seeking permits for new work or modifications, the Commission can condition approval on bringing any existing non-compliant elements into conformance.

The introduction of waiver language would fundamentally undermine this enforcement tool. Rather than correcting non-compliance through the application process, property owners would instead be incentivized to seek waivers to legitimize structures that should otherwise be brought into compliance. This creates a perverse incentive structure where non-compliance becomes an asset rather than a liability—property owners with non-compliant docks could argue for waivers based on existing conditions that they should in fact, be required to correct.

Lack of Clear Standards and Expertise

The proposed waiver language lacks critical definition and structure. Specifically, there is no clear definition of what constitutes a "potential safety issue" or "hardship" in the context of waterfront structures. Who would be responsible for making such determinations—an outsourced certified Water Safety Officer, the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, or another entity? Unlike the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), which requires applicants to provide professional engineering reports and comprehensive analyses to substantiate hardship claims, no comparable evidentiary standard has been established for dock and mooring waivers.

Furthermore, the Commission is composed of dedicated volunteers who, while committed to protecting our inland wetlands and watercourses, are not trained water safety professionals. Requiring the Commission to make technical determinations regarding navigational safety and watercraft operations without proper expertise or established criteria could expose both the Commission and the Town to significant liability. Should an accident occur as a result of a waiver decision made without adequate training or expert guidance, the Town could face serious legal consequences.

Jurisdictional and Ownership Considerations

The comparison to ZBA waivers is fundamentally flawed. Firstly, the ZBA is a wholly separate board with discrete and separate guidelines from the Planning and Zoning Commission. There is no such separate body to manage waiver requests that is discrete and separate from IWWC.

Additionally, when the ZBA grants variances, the decisions concern land that property owners actually own. In the case of dock and mooring regulations, however, IWWC is dealing with state-owned property. The State of Connecticut owns the water and the lake bed, which creates a fundamentally different legal and regulatory context. Our authority to grant waivers in this area is not analogous to land-use variances.

Historical Context and Current Solutions

It is important to recognize that many of the docks that currently extend beyond compliant distances were installed before the Town controlled the water level of Highland Lake. During the era when the pin factory controlled water levels, there were extended periods when the lake bed was exposed from residents' waterfronts, necessitating longer docks. This historical context does not, however, justify perpetuating non-compliant structures or creating a waiver system based on outdated conditions.

Moreover, the Commission has recently adopted regulations allowing property owners to break up rocks in a controlled manner, which directly addresses navigational concerns around submerged hazards. This regulated approach has effectively resolved one of the primary

arguments for extended docks without creating the complications that a waiver system would introduce.

Safety Paradox and Congestion Concerns

The introduction of waivers could create the very safety issues they purport to solve. Allowing waivers for longer docks and additional boat lifts—particularly in small coves where space is already limited—would likely increase congestion and navigational hazards rather than reduce them. More structures in confined waters creates more potential for accidents, not fewer.

More/longer docks and boat lifts in tight coves also reduce maneuvering room and increase wake interference, elevating both safety and property damage risks. This concern becomes even more acute when considering emerging issues related to modern watercraft usage.

Wakesurf Boats and Wave Dissipation Concerns

We must also consider the growing body of evidence regarding the impact of wakesurf boats on lake infrastructure and shorelines. There is a recent statewide study that has been provided to all CT state residents examining the impact of wakesurf boats on Connecticut lakes, and the preliminary findings are relevant to our discussion of dock and mooring waivers.

Unlike traditional runabout wakes, the large, ballast-enhanced waves generated by wakesurf boats carry significantly higher energy and dissipate much more slowly. Research indicates that effective dissipation of these high-energy waves typically requires distances of 1,000-1,200 feet and water depths of 20 feet or more. In narrow coves or shallow areas—precisely the locations where waiver requests are most likely to arise—these waves reflect off shorelines and structures rather than dissipating naturally. This reflection compounds and prolongs wave energy, creating dangerous conditions.

The increased wave height and prolonged wave periods generated by wakesurf boats drive substantially higher forces on docks, boat lifts, retaining walls, and natural shorelines. In confined coves, reflected and refracted wakes create cross-chop and surge conditions that twist docks, stress hardware, and accelerate structural deterioration. Prolonged, repetitive wake loads loosen footings and increase risk to vulnerable shoreline protection systems, including flat stone-and-mortar walls and natural banks.

Allowing additional or extended docks and boat lifts through a waiver process would compound these problems. More structures mean more surfaces for wave reflection, more obstacles in already congested spaces, and increased vulnerability to the cumulative effects of high-energy wakes. This directly contradicts sound waterfront management principles and creates foreseeable risks to both public safety and private property.

Equity and Precedent Concerns

We must also consider the precedent that granting waivers would establish. If we were to approve a waiver for one property owner whose neighbor has a non-compliant dock, we would be obligated to grant similar waivers to all property owners in comparable situations. This could result in a cascade of waiver requests that would fundamentally undermine the intent of the ordinance and create an inequitable patchwork of regulations across the lake. Individual circumstances or neighborly disputes cannot serve as the basis for sound policy that will affect all Highland Lake residents for years to come. Currently, relief is available; if a neighbor's non-compliant waterfront is creating a perceived hazard to an adjoining property owners' waterfront or use thereof, the affected neighbor may bring the non-compliant waterfront use to the attention of the Town's land use staff whose enforcement officer has the authority to require the non-compliant property owner to come before IWWC with an application for their waterfront structures.

Recommended Path Forward

Rather than hastily adopting waiver language that could have significant unintended consequences, we respectfully recommend the following approach:

1. Conduct a Comprehensive Lake Study: We understand there is funding in the town budget for a study focused on the effects of deep drawdown on Highland Lake. We strongly recommend that this study be expanded to include a comprehensive survey of the entire lake shorefront, water depth mapping, cove configurations, and wave dissipation characteristics. Such data would allow qualified safety and environmental experts to assess current conditions, identify genuine safety concerns, evaluate the impacts of modern watercraft usage patterns, and make evidence-based recommendations regarding dock and mooring regulations.
2. Study the findings of the Statewide Wakesurf Study: Given the statewide study of wakesurf boat impacts on Connecticut lakes and ongoing discussion thereof, we recommend postponing any waiver provisions until those findings can be meaningfully considered and incorporated into a decision-making process.

We would appreciate the opportunity to review and discuss a draft RFP for the Highland Lake study with the Board of Selectmen. A comprehensive study addressing both deep drawdown effects and wave dissipation issues would provide the Commission—and the Town as a whole—with a meaningful and necessary resource for making informed decisions not only about waiver requests, but also about the lake's ecological health and the cumulative impacts of shorefront development and watercraft usage.

Conclusion

The Commission's existing authority to require compliance during the application process represents a measured, fair approach to gradually bringing the lake's waterfront structures into

conformity with current standards. Introducing waivers would not only abandon this progress but would likely freeze non-compliance in place indefinitely, preventing the very improvements to safety and environmental protection that our regulations are designed to achieve.

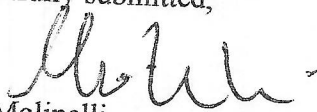
The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission shares the Board of Selectmen's commitment to ensuring the safety and enjoyment of Highland Lake for all residents. However, we believe that the proposed waiver language, as currently conceived, is premature and could expose the Town to legal liability while potentially compromising both safety and environmental protection.

The complexity of issues surrounding dock and mooring waivers—including jurisdictional questions, volunteer expertise limitations, wave dissipation science, and cumulative impacts—demands a more deliberate, data-driven approach. We respectfully but firmly urge the Board to defer action on this matter and instead pursue the thoughtful study and consultation process outlined above.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with the Board to discuss these concerns and our recommended path forward in greater detail.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. We look forward to continuing our collaborative work in service to the Town of Winchester.

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Molinelli

Chair, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

Town of Winchester

On behalf of the unanimous opinion of the Commission Members:

Gary Paganelli

Russell Davenport

Jamie Coligan

Mary Ann Marino

Kevin Burgio

Matt Closson

cc: Paul Harrinton, Kevin Nelligan, Christopher Ciuci

July 31, 2026

Board of Selectmen

Town of Winchester
338 Main Street
Winchester, CT 06098

Re: Proposed Changes to Chapter 380 (Agenda Item 10(D), August 3, 2026 Meeting)

Dear Members of the Board,

I write to you in my capacity as Chair of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission to formally oppose the changes proposed to Chapter 380 currently before you, as reflected in the redline document proposal dated July 22, 2026. This letter refers specifically to the proposed changes in red ink. I ask that this letter be entered into the record of your August 3rd meeting.

This letter addresses the Board's proposed changes specifically — the revisions shown in red underline that would transfer permitting authority over docks, swim floats, boat lifts, and related structures from this Commission to the Planning & Zoning Commission. It is separate from, and in addition to, the comments I have already submitted regarding this Commission's own proposed revisions to Chapter 380, shown in orange underline, which remain under consideration on their own terms.

I want to be direct about why I oppose this specific change, and I ask the Board to consider each of the following points on its merits.

First, this proposal does not achieve what I understand its stated purpose to be. Chapter 390 of the Town Code already requires this Commission to issue a permit for any "regulated activity" affecting a wetland or watercourse, and dock construction is expressly included in that definition — Section 390-4.A(3) exempts boat anchorage and mooring from that requirement but pointedly does not exempt dock construction. That means a dock applicant will need this Commission's permit under Chapter 390 regardless of what the Board does to Chapter 380. Per CT general statute 22a-42(a)(c), this proposal cannot remove that requirement; it can only add a second permitting process on top of it, through the Planning & Zoning Commission. This is because the lakebeds and water in CT's lakes belong to the state of Connecticut and not to the municipalities in which they exist. The result of this additional oversight is a fragmentation of a single, currently unified review, into two processes before two different boards, for the same physical structure.

Second, the Town's own regulations already anticipate that stacking these two approvals creates delay and inefficiencies, for applicants. Section 390-12.J(3) states that where a wetlands permit also requires a zoning approval, no work may begin under the wetlands permit until the zoning approval is obtained. This proposal would make that sequencing the default for every dock, swim float, and boat lift in Town, rather than the occasional circumstance it is today - a circumstance the Town's own fee schedule at Section 390-19.E(1)(b)(g) treats as its own line item precisely because it is meant to be uncommon.

Third, the coordination this proposal appears intended to produce already exists without transferring any authority. Section 390-10.A(3)(b) already allows this Commission to consider reports from the Planning and Zoning Commission in its decisions, and Section 390-11.E already requires this Commission to file its decisions with that Commission within fifteen days when a zoning approval is also required. If better coordination between the two bodies is the goal, it does not require dismantling this Commission's jurisdiction over dock structures to get there.

Fourth, the proposal replaces a waiver process built specifically for docks and watercourses with a full Special Permit application under the Planning & Zoning Commission's general zoning criteria — requiring a written hardship statement, and compliance with standards that were written for buildings and traffic, not for shoreline structures. These standards include, side and front yard setbacks, specific distances between wells and sewers, building heights and maximum impervious coverage. None of these standards apply to shoreline structures.

I raise a fifth point that is not technical, and I want to state it plainly, because I believe it deserves to be heard directly rather than folded into the regulatory analysis above. I have served on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission for many years. I have given a great deal of my own time, without compensation, because I believe in the work the IWWC does to protect the health and safety of Highland Lake and the watercourses of this Town. That work depends on the IWWC commissioners' understanding the water, the shoreline, and the people who live on it - knowledge built over years of service and training, not assigned by title.

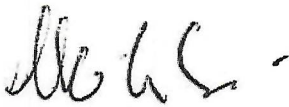
I say this respectfully, but firmly: a change of this significance to this Commission's jurisdiction was placed on the Board's agenda without a single conversation with me, or with the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, beforehand. Selectman Hester attends the IWWC meetings regularly and has never once raised these items. In fact, Selectman Hester's name does not appear on this agenda item. Rather Selectman Marino and Selectman Lamere are named on this item and neither of them routinely attend the IWWC meetings.

I do not raise this to suggest any bad faith on the Board's part. I raise it because the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission is not a formality standing between an applicant and a permit — it is the body the state of Connecticut requires this Town to maintain for exactly this purpose, and it is the body that has done this work faithfully for decades. A proposal to reassign a piece of that work to another commission is the kind of decision that ought to begin with a conversation with the people currently doing it, not end with one. I would have welcomed that conversation, and I remain willing to have it now, before this matter goes any further.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the Board to decline to adopt the proposed changes to Chapter 380 as currently drafted, and to instead refer this matter back for consultation with the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission before any further action is taken.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Steve Molinelli', with a small dash at the end.

Steve Molinelli
Chair, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission
Town of Winchester