



Town of Sherman
Conservation Commission
 Regular Meeting Minutes
 Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Members Present: William (Bill) McCann (Chair), Michele MacKinnon (Vice Chair - Remote), Breezy Grenier, Jill Humphreys, Connor McGowan, Colette Shulman, Anne Weisberg (Remote)

Members Absent: Jen Freed, Lauren Weber

Other Attendees: Christine Aruza (Clerk)

Call to Order: Chairman B. McCann called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

B. Grenier made a motion to approve the May 14, 2025 minutes.

Seconded by: C. McGowan

Vote: Unanimous For

Correspondence:

None at this time.

New Business:

a) Doug Tallamy Program 10/23 at 6:30 via Zoom

M. MacKinnon confirmed with Ashleigh Blake (Executive Director, Sherman Library) that the library will co-host a program featuring Doug Tallamy on October 23, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. via ZOOM. A. Weisberg advised she has a contact who knows the individual in Sharon, CT that worked with Doug Tallamy on his backyard habitat project. The same individual also helped him start his website (homegrownnationalpark.org). Per M. MacKinnon her name is Michelle Alfandari. A. Weisberg thought maybe she could be an add-on to the Doug Tallamy program. M. MacKinnon says the talk is 60 minutes so perhaps it could be a standalone program. A. Weisberg will confirm if Michelle Alfandari is still living in Sharon and available to do programs. In addition, B. McCann advised the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC) will also co-sponsor the October program with Doug Tallamy. He is waiting to hear back from Cathy Hagadorn at Deer Pond to see if they are also interested in being a co-sponsor.

b) Christine Cook Program 4/18/26 at 11 a.m. at Sherman Library

M. MacKinnon has also secured Christine Cook, from Easton, CT, for a talk about dragonflies with the Sherman Library on April 18, 2026 at 11 a.m. Christine Cook designs gardens that attract and foster these insects. M. MacKinnon believes it will be a good draw for children and adults.

c) Stonewall Mapping

B. McCann showed maps of the stone walls that J. Humphreys had created using LIDAR. She looked at NCLC properties and focused on a parcel such as the Strauss Morrissey Preserve as an example. She said the commission could choose a couple of parcels to map as it would not be practical to map all of the stonewalls in the town. B. McCann suggested breaking the town up into 10 sections to get to the right resolution and level of detail and recommended changing the color of the stonewalls to green. B. McCann said he is impressed. He believes the mapping is almost done and is ready to share with Planning and Zoning (P&Z). He will also bring the mapping to NCLC to show them. B. McCann will solicit feedback from both entities and share with the commission. C. Shulman advised the commission needs to give thought on how to save and publicly display the mapping.

d) Weed Warrior Scheduling

B. McCann would like to schedule the next Weed Warriors session for Saturday, July 12th. He will send an email out to the Weed Warriors. [NOTE: Rescheduled after meeting to July 19th]

Old Business:

a) Wildlife Corridor Mapping Update

C. McGowan distributed copies of a document he produced which explains the process of how a wildlife corridor mapping should be created with proper sourcing and layering of different data sets. C. McGowan is relying on ArcGIS and QGIS. So far, he has collected all of the property lines and land in Sherman plus the topography and waterways. He is having difficulty finding the roads. J. Humphreys offered to help C. McGowan with this aspect and provide a shape file.

He is also having difficulty locating elevation data and core habitat (forest) protected areas. He asked the commission which animals should be included (endangered, local, etc.). C. McGowan inquired if after the exercise the mapping will show the ideal path wildlife would take, not the actual path. C. McGowan said it will run simulations on the ideal path via least-cost path modeling. B. McCann recommended including large mammals that occupy the biggest territory such as bears, bobcats, coyotes, and deer in addition to endangered animals. B. Grenier asked about the intended audience for the corridor mapping. C. McGowan said it could help the commission if it was asked about land in Sherman that was proposed for development and any potential impact on wildlife. B. McCann added that he envisions it could be a helpful tool for P&Z.

b) Other - Wind Turbine Discussion

B. Grenier sent correspondence to commission members prior to the meeting about wind farm development in CT and the need to discuss. B. McCann invited her to share her concerns with the commission during the meeting. Per B. Grenier she lived and worked on Block Island for 20 years and was involved in the first offshore wind turbine project there. She has also done paleo landscape reconstruction and done sea floor mapping for wind turbine projects in Massachusetts. B. Grenier said they discovered early on and documented the negative environmental damage that occurred at the Block Island site and were shocked to learn about a second phase. She stressed that the U.S. is behind in terms of its knowledge of and exploration of the continental shelf.

B. Grenier explained that a lot of the science collected on offshore wind was based on incomplete data from a UK study with admission from scientists that data is missing. She added that there are decades of information from oil/gas company platforms, the Navy, and other scientific institutions that man-made structures, such as wind turbines, do environmental damage in the ocean. She stated that the electricity doesn't serve Block Island, rather it goes to the mainland and went on to explain the impacts of the shore connection and A/C cabling.

B. Grenier went on to elaborate that the wind turbines run on diesel engines to keep them spinning when there is no wind or cease due to saltwater operations. She provided specifics regarding the amounts of petrochemicals in the blades and oil used to manufacture the foundations. With respect to ships and wildlife, B. Grenier enumerated the effect on sonar signals, whales, sharks, fish, and lobsters. Lastly, she referenced investigations into violations of the Jones Act and potential human rights abuses with indentured servant labor.

Per B. Grenier, there are multiple offshore projects in each state totaling over 3000 in-progress projects which makes them hard to track individually. C. Shulman offered a resource with the Human Trafficking Legal Center in New York. She requested B. Grenier create a summary that can be sent to her resource to determine if it is something with which they could assist.

c) Miscellaneous

C. McGowan shared that he and M. MacKinnon had 12 kids at the children's program they conducted at the pollinator garden. He expressed the need for a trailer to obtain the mulch. M. MacKinnon suggested reaching out to Beatty Brothers.

C. McGowan **made a motion** to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: B. Grenier

Vote: Unanimous For

B. McCann adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza
Next monthly meeting: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m., Mallory Town Hall