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Interim Town Manager

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Town Clerk

MEETING DATE: Aug 13, 2026

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Deborah J. Hill MPA AICP CFM
DEPARTMENT: Planning Department
SUBJECT: Higher Standards: Wetland Protection

SUMMARY:

On July 9, 2026, the Staff introduced a discussion about potential higher environmental and flood resilience standards. Topics included: wetland protection; stormwater management; water quality improvements; erosion and sediment control; tree preservation; and wetland buffer requirements. Board members discussed the concept of establishing wetland setbacks or buffers. Issues raised included:

- Possible 75-foot buffer requirements.
- Potential impacts on private property rights.
- Creation of nonconforming lots and structures.
- Economic effects on future development.
- Enforcement limitations for local government.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. *Planner's Guide to Wetland Buffers for Local Governments*, Environmental Law Institute, March 2008.
2. Establishing a Wetland Protection Buffer (B. Golden)

SPECIFIC ACTION REQUESTED:

1. Discuss the merits of establishing a wetland protection buffer for certain accessory structures. **2.** Discuss potential impacts on private property rights; the creation of nonconforming structures; the economic effects on future development; and enforcement limitations for local government. **3.** Determine the appropriate distance from the wetlands to allowable accessory uses. **4.** Consider proposing a text amendment to § 5.03 SETBACKS FOR ACCESSORY BUILDINGS for the purpose of establishing a wetland buffer for certain accessories.