

Town of Canaan  
Inland Wetlands/Conservation Commission  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
September 21, 2026

Members Present: Mark Burdick, Brant Burz, Susan Kelsey, Ellery Sinclair

Others Present: John Harney and Lenore Mallet, real estate agents; Bill Colby, engineer

Meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. Minutes of 8-17-2026 were reviewed. Motion by Sinclair to approve minutes as presented; seconded by Burdick; passed unanimously.

**Public Input:** None.

**Old Business:** (By consensus, agenda order changed to accommodate guests).

**1. Cox Application, 185 Route 63:** Members had all visited the site. Colby, engineer for the proposed activity, presented plans that were reviewed by the Commission. Significant erosion of the Hollenbeck River in proximity to the dwelling is due in part to the highly erodible soils associated with the streambank that contain no large rocks to minimize erosion. It was noted that the watershed of the Hollenbeck River is of significant acreage. Plans for stabilizing the bank include creating a 2:1 riprapped bank slope; proposed modified riprapping will be with 12" – 18" sharp-edge quarry rock. A 2' wide trench at base of slope will be filled with said quarry rock. Clean fill will be deposited on the eroded bank and then riprapped. Said stabilization should alleviate current erosion resulting from both river scouring and ground water flow occurring from adjacent lands. Burz recommended that plans be amended to extend the area to be riprapped further upstream at least 20 feet to ensure additional bank stabilization in the vicinity. Colby concurred that said additional stabilization would be prudent. The repair/replacement of one of the deck footings is also proposed as it has been compromised by the erosion. Silt fencing between area of activity and the river is also proposed. Burdick proposed that a gutter be installed on the section of the roof that sheds toward the river, suggesting this would reduce the amount of water targeted on the streambank. Kelsey made a motion to approve the application with the following findings and conditions:

**Findings:**

1. Commission members had all visited the site and concurred remedial measures for streambank stabilization would reduce degree of erosion in the area of the house and deck, which is within 5' of the eroded area.
2. The soils in the area of the proposed activity are extremely erodible and significant erosion of the Hollenbeck River streambank has occurred in proximity to the residence.
3. Submitted plan for the proposed activity was prepared by Bill Colby, engineer (Colby Engineering and Consulting, LLC) and reviewed.
4. Members and the engineer concurred that the map should be amended to include additional riprapping upstream.
5. Measures for erosion control (staked filter fabric) and bank stabilization (sharp edge 12" – 18" quarry rocks for riprapping of a fill-created and riprapped 2:1 bank slope) as detailed in the plan were considered appropriate for stabilizing the bank.
6. A portion of the house roof facing the River creates significant runoff, likely contributing to the erosion of the bank.

**Conditions:**

1. Plans will be amended to include additional riprapping upstream for a minimum of 20 feet.
2. Silt fencing will be monitored on a regular basis, particularly after any significant storm.
3. Work is to be conducted when the Hollenbeck River flow is low and during dry conditions.
4. Work is to follow the submitted plan, with the amended additional riprapping.
5. That the installation of a gutter on the roof draining directly into the river be strongly considered.
5. Steve Dean, contractor, will serve as contact person.
6. The Commission will be notified when work is to begin (Mark Burdick: (203) 217-2405).
7. All disturbed areas in vicinity of the activity will be stabilized.

Motion seconded by Burz; passed unanimously. Kelsey will issue permit and send copies to John Harney, Steve Dean and property owner, William Cox.

**2. Street Tree Inventory:** No update.

**3. Miller Application, 64 Music Mountain Road:** Burdick informed Commission that the end of the 65-day time period to act on this application is within several days (it was received for review on July 27, 2026). No additional information has been received regarding plans for the culvert replacement. Burdick made a motion to deny the Miller application without prejudice and that the application fee for a future updated application will be waived; seconded by Burz; passed unanimously. Burdick will inform Miller of the motion.

**4. Highlands Conservation Grant Update:** Burdick met with staff at HVA to review the 2022 expanded offering of the Highlands grant to municipalities. Two priorities for awarding the grant are preserving productive agricultural land and for providing recreation. The grant will cover up to 50% of fair market value. Deadline to apply this year is October 31<sup>st</sup>. There will be two additional years of funding. HVA is going to contact the CT Dept. of Agriculture and the CT Farmland Trust regarding funding for farmland preservation. HVA recommended that there be efforts to garner support from townspeople for either the town's or an individual's possible purchase of this parcel with the ultimate goal of preserving farmland. Discussion took place regarding how to start this conversation. It was agreed that the first step is for the Commission to gather information regarding the Coolidge parcel in particular. Kelsey will ask assessor what the current taxes are on said parcel and if building lots are being assessed on each of the four subdivision parcels.

**5. Requirements for Commission Members:** Kelsey had reviewed the State statutes and had also contacted First Selectman Barger regarding commission member requirements. It is apparent that being a registered voter is a requirement (and therefore, also, is being a US citizen). Burdick will inform Marleen van Gulick of this determination and will extend the Commission's gratitude for her participation. Sinclair will inform Mark Gozonsky that a position is available if he is still interested. Burdick said that Eli Horowitz may be interested in serving as an alternate and will contact him.

**6. Forestry Resiliency Grant:** Kelsey shared a list of Town owned properties to help determine if any might qualify for receiving grant money through the DEEP's Urban and Community Forestry Program. Application deadline for the grant was August 31, 2026. One parcel is in Robbins Swamp and another is on Canaan Mountain, located within State Forest; Burz

wondered if these parcels, which would seem to be desirable to the State, might in some manner be used as a bargaining chip in receiving State assistance in the conservation of the Coolidge property. Kelsey will speak to Barger regarding the history of these two properties.

**7. Water Diversion Update:** Burdick reported he spoke with Bruce Bennett. Bruce has pertinent information regarding water diversion and will forward it to Burdick.

**8. Commission Member Certification:** John Harney clarified that all Commission members must take the certification training modules before the end of the year. Kelsey will forward the link to members.

**New Business:**

**1. Yelping Hill Road:** Burz queried the apparent closure of Yelping Hill Road, expressing concern how said closure negates access to that portion of State Forest land for recreation. Kelsey will ask Barger for an update on the road.

**Routing Sheets:** None.

**Communications:**

**1. Connecticut River Conservancy:** A letter and pamphlet was received informing us of stream restoration assistance for rivers and streams within Connecticut River watershed.

Sinclair made a motion to adjourn at 9:15; seconded by Burz; approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Kelsey, secretary