

Received 2/12/26
8:44 AM Jodi Moore, ATC

Town of Durham Conservation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Feb. 10, 2026

- 1) Chair Augur called the meeting to order at 7. Members present: Augur, Paskiewicz, Cordes, DeVito, Lawlor, LaFlamme, Miller, Dudko, Meigs.
- 2) LaFlamme moved agenda as presented, Lawlor seconded. All ayes.
- 3) No members of the public present so no public comment.
- 4) Old Business
 - a) Goats vs Invasives: Bridgette and John of Raptor Ridge Farm joined via Zoom to discuss their operation and answer Commissioners' questions. They are goat and sheep owners/managers. The benefits of the business include treating hard to access terrain Cordes: what about the palatability of species, are there invasives they won't eat?
RRF: it depends on the goat, but there are not plants they won't eat and they tend to prefer and will target invasives. There are some plants they *should* not eat, that are poisonous to them, but none they *won't* eat.
Meigs: Mugwort?
RRF: yes, that is a natural dewormer for the animals.
Miller: How does stocking run (how many animals at what density)?
RRF: We currently have 80 goats and 20 sheep. Tend to limit to 40 goats per half acre.
Miller: Days (duration of treatment)?
RRF: varies by density, terrain, and the weather (the goats don't like the rain that much). 40 – 50 goats can do an average acre in a couple days.
Dudko: success with repeated grazing eradicating problem species?

RRF: 2025 was first year of operation, so cannot comment on multiple grazing at customer locations; however, in our own paddock, which was overrun with multiflora rose, it is now completely knocked out.

Augur thanked RRF for their time, explained the Commission would continue to deliberate, and they signed off.

DeVito says he likes the idea of using the goats to get rid of the invasives. It was said to be a fairly flexible business with municipal pricing. Augur says we can lay out a test run to be given a quote to see if the goats are an affordable option. Augur had the goats previously and says that the goats do a good job of knocking down the hard parts, leaving things to just be thinned out. He was pleased with the outcome for the cost. He said we could also do an area with spraying if we wanted to demonstrate the cost and outcome comparison between the two approaches.

The Commission discussed further potential areas to request a goat quote on, and settled on 1) Otte Meadow from Saw Mill Road, either side of the path, 2) Howd Road, along the road heading south southwest from the northwestern edge of the hay field, and 3) Curtis Woodlands, the edge of the field that's been rotary mowed into the woods.

b) White Farm Hay Land Restoration and Protection Project: There will be Whites Farm use applications coming in the future, so good to discuss in advance independently of any one application, following up on the Oct. Plan which should be enacted in the Spring. Consensus was reached that the area north of the laneway which will not be barricaded would be an appropriate area for rocket and plane clubs, and that there is no reason to restrict mowing throughout that area as the clubs see fit.

C) Meigs noted that the large tree that had been mentioned as cut and moved on the trail near Cream Pot was not done by the Town Crew. Some wondered if the Fire Department had done it. Augur will ask.

5) New Business

a) Howd Road Hay Harvesting Bid Review: There was one bid, from same person who was the lessee for the one-year term in 2025, and they bid on the same terms: hay harvesting on Howd in exchange for rotary mowing of the Otte Meadow parcel on Rt. 17 and the field at Curtis Woodlands.

Motion to recommend to the Board of Selectman to accept the bid by Miller, DeVito seconded. In discussion it was noted in the past some lessees who were paying to hay didn't follow through on the berm maintenance aspect. Augur commented that he liked that this helps to engage a young farmer in town. After discussion the vote was taken: all ayes.

6) Communications: Augur noted he'd discovered Off-road vehicle trespass on the Pent Road parcel, with incursion from a parking lot on Ozick Drive where there has been previous activity. He reported it to the First Selection and requested the town crew place a large boulder to block. First Selectman forwarded the report to the Resident State Troopers. Augur reported he'd received an email from Michael Good asking the key to the bobolinks success, and Augur responded the mowing clause in the White Farm hay land lease has been effective.

7) Approval of minutes

a) Dec. 9, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes garnered no corrections nor comments and thus are approved as presented.

b) Dec. 15, 2025 Special Meeting minutes garnered no corrections nor comments and thus are approved as presented.

8) Cordes moved for adjournment, LaFlamme seconded. All ayes at 7:55.