



WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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AN ABUTTER'S GUIDE TO THE WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION PERMITTING PROCESS

Updated 3/1/2023

The Weston Conservation Commission (WCC) has prepared this guide to explain what you, as an abutter to a proposal to conduct work in or near wetlands, can expect during the project permitting process. It is not intended as a legal guide, but to help you understand how to participate in hearings, get information, and best communicate any concerns. To reach the WCC, please call 781-786-5068 or email conservation@westonma.gov.

Who is Notified of a Wetlands Project? The Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) requires that all property owners within 100-feet of a proposed project are notified by the applicant by mail ("Notification to Abutter" Letter). All wetland hearings are also legally advertised in the Boston Globe at least 5 days prior to the hearing.

How Can I Find Out More About What is Proposed? Residents are encouraged to call the WCC Office or the Applicant to ask questions. The application and proposed plan are uploaded to the Town's website for easy viewing by the public. The link will be posted on the WCC's Agenda in the [Agenda & Minutes Center](#) at least 48 hours prior to the hearing; you may email the WCC office for the link prior to that time. Hard copies are also on file at the WCC office, where you are welcome to review them and may pay for copies of any information that you would like to keep. The office is generally open on weekdays from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Since staff are sometimes conducting site visits, it is best to make an appointment. Hard copies can also be requested (for a fee) from the Applicant; their contact information is on the "Notification to Abutter Letter" letter.

Are the WCC's Public Hearings Remote or In-Person? Pursuant to An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations, signed by Governor Baker on July 16th, 2022, which extends the expiration of the remote meeting provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2023, all meetings of the WCC will be held via an online meeting platform until further notice. No in-person attendance of members of the public is available, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, including a dial-in option. Upcoming meeting agendas, which include the remote meeting login information, can be viewed at our [Agenda & Minutes Center](#).

What Should I Expect at the Remote Public Hearing? At the hearing, the applicant will present plans and explain what is proposed. The WCC will ask questions. Then, the WCC Chair will ask if anyone on the remote meeting has questions. If you wish to express a comment or question that relates to wetland protection, you will be asked to raise your virtual hand in order to be identified to speak. After comments are received, the hearing may be either closed (if there is no more information to be received) or continued to a date and time certain (if the WCC needs additional information). You will not receive written notice of the continued hearing date. To verify that a hearing is being held on a scheduled date, you can call the WCC office, or check the [Agenda & Minutes Center](#).

What Issues Does the Commission Consider? The scope of issues that the WCC can consider in reviewing proposed projects is defined by the WPA. In presenting testimony (oral or written), please be aware that the Commission's jurisdiction only relates to wetland issues.

Suggestions for Presenting Testimony at Public Hearings

- State your name and address for the record before you speak and each time you speak.
- Try to state all of your questions or concerns at once and then allow the next person to speak.
- Be polite and respectful of differing opinions. Avoid personal attacks.
- While you may have questions of the applicant, you should address them to the WCC.
- Stick to issues relating to the project and within the scope of the WCC review. For example, issues like traffic and noise are outside of the WCC purview.
- It is fine to just say "I agree with Mr. Smith about that drainage issue" rather than restating the same concerns.

How Can I Make My Concerns Known if I Cannot Attend? Comments can be submitted to the WCC in writing prior to the close of the public hearing. As with all testimony (oral and written), it is most helpful to raise concerns early in the process.

What Happens After the Hearing? After the hearing is closed, the WCC deliberates and issues a decision (Order of Conditions) within 21 days of closing the hearing. The WCC generally approves the project with conditions. The WCC can deny a project if it cannot be adequately conditioned to protect wetlands.

Will I Be Notified of the Decision? Copies of decisions are not sent to abutters. You may request a copy from the WCC office. The owner is also required to record it at the Registry of Deeds. Permits are generally valid for three years.

How Can I Appeal? Appeals of decisions under the WPA (called a Request for a Superseding Order of Conditions) must be made to the Department of Environmental Protection within 10 days using forms supplied by DEP. Appeals may be made by the Applicant, a direct abutter, a 10-citizen group, or the Department of Environmental Protection. For more information, please see: www.mass.gov/guides/about-the-massdep-appeals-process.