

Bristol Conservation Commission (BCC)

Minutes

May 14, 2026

6:00 pm

Location: Holley Hall conference room (with a Zoom option)

I Call to order: 6:00 pm Carolyn Dash, Kieran Mulvaney, Jono Chapin, Kristen Underwood

Members of the public/others: Jon Cummings, Ken Johnson, Alex Marcucci/Jessica Louisos
SLR Consulting, Andrew L'Roe ACRPC

II Public Comment Period - none

III Addition of Items to the Agenda - none

IV Review and approval of minutes from April 9, 2026: JC motion to approve. KU seconded.

V Correspondence - none

VI New Business

A. Bristol Flats Hydraulic Study: ACRPC presentation followed by Q&A (45 min):

In 2023 KU helped the town of Bristol apply for a grant from the Flood Resilient Communities Fund to study a 1.3-mile section of the New Haven River from Hewitt Lane bridge downstream beyond the A Johnson Co. mill. ACRPC agreed to be the administrator for the grant application on behalf of the Town of Bristol, with Selectboard approval. SLR Consulting performed the Alternatives Analysis including a computer model of the river under flooding conditions.

Results of the computer modeling and a list of about a dozen possible flood resilience projects were reviewed in a publicly warned meeting on 11 Dec 2024 from 1:30-3:00pm in Holley Hall – Andrew L'Roe (ACRPC) and Alex from SLR were in attendance, along with some area landowners including Ken Johnson, Ken Weston, Jono Chapin, and Kevin Elnicki of Earth, Waste & Metal (occupying the former A. Johnson Co., LLC mill site). Of the 10 possible projects, one was selected by that working group to proceed to conceptual design; floodplain restoration on the Saunders River Access parcel. SLR Consulting attended the May Conservation Commission meeting to present results of that conceptual design.

The proposed project would involve lowering the floodplain (excavating soils) between 1 and 7 feet across approximately 8 acres of the Saunders River Access parcel in the location of the North Bend. This lowering would allow the river to access a greater area of floodplain during frequent and modest-sized floods (2-year to 50-year) to lessen downstream flood peaks; and fine sediments with nutrients could be stored in the floodplain rather than delivered to downstream waters (Otter Creek and eventually Lake Champlain).

However, detailed computer modeling of this restoration scenario revealed only a modest flood resilience benefit of the project in that it would reduce flooding levels (for the 100-year flood) in the area of the North Bend by only two to three inches, and in fact for some areas closer to the South Bend (and nearby homes) the flood levels would actually rise. SLR advised that such a project would be difficult to get permit approvals for because of that added risk to homes -- and wouldn't make sense practically speaking. Excavation would involve trucking something like 32,000 yards of soil. While it now requires a very large flood to overtop the banks and possibly expose homes along Rt 116, with a lowered floodplain as conceptualized, floodwaters would now more frequently be very close

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(laterally) to the homes along Rt 116. Proposed work would also mean disturbing the tree buffer that was previously invested in and which has been maturing for 10 years.

While modeling results were not particularly favorable for this floodplain lowering project at Saunders River Access, better results were obtained (from the original model) for widening the Hewitt Lane bridge and excavating a narrow, lower-elevation bench just downstream of it.

The Commission will consider results of the presentation and have further discussion during the June meeting.

VII Old Business

- B. **Town Plan planning:** tabled for lack of time
- C. **Parks Updates:** Eagle, Memorial, Sycamore, Saunders River Access, etc.:
 - a. CD read in an update from Aiden Lenihan.
 - b. Eagle spring clean-up: canceled because of rain, but KU suggested based on AL update it may not need much, except perhaps pruning of perennials
 - c. Pollinator garden: CD provided update on recent work at and status of pollinator garden at Sycamore Park
- D. **Green Up Day:** CD provided update; final figures not yet available, but Bristol collected more than 400 bags of trash weighing just under a ton. There were a lot of tires.
- E. **Timberlands Multi-Trail Partnership:** in Roger Sullivan's absence, tabled until next month
- F. **BCC membership:** CD explained Zelig Smith has left to pursue another opportunity, so the Commission will need new member. JC still hoping for confirmation.
- G. **Summer meetings:** brief discussion of annually planned hiatus.

VIII Events

IX Next Meeting:

The BCC meeting is the second Thursday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm. Our next is planned for June 11, 2026 in the Holley Hall conference room with a zoom option although the location might change.

X Adjournment 7.30 motion KM

* Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84574267401?pwd=ZmEzQWZiQUtWRzVxaW5WOU9EbXRzZz09>

Meeting ID: 845 7426 7401

Passcode: 566093

Dial by your location +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)