

Received 4/15/26
9:16 AM Jodi Moore, ATC

Town of Durham Conservation Commission

Apr. 14, 2026 Meeting Minutes

- 1) Augur called the meeting to order at 7 PM. Members present: Augur, Cordes, DeVito, Dudko, Lawlor, Meigs, Paskiewicz. (Miller arrived at 7:01), and *ex officio* Rea.
- 2) Motion to approve agenda as presented made by Cordes, seconded by Lawlor, all ayes.
- 3) Public comment: none
- 4) New Business
 - a) White's Use request – 4H Fair, Holly Andrews spoke to the application. 100th edition of the Fair, expecting slightly larger crowd, requesting use of White Farm for overflow parking in the areas noted on the aerial view (along roadways, excluding hay fields). Miler moved approval as presented, seconded by Miller, all ayes.
 - b) White's Use request – Blacksheep Squadron, a club of the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Stevan Akerley, Blacksheep Vice President, spoke to the application. Treasurer Robert Horn, Executive Board Member David Keosk and member Jeff Davenport spoke as well. The Commission's Oct. 2025 discussion of moving the airstrip north of the roadway was discussed, as was the Dec. 2025 motion to hire out rotary mowing of many areas of White Farm, including north of the roadway. Blacksheep members noted they too suffer from ruts and vandalism and that the telephone pole barrier should be a benefit. Miller noted that independently of this situation a locked gate at the western end of the pole barrier could be of use. Observation was made that this year could be used to prep the area north of the laneway for future airfield use.

Motion was made by Miller, seconded by Dudko, to approve application as presented for 2026 use with addition of wording that no gas-powered planes are to be use. Discussion ensued, with commentary shared that this feels like the last year for the airstrip in its current form. Motion carried unanimously.

5) Communications:

- a) Leslie Bulion, town poet laureate, had reached out to follow up on prior approval noting that now that the ground is drying out she's preparing to install six green metal fenceposts at the edge of the Memorial Tree Grove with laminated 11" x 14" poems affixed there to. No commissioners had any feedback for her.
- b) David Laducer had reached out regarding a conservation easement in a development, so Augur had referred the matter to town hall and First Selectman Rea dispatched the tree warden.
- c) Beth Mancota had shared that the Board of Finance wanted to remove the budget item for adding to the open space acquisition fund. Augur noted that this is called for by the Plan of Conservation and Development and that since it has been zeroed out many years the amount on hand has not kept pace with inflation, so he requested some amount be left, and if cuts are made some be put back in Operating Budget.
- d) Miller had been contacted as Tree Warden regarding a dead limb on the Seward Road parcel near to where it abuts Pleasant Terrace. The reporter mentioned a trail but there are no sanctioned trails on this parcel. If the limb is not threatening the road it will be left to let nature take its course.

6) Old Business

a) Invasives Management

- i) Augur and LaFlamme had met with Raptor Ridge farm staff to show them the parcels the commission had prioritized for consideration of a goat practice and their more detailed quote was subsequently shared with

commissioners. Consensus was the price point was too high to pursue at this time.

Discussion turned to chemical management. Augur will dig out the past materials on the pilot program for knotweed management and send it to Cordes who will search for potential vendors and we will discuss at a future meeting (regular or special).

Rea noted ~ \$8,500 remains in the current fiscal year operating budget. Some has been committed to the White Farm rotary mowing authorized in December, but other may be able to be used for an initial knotweed treatment if that timing is sensible. Additionally it can be used for gates and hardware for the pole fencing at White Farm.

b) DEEP Grant. Some back and forth emails with a representative from the state have created confusion. Cordes will try to call to see where things stand.

7) No feedback was provided to the minutes of the Mar. 10, 2026 Meeting, so they are approved.

8) Adjournment was motioned by Lawlor at 8 PM, seconded by Miller, all ayes.