

**CITY OF WOBURN
WOBURN CITY COUNCIL
ORDINANCES, CHARTER & RULES COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
WOBURN CITY HALL
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 2025 – 6:25 p.m.**

Voting members present: Chair Joseph Demers, Councilor Robert Toro, Councilor Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Councilor Robert Ferullo and Councilor Lou DiMambro

Non-voting members present: Councilor Charles Viola, Councilor William Pappalardo, and Councilor Joanne Campbell. Absent: President Jeffrey Dillon

Also present: Building Commissioner Thomas C. Quinn Jr., City Solicitor Mark Salvati, and Samantha Stone, Assistant to the Mayor for Community Outreach and Communications

* * * * *

Reading and approval of previous meeting minutes: Motion made by Councilor Toro and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the meeting of May 12, 2025; approved, 5-0.

* * * * *

President Dillon proposed zoning amendment to replace Section 9 in its entirety with new Section 9: Floodway and Floodplain District: City Solicitor Salvati said there is a proposal for a new Section 9 of the zoning ordinance. He said the language in the proposed zoning amendment was developed with the assistance of a consultant, Tighe & Bond. He said the consultant is sick and cannot attend tonight's meeting but he can contact her by telephone if the committee has any technical questions. He said the new zoning amendment is a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirement. He said a lot of people could lose flood insurance. He said City Engineer Alex Rozycki, former City Engineer Jay Corey and Conservation Administrator Theresa Murphy have vetted the proposed ordinance. He said the FEMA map will be the official reference map rather than the Woburn floodplain map. He said the language in the zoning amendment has also been vetted and approved by the state Dept. of Conservation & Recreation and FEMA. He said the city's Planning Board has gone through it. He said this is a requirement. Councilor DiMambro said his concern is whether people are going to be liable for flood damage were not before. He asked if the FEMA map got larger. City Solicitor Salvati said there is a potential for someone to require flood insurance who did not require it before. He said no one is going to be knocking on anyone's door but if the house sells there could be issues. He said the hope is this legislation actually helps protect people who are in a floodplain. Councilor DiMambro said he assumes the Engineering Dept. will update its maps to match the FEMA maps. City Solicitor Salvati said the maps will be updated. Motion made by Councilor Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to suspend the City Council's rules to allow any non-voting member of the council to address the order; approved, 5-0. Councilor Campbell asked how many residents will be affected. Commissioner Quinn said the preliminary maps are on the city's website. He said the permanent maps come out on July 8. He said residents will be able to pull up the maps and it will give them a sense of whether they are

newly added to a floodplain area. Councilor Campbell asked when these new regulations came about. Commissioner Quinn said there were changes to the federal law. He said changes in the atmosphere led to changes in floodways. Councilor Campbell said her biggest concern is residents are not going to be aware of these changes. She asked if they will be notified. City Solicitor Salvati said there is no reason to notify residents unless they sell or build an addition. He said there is not really much the city can do to about notification. Councilor Campbell asked what will happen if a resident's property gets flooded and they don't have flood insurance. She asked if they are not going to be covered. Commissioner Quinn said insurance companies are well aware of this change. He said the insurance companies should notify their clients. He said there is no responsibility for the city to notify residents. Councilor Campbell asked if the city should notify impacted residents anyway. Commissioner Quinn said these changes are required by the federal government. He said this is something the city has to do. Councilor Campbell said she wants to know if the city has looked at everything. She said notification might be the city's responsibility. City Solicitor Salvati said there will be something added to the city's website on the Engineering Dept.'s page. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she wants to follow up Councilor Campbell's questions. She said she does not want people to find out the hard way they are in a floodplain area. She asked if there was an alert sent by the city giving residents a head's up the floodplains are changing. City Solicitor Salvati said that can be considered. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said she thinks a floodplain area designation would impact the value of a house, and a lot of residents have money tied up in their house. She said at the end of the day the city has an obligation to tell people to pay attention to this. Ms. Stone said there will be a general notification. She said notices will be sent to the paper, there will be a posting on Facebook, and there will be a mention at the mayor's Town Hall. She said if there is a list, they can notify people on it. Councilor Mercer-Bruen asked if city officials know the difference in what the maps will look like. Attorney Salvati said the city won't know until July 8 when the maps become official. He said the Engineering Dept. can let city officials know. Chair Demers suggested notifying residents in their next property tax bill. City Solicitor Salvati said that might be effective. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said that is a great idea. Commissioner Quinn said he and City Solicitor Salvati are here to address any questions about the ordinance itself. He said the notification piece is not why they are here. Councilor Mercer-Bruen said this meeting may be the first time people have heard about this. She said Chair Demers' idea is amazing. She said the city needs to assure its residents it is doing its due diligence. Chair Demers said he will follow up with the Mayor and the Treasurer/Collector. Councilor Toro said he wants to make sure the public understands this zoning amendment isn't something the City Council necessarily wants to pass. He said this is a request from the federal government. He said it is in front of the City Council as a formality. City Solicitor Salvati said the city may also not necessarily agree with the maps. Councilor Campbell said she still wants to make sure there is notification to residents. Motion made by Councilor Mercer-Bruen and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to send a communication to Mayor Concannon asking if notification of the new floodplain maps can be sent to all taxpayers, with information provided letting them know where they can go to find out if they have been impacted by the ordinance; approved, 5-0. Motion made by Councilor Toro and seconded by Councilor DiMambro that the order "ought to pass;" 4-1, with Councilor Mercer-Bruen opposed.

* * * * *

Motion made by Councilor Toro and seconded by Councilor DiMambro to adjourn; all in favor, 5-0, Chair Demers adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

* * * * *

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST

Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees

