

To the Conservation Commission:

I appreciate the commission gathering public input to explore alternatives on the matter above. Note first that I recuse myself on this matter, and write as a town taxpayer and voter.

A position was stated on this topic in a letter from a lawyer apparently serving as town counsel. It starts by simply describing laws covering wetlands and great ponds, noting provisions letting the commission permit and license docks or other structures. The final paragraph however, in one brusque sentence with no mention of those options, abruptly states that the only way the commission can comply with relevant laws is to just remove all docks (seemingly including btw all docks on private property as well).

But another way to serve all those same laws was established unanimously just last year in the “Littleton Conservation Commission Dock Permitting Policy”. It reads: “Accordingly,

- No new permanent or seasonal dock, pier, float or decking may be placed without prior permit approval by the Littleton Conservation Commission (and MADEP if the waterbody is a Great Pond).
- No existing unlicensed permanent or seasonal dock, pier, float or decking may be reconstructed, enlarged, or relocated without prior approval of the Littleton Conservation Commission (and MADEP if the waterbody is a Great Pond).

By recognizing but not requiring permits for existing docks, this policy seems to tacitly allow them. In the interest of protecting lakes and wetlands, however, I myself - as a user of one such dock - could see value in that approval process being extended to existing docks, along with appropriate permit fees.

No negative environmental impact has been suggested for existing docks, which support positive recreational usage as well as lake cleanup and safety activities. Issues raised by permitting docks on public land can be readily addressed, eg covering the very remote risk of liability by insurance bought with permit fees. The Long Lake Neighborhood Association could be engaged to provide input.

I look forward to the commission's view on this and on other ways to serve both wetland conservation and town residents' quality of life.

Yours,

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