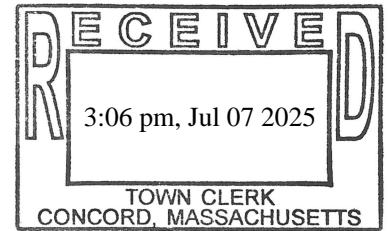


**Warner's Pond Task Force  
Keyes Road  
Thursday, May 22, 2025 at 6 PM**



### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Task Force members:**

- Vickie Alani
- Paul Boehm
- Malcolm Bryant
- Ann Clifford
- Jeff Collins
- Bruce Curliss Absent
- Christine Denaro
- Keith Hannon
- Mark Howell
- Delia Kaye/Bert Comins
- Bill Kemeza
- Liz Morrison Howe
- David Owen
- Samiksha Poudel
- Jeff Quick
- Sven Weber

The Warner's Pond Task Force held its 20th meeting on May 22, 2025 beginning at 6:00 pm at the DPLM office, 141 Keyes Road, Concord, MA 01742, with an option to join online via Zoom. Task Force members and members of the public were in attendance in person and on Zoom, with Task Force members Jeff Collins and David Owen joining online. Samiksha Poudel, Jeff Quick, and Bruce Curliss were absent.

#### **Welcome and Updates**

Christine Denaro, Task Force co-chair, opened the meeting at 6:00 and took a roll call of members. Chris identified the goals for the meeting:

Achieve as much alignment as possible on an overall framework for final Task Force recommendations; and potentially vote to approve an overall framework for development at the next meeting.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Chris invited a motion to approve the minutes from the April 16, 2025 Task Force meeting. Keith made a motion to approve the minutes as written; Mark Howell seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously as written.

#### **Review and discussion on pre-meeting survey responses**

Toby presented the survey responses submitted by Task Force members and answered questions about the results and analysis. Malcolm asked whether weighting had been used and Toby responded that it had not. Malcolm commented that he thought weighting should have been

applied; other Task Force members felt differently. Toby summarized that weighting had not been applied and that Task Force members had varying opinions about how much meaning should be attached to the survey results.

Toby then showed a series of slides displaying the Task Force members' responses to the survey questions about the different proposals and options. He noted that some members had strong feelings about some options, including a significant divide on dam removal and a similarly wide divide on dredging. However, there was broad support for the recurring management option as a pathway to consensus among Task Force members. Vickie commented that she really tried to think about the choice of options in terms of the likelihood of identifying a choice that most Task Force members would be able to live with. The group engaged in a thoughtful discussion about how they approached the survey questions and how they balanced their own opinions against what they thought others on the Task Force could agree on.

Continuing his presentation of the survey results, Toby explained the ordered rankings results, which indicated that the recurring management plan had the highest level of agreement. Sven and Paul asked about aspects of the recurring management plan related to the timing of the plan and how long it would be in place. Bill responded that the intention was to have a 5 year period to try it and that after 5 years it would be possible to see if it was successful, or to make adjustments. A discussion ensued about the timing and specific wording of the activities that would be undertaken in the recurring management proposal. Keith proposed that the name of the plan be changed to "Adaptive Management Plan," which would have the intention of responding and adapting to the conditions of the pond. Members discussed this suggestion and agreed that it was a better description of the approach.

Toby then explained a series of slides that summarized suggestions that Task Force members had made in their survey responses as ways to improve or refine any of the proposals, as well as actions that members had recommended be taken regardless of which proposal was selected. Task Force members generally agreed with the list of actions that should be taken no matter which proposal was chosen. The discussion moved on to the timing and intentions of the adaptive management plan, and how decision points would be identified to determine if progress was being made, as well as other details. Sven noted the huge amount of work that the Task Force members had put into the Warner's Pond effort and raised the concern that the proposal and the recommendations not be lost after a few years. Other members agreed that it was important for the work of the Task Force to be preserved for future consideration, and discussed possible ways to ensure this happened.

Jeff commented that dam removal did receive top scores for 4 members and suggested that dam removal combined with dredging to expand the deep hole might be an acceptable proposal for some Task Force members, and perhaps should be discussed further. Bill and Keith both raised questions about costs and lack of data related to this proposal. Jeff felt the information could be developed based on what was already in the cost estimates. Malcolm commented that he thought the adaptive management plan represented a pathway to delaying making a decision about the Pond and therefore didn't fully meet the Task Force's charge. Liz commented that she was still struggling with what was fact versus opinion. Bill responded that facts were often subject to individual interpretation.

Toby then moved to the next topic, which focused on the responses to the second survey about identifying the better avenue towards alignment of the Task Force around a recommended option. He noted that the adaptive management proposal had the greatest alignment based on the survey responses. He asked the group which avenue they wanted to take and whether there were other preferences that had not been listed. Jeff asked if any group members wanted to learn more or discuss the idea of dam removal plus dredging the "deep hole." Sven commented that he was very sensitive about the cost equation and said that although he would support dam removal, recurring management would be less expensive and would preserve funding for removing the dam or taking other actions in the future. The Task Force deliberated about whether the adaptive management proposal represented the highest likelihood for agreement among the members, and heard from members who advocated for dam removal and members who felt that selecting adaptive management represented a failure of the Task Force to meet its charge. Toby reminded the group to also consider if there were ways to build out the adaptive management plan to try to address all members' concerns. After more discussion by the members, Toby noted that the group seemed to be approaching a consensus around the adaptive management proposal. Most of the Task Force members indicated their willingness to focus on that proposal in more detail as the next topic in the agenda.

Toby and Rachel invited the Task Force to make specific suggestions to improve the adaptive management plan and to focus on ideas that would make it as acceptable as possible to all members of the Task Force. Suggestions and recommendations included:

- Defining "recurring management" as an "adaptive management plan" that will recur if it is working; and that it is intended to be a dynamic plan, not an interim step;
- That it will be a time-bound 5-year plan with a commitment for evaluation, with regular review on an annual basis, and with a major assessment in 5 years. It could be revised and adjusted annually, and could be modeled on Bear Hill Pond plan.
- That there should be clear decision-points for reviewing the effectiveness of adaptive management actions to ensure that pond management does not "slide" into dredging.
- A Committee (Warner's Pond Management Committee) would be formed as a subcommittee of the NRC. The Committee would be charged with overseeing management of the pond and implementation of the adaptive management plan. The Committee would be standing committee with representatives from various town departments. Members would have 5-year appointments on a staggered basis.
- Among its responsibilities, the Committee would track the recreational use and ecological conditions of the Pond.
- If sufficient progress on the pond's condition was found to not be made, the Committee is charged to consider other options.
- A professional consultant hired by the Town will develop a pond management plan;
- A professional consultant hired by the Town will evaluate the effectiveness of the pond management plan and the pond management actions;
- Costs would be based on a "not to exceed" price determined through the town's financial process and the budget in the Adaptive Management Plan proposal.
- Climate change resilience would be part of the Committee's charge. The Committee should consider multiple futures.

- Major damage or repair of the dam would be a decision point for consideration of a new management approach, such as dam removal.
- Investment in fish passage is not recommended at this time, but could be reconsidered at a future decision point or when funding allows.
- The Envision Concord criteria should be carried forward, along with the documentation of what the Task Force has learned.
- The Adaptive Management Plan should include actions to help ensure that information, data, resources and research from the Task Force's work are preserved for the future.

As part of the discussion about these recommendations, Delia commented that town committees generally do not have a budget. Mark disagreed, noting that the MCI Advisory Committee hired a consultant.

After Rachel reviewed the list of recommendations with the group, Bill proposed that the Task Force vote to ask CBI to write up a recommendation for an Adaptive Management Plan that incorporates all that was discussed tonight for a future vote.

Mark suggested that the recommendation come from the Task Force and be conveyed to the NRC. Mark said that the Task Force should choose a direction for a recommendation, and then adopt a final report after it has been produced and reviewed. Paul & Chris agreed.

After further discussion and consideration, Paul made the following motion:

**To recommend to the NRC an adaptive management plan that incorporates the ideas and suggestions that were verbally discussed during today's meeting, based on the recurring management plan proposal that was presented.**

Mark seconded the motion. The Task Force voted as follows:

Endorse: Vickie, Paul, Chris, Keith, Mark, Bill, David

Can live with: Liz

Cannot live with: Malcolm

Abstain: Jeff, Sven

8 YES

1 NO

2 ABSTAIN

### **Public comments**

None.

With no further business, Chris adjourned the meeting at 9:17 p.m.