

## Burlington Conservation Board

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Ryan Crehan, Vice Chair  
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Ethan Ely  
Dale Azaria  
Evan Horne  
Kelly Farrell  
Alan Reichard*



## Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 1, 2025 – 5:30 pm  
Remote & In Person Meeting

### Attendance

- **Board Members:** Zoe Richards (ZR), Rebecca Roman (RR), Ryan Crehan (RC), Dale Azaria (DA), Evan Horne (EH), Ethan Ely (EE), Alan Reichard (AR), Don Meals (DM), Kelly Farrell (KF)
- **Absent:**
- **Public:** Thomas Ellis, Jamie Spano
- **Staff:** Scott Gustin (Permitting & Inspections), Dan Cahill (Parks & Rec), Emmett Wood (City Attorney's Office)

RR, chair, called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

### Minutes

November 3, 2025 minutes

A MOTION was made by DM and SECONDED by DA:

Approve the November 3 minutes as written.

Vote: 9-0-0, motion carried.

### Board Comment

RR noted the Planning Commission's Open Space Plan referral memo to the City Council. SG & ZR noted Planning Commission's meeting and their concern about addressing the crisis of unhoused individuals living in city open spaces. SG noted that the consultant team has provided a final draft of the plan that touches on the Commission's concerns. The Planning Commission will review the plan again on December 9. City Council will hold public hearings on December 15 and January 12.

ZR, complimented Parks' recent work on trails.

### Public Comment

None.

### Update & Discussion

#### 1. Urban Reserve Map

Discussion with Emmett Wood re: map per Interim Use & Stewardship Plan

Attorney Wood provided background as to the purpose of the map. The original impetus dates to the early 1990's. It pertains to part of the agreement between the city and VHCB. Attorney Wood noted

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the two versions of the map. There's still about 0.8 acre that we have not been able to account for. A decision needs to be made as to inclusion of the wetlands in the shoreline protection area or not. Attorney Wood referred to the interim management plan.

DM, what does POR stand for? Attorney Wood, public open recreation area. DM, 50% of the UR needs to be conserved. Is that correct and reflected in the map? DM, it adds up to 11 acres, which is not 50% of 24 acres. Attorney Wood said half of the north 40 needs to be conserved.

ZR, was the sailing center ever part of the North 40? Attorney Wood, the sailing center is located in the interim development area. RC, the shoreline buffer extends in front of the sailing center.

KF, for the dog park and other areas, could they be developed some day? Attorney Wood, the dog park is a designated park and cannot be developed.

Dan Cahill, the area south of the dog park is the deep water access area. It needs to be maintained as such.

RR, about the 8 acres of shoreline buffer, is that in the conservation easement? Dan, yes, pg. 3, item 1.

RC, why do this now? Attorney Wood, there was no staff to do it before.

ZR is in favor of adding the wetlands to the 6 acres of shoreline to make it 8 acres.

Attorney Wood, we have conferred with Planning Director Dillard. Nothing is changing.

RC, south and east of the dog park, why does that area not have specific programming? Dan, north and south areas of the dog park are not designated. It feels somewhat arbitrary. RC thinks that people wanted these areas open and available for public recreation. They are more viable for this use than the designated areas that include steep slopes.

RR asked about total UR size. Attorney Wood said its approximately 45 acres.

RC does not support the original draft map. The sailing center is interested in filling in the wetland adjacent to their facility. Not including the wetland in the protected shoreline area would facilitate filling it in. He wants to include the wetland in the protected shoreline as depicted in the latest version of the map. DM and ZR concurred. EE said he doesn't see any downsides to including the wetland.

RR would like clarification as to what the easement is protecting once the map is finalized. Would it be better to include some of the open, flat areas rather than the steep slope areas? Attorney Wood, it could be both. There's a required minimum, not maximum. The map reflects current practice in large part.

DM, is there any objection to including everything between the shoreline and the POR area 3 (aside from the dog park)? Dan, and the deep water port access. Board members agreed with DM's suggestion. Attorney Wood and Dan will follow up and finalize the map.

## **Project Review**

- 1. ZP-25-527; 116 Sunset Cliff Rd (RL, Ward 4) Thomas Ellis**  
Proposed reconstruction of deteriorating seawall.

Thomas Ellis appeared on behalf of this application.

Tom Ellis said there's an existing seawall that will be replaced. It consists of large redstone blocks that are eroding badly. We'll remove the stone and replace it with concrete with drainage. The existing rock will be installed back in front. No vegetation will be cleared, except for some abutting grass. No trees will be removed except perhaps one small tree at the end of the wall.

RR, will there be replanting other than grass? Tom, we'll reseed disturbed areas for lawn.

DM, erosion is attributed to damage by the lake. Is that correct? Tom, I'm unsure what caused the damage. Wave action and large logs crashing into the wall have probably caused some damage. Water looks like it has gotten behind the wall as well, causing erosion. DM, the proposed work may not address the existing problem. Tom, there is a plan to fill in behind the new wall with gravel, geotextile fabric, and drainage. Together, this system will be an improvement over existing conditions.

DA, how does your wall tie in with the neighbors' walls? Tom, to the north, there is no wall. To the south, there is a transition to a concrete wall. The proposed design accounts for this connection.

RC, the linear joints among the rocks are probably impacted by the freeze/thaw cycle, as opposed to staggered joints. RC, will the front of the stone be in the same location, or will they be replaced a bit closer to the lake? Tom, we are fine with bringing the concrete wall closer to the house, so that the rock blocks stay basically in the same place.

A MOTION was made by DM and SECONDED by EH:

Recommend approval of the application with the condition that the final face of the natural stone block be no closer to the lake than present.

Vote: 9-0-0, motion carried.

**2. ZP-25-378; 451 Appletree Point Rd (RL, Ward 4) Jamie Spano**

After-the-fact tree removal and replacement with new trees. Replaced failing seawall and added additional seawall length.

Jamie Spano appeared on behalf of this application.

DM asked about current status of the property. The response to after-the-fact work resulting in issuance of a permit makes him unhappy. Requiring new plantings of small trees does not offset loss of mature trees.

Jamie Spano said she moved from Isle La Motte and had no experience with zoning. The work was done without permits. She consulted with an arborist for tree removal. The prior seawall was eroding and in poor condition. The wall was replaced and extended. She consulted with Heritage tree service for the tree work. Trees that were removed were dead or dying. We have since planted more than twice the number of trees that were removed.

DM finds it remarkable that the contractors did not note the need for permits. Jamie, the contractor who did the seawall is from Franklin County. She believes in following the rules.

RR, what has your remediation included so far? Jamie, two large trees on either side of the house have been replaced with 5 or 6 junipers and more within the yard area. Cedars have been replaced with junipers because of deer impacts. Along the edge of the seawall, we have installed flower plantings.

RR, let's take a stab at review as if this work has not already happened.

KF recommends installation of some deciduous trees on the south end of the property. Jamie said only 1 deciduous tree was removed. KF, it looks like a good area to accommodate additional trees. EE said it makes sense to install a native tree species. Arborvitae don't add much.

RR, there is gravel between the seawall and the lawn. Jamie, this is for drainage. SG pointed out that the low mow area could be inclusive of where the work was done. This would require some reconstruction to introduce more robust vegetation.

ZR, would we want to see a planting plan, inclusive of native plantings? RC would support this. We're not holding things up. ZR, the low mow zone needs to be delineated. DM, the planting plan should include deciduous trees, plus the low mow zone with native vegetation.

EE, what about specifying a diameter for replacement trees? RR, would rather not.

A MOTION was made by EE and SECONDED by RC:

Continue project review pending receipt of a landscaping plan depicting the required low mow zone, native plant species, and replacement trees.

Vote: 9-0-0, motion carried.

### **Update & Discussion (cont.)**

#### **2. Burlington Wetland Map**

Discussion of 2009 map and whether there is a need to update.

RC overviewed this item. Federal wetland protections are being rolled back, and changes are being made at the state level. It is a good time for us to look at our standards. DA, the proposed changes to state wetland rules affects development involving unmapped wetlands.

EE, so we should add unmapped wetlands? RC, the city's map is 16 years old and should be updated.

DM, are the state maps of sufficient resolution to identify what's missing in Burlington's current map? RC, yes, they are pretty detailed.

DM, should the city adopt the state's current map? This could be a good start. EH, the VSWI maps are pretty detailed.

DM, what if we queried development site plans over the past 10 or 15 years for inclusion in the map? SG, this was done when the current map was put together. He can't think of any projects that have impacted wetlands since the map was done.

EH, can the city have more stringent standards? SG, yes. EH, we could overlay the VSWI map over the city layer and update the city map based on that. Dan Cahill, we could add based on VSWI, but don't remove any from the current city map.

EE, is the new state delineation based on the new lidar? RC, imagery is still part of it.

Dan will follow up with city GIS staff. We'll come back with a revised draft map.

#### **3. 2026 Meeting Schedule**

Review and approve the 2026 meeting schedule

DM asked about meeting space at 645 Pine Street. Dan mentioned that hosting the Conservation Board meeting here meets some of the requirements for this building to be a public space. DM, let's revisit location in July.

A MOTION was made by DA and SECONDED by ZR:

Approve the 2026 meeting schedule.

Vote: 9-0-0, motion carried.

**Adjournment**

7:25 PM.