

### **Public Comment Reveals Many Concerns About Town Hall Handling of Conservation Restrictions.**

**Select Board**

**Sept 1, 2026**

**Great Hall, Plymouth Town Hall**

**Board Members and Others Present:** Chair Deb Iaquinio, Members David Golden (Zoom), Kevin Canty, Vice Chair Richard Quintal and Bill Keohan. Town Manager Derek Brendisi, Senior Staff Assistant Kenzy Philabaum, Town Attorney Carolyn McKay, Community Preservation Committee (CPC) /Committee of Precinct Chairs (COPC) Coordinator Kristen Ford.

**Brief Summary of Key Discussions:** Topic details and support documentation made available with the meeting agenda can be found [here](#).

**Announcements:** Chair Iaquinio announced that Public Comment will be limited to one, at the beginning of the meeting.

**Public Comment:** Many prominent citizens spoke of their concerns about how Town Officials have been trying to resolve the Conservation Restrictions (CR) problem – that over the years many Town Meeting CPC budget articles were passed without the necessary CR. Pat Adelman, Town Meeting Member, said she was “appalled” that Town Hall was not releasing the remaining payment to Pilgrim Hall of a \$3.6 million CPC grant that was approved at Town Meeting. John Mahoney, former SB and CPC member, complained that the CPC under Bill Keohan’s chairmanship did not obtain CRs for CPC Articles. Chair Iaquinio interjected that this meeting is ‘not a referendum on any person’. Virginia Davis, Town Meeting Member, explained that she attended the 2020-2024 CPC meetings where the previous public speaker was ‘so disruptive that the committee asked the SB to replace him’ and further asked that this issue be resolved with support of each other, without further blame. Donna Curtin, Director of Pilgrim Hall, said that historical properties by their very nature have not changed so do not need additional CRs and added that it was unfortunate that there will not be Public Comment after the CPC Restriction presentation agenda item. Lee Filson, Mayflower Society Director, said she doesn’t understand where the ‘hate’ element from Town Hall is coming from, since Mayflower Society (that is working to reopen the former Mayflower Meeting House) ‘only wants to give back to Plymouth and is trying to work with the Town despite being called ‘deceptive’ and being told ‘three times the papers would be signed’ but haven’t been yet. Peg Baker, former Pilgrim Hall Director, said that there was ‘a good, strong history of CPC and Town/Pilgrim Hall working together’, recalled that CR were filed then and optimistically projected that ‘we can get back to that.’

#### **Agenda Proper:**

The following Committee Appointments were made after applicant interviews – Nancy Feeney Pct. 2 and Connor O’Dwyer Pct. 4 were appointed to expired terms on Affordable Housing Trust and Chris Moore was reappointed to the Capital Improvements Committee.

Article 21 CPC – Reduce borrowing for Jenny Pond dredging.

Article 22 CPC – Conservation restriction for purchase of Plymouth land (Mann property) with Buzzards Bay Coalition.

Article 2 Budget Amendment Solid Waste Enterprise- Add language to original Article approved at Spring Town Meeting.

Article 3 Borrowing Authority Rescission Request – Airport project that was paid for from other sources therefore not needing Town money.

Article 4 FY 26 Snow and Ice Deficit Funding Recommendation – This year's request for more money than in past several years is due to the heavy snow fall last winter.

Article 9 Change 2027 Spring Town Meeting (TM) Date – Schedule our Spring TM for April 25, per Plymouth current Charter, to allow Town Meeting Members to gather the latest State budget figures for decision making.

The above Articles were passed unanimously.

Article 1 Budget Amendment Visitor Center Capital Funds- Reduce request to \$378,000. Exact request number may be known before TM. Passed 4 – 1 with D. Golden voting No.

Articles 23 and 20 were pulled from the agenda.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Restriction Presentation - Att. McKay followed a Power Point presentation that included lists of the over forty CPC Articles for projects that were funded by Town Meeting that should have had CRs. The four lists reflected the four CPC categories: Recreation, Historic, Open Space and Affordable Housing. Att. McKay described each project and said that the filing of some of the CRs is already in progress. Att. McKay and Ms. Ford provided detailed answers to SB questions including that CPC will now only consider funding requests accompanied by a CR.

Mr. Keohan reminded everyone that getting a CR from the State is a lengthy process and it is not unusual for it to take years. And at times, requests are urgent.

Mr. Quintal offered that in years past the town and CPC had the services of the capable Town law firm of Kopelman and Paige as well as services of other town officials that OK'd TM Articles w/o CR, so 'let's stop blaming and start working together.'

Mr. Canty reminded all that now the town has the services of two in-house lawyers.

**Second Public Comment:** Per request of Mr. Keohan and Mr. Quintal, Chair Iaquinto agreed to allow a second period of Public Comment, initially requesting that the public only address the process that has been followed for this CR issue. However, she quickly dropped that request when Mr. Golden reminded her that the Chair cannot restrict Public Comment in any way. Att. Rich Serkey, Town Meeting Member, said that once a CR has been received for a property there is no further need for another. Att. Canty, SB member, said that is not correct, since the changes to the property require another CR and that our Town is following our Town Counsel and Bond Counsel recommendation that the Town follow TM vote on each Article, which called for a CR. Ms. Curtin spoke again about

following MA Historical Society guidelines that recommend the need for only one CR. Mr. Brindisi stated that the MA CPC Coalition recommends repeat CRs. Lynn Barrett, Town Financial Director, stated that the Town needs a CR to borrow money.

**Simes House:** Town Manager Brindisi reviewed the story of the Town’s involvement with the large historic Simes House and surrounding property in Manomet, starting with the taking of the property by tax title in 2007, followed in 2010 by TM conveying the property to the SB. The following years were marked by mostly unsuccessful efforts to utilize the property, despite the involvement of three different committees and CPC funds. Two affordable apartments were created on the second floor and have been successfully rented to date. Plans to use the first floor never materialized nor did serious efforts to lease the property so in 2025 the property was offered for sale. The only interest was the nearby Bird Observatory, now called Manomet, Inc. who offered \$40,000 and agreed to respect all three CRs that had been set up – Historic and Open Space in addition to Affordable Housing.

Mr. Canty expressed awareness that the \$40,000 sale price is very low compared to the much greater amount of money invested by the Town but reasoned that the taxpayers still have three restrictions on the property. Mr. Quintal offered that COVID contributed to the difficulties managing the property and stated that he wished the town had invested the \$2.5 million in actual housing. Ms. Iaquinto spoke to the ‘wonderful stewards’ that now own the property which will allow them to expand their educational and scientific work.

Mr. Keohan talked about the low selling price being a hard pill to swallow but he is excited that worldwide known and respected neighbors will be using the property.

**Issues relevant to LWV position/programs** – Affordable Housing. League Chair Art Desloges will receive a copy of this report.

| Open Meeting Law (OML) Concerns                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Yes | No  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Were all speakers audible to all attendees?                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |     | X*  |
| Were motion wording, motion maker names, and votes audible to all attendees?                                                                                                                                                                                     | X   |     |
| Were minutes posted per OML?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |     | X** |
| Was public recording permitted and announced?                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | X   |     |
| If conducted, was Executive Session for one of 10 reasons per OML?                                                                                                                                                                                               | NA  |     |
| Comments: * An audience member had to rise with a point of order asking the Chair to use the mic, which she did do and thanked the member.<br>**The most recent posted minutes are 5/26/26 and since Jan. 2024 three are missing: 4/11/26, 10/18/25 and 4/24/25. |     |     |

## Observer Corps Report



| Public Meeting Best Practices                                                              | Yes | No  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Was a name card for each Member in place and readable by attendees?                        | X   |     |
| Were visuals presented during the meeting visible to all attendees?                        | X   |     |
| Were all in attendance civil and courteous to each other?                                  | X   |     |
| Did Members follow their published Policies and Procedures, if any?                        | X   |     |
| Was any conflict of interest disclosed, per State Ethics Law or Plymouth By-Law?           |     | N/A |
| Was there an opportunity for public comment as encouraged by Attorney General?             | X*  |     |
| Comments: *Chair Iaquinto conceded to SB members request to allow a second Public Comment. |     |     |

**Observer name and date:** Martha Vautrain September 4, 2026

- Follow link to recording on [The Local Scene](#).
- When the official minutes from this meeting have been approved, they will be available on the Town website at [Plymouth Agendas & Minutes center](#).