

# Freshwater Ponds Advisory Committee

## Minutes for meeting on Thursday, January 8, 2026

### Civil Defense Room Town Hall, Falmouth

Committee Participants: Liese Siemann, Matt Long, George Heufelder, Kim Comart, Angela Tanner, Bill Kerfoot, Bill Mebane

The meeting began at 6:33pm

#### Quick recap

The Committee reviewed their previous actions and discussed ongoing initiatives including retailer requirements related to fertilizer sales, Mill Pond (E. Falmouth) degradation, the Board of Health's role in freshwater pond protection, and water management modeling and monitoring approaches for Falmouth ponds.

#### Next steps

- [Bill and Angela: Revise the fertilizer education sign\(s\) to increase font size for key information, add compelling language \(e.g., "Protect Our Water Quality"\), include QR code\(s\) linking to relevant educational resources \(including soil testing information\), and incorporate feedback from the group; complete revisions so sign can be submitted to the Select Board.](#)
- [Kim: Draft a letter to the Select Board requesting they vote to instruct staff to send the fertilizer retailer notification letter \(with Select Board signatures\) and to identify the responsible town department\(s\) for compliance.](#)
- [Kim: Send out the Zoom link and details for the January 15th meeting with Elizabeth Els about Mill Pond.](#)
- [Matt: Continue analysis of existing pond monitoring data, including Cape Cod Commission and Chris Neill datasets, and report findings at the next meeting. Try to obtain and share the Cape Cod Commission's GIS watershed delineation data and maps for Falmouth ponds with the committee.](#)
- [Committee: Decide whether to recommend annual repeat monitoring of Falmouth ponds \(similar to Chris Neill's 2022 study\), and if so, coordinate with Falmouth Pond Coalition for volunteers and funding.](#)
- [Kim: Invite Jennifer Lincoln \(Conservation Department\) to the next committee meeting for a discussion about the department's role in freshwater pond protection and to explore collaboration opportunities.](#)

### **Committee Advances Fertilizer Signage Plan**

The Committee reviewed their plans to submit a recommendation letter to the Select Board regarding retailer requirements and educational materials. They discussed a recent meeting with Select Board members Heather Goldstone and Bob Mascali, who were supportive of their fertilizer signage initiative.

The Committee discussed two sign options - one from MDAR and another created by Bill Mebane. Angela and Bill volunteered to take the next steps to finalize the sign design, after which the Committee will recommend to the Select Board that they implement the signage program, including identifying the appropriate town department to communicate with fertilizer vendors about posting the signs.

### **Mill Pond Intervention Strategies**

The Committee discussed the challenges facing Mill Pond (East Falmouth), an artificial pond that has been degrading for many years. Various intervention methods have been tried over the years, including harvesting plants to remove nutrients and installing a detention pond to capture nutrients that would otherwise enter the pond. The Committee noted that the plants in the pond absorb nutrients that might otherwise flow into Green Pond. The group discussed previous failed attempts at oxygenation and plant biomass removal. Some members will participate in an upcoming Zoom meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup> with Elizabeth Ells and Micheline Labrie from UMass Dartmouth to discuss their research about Mill Pond.

### **Freshwater Pond Protection Measures**

The Committee noted that at its January 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board of Health discussed its role in freshwater pond protection, particularly in relation to cyanobacteria blooms. The Board voted to recommend to the Select Board that they incorporate watershed delineations for freshwater ponds into their analysis for marine abatements, allowing for reasonable regulations to be enforced. The Board of Health identified the need for more data on stormwater phosphorus contributions to better prioritize and regulate stormwater runoff.

### **Cape Cod Pond Water Modeling**

The Committee discussed modeling for Falmouth ponds. Matt noted that the Cape Cod Commission has conducted significant watershed modeling work, including for Waquoit Bay, which was divided into 43 sub-watersheds. The conversation highlighted the need to map zones of contribution for ponds, similar to what has been done for estuarine areas, and discussed the challenges of groundwater recharge zones which are only modeled for about 5-8 freshwater ponds. The Board of Health could recommend to the Select Board that the town engage a consultant to further develop these zone mapping efforts, particularly focusing on nutrient inflow and microbiological concerns.

### **Pond Monitoring Strategy Discussion**

The Committee discussed pond monitoring and assessment strategies, with Matt presenting an initial analysis of Cape Cod Commission data showing phosphorus levels in area ponds. The Committee agreed on the need to prioritize identifying which ponds need monitoring most, with Bill Kerfoot suggesting we could use existing assessment protocols to rank ponds based on their condition. The committee concluded that while single snapshot water samples are limited, more frequent monitoring with simpler measurements like transparency and dissolved oxygen could provide more valuable long-term data than occasional detailed chemical analyses.

### **Discussion with Conservation Department**

The group decided to invite Jennifer Lincoln from the Conservation Department to their next meeting to discuss potential collaboration.

The Committee confirmed its next meeting date for Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm.

The Committee approved the minutes from their Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The Committee voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm