



Town of Sherman Conservation Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Members Present: William (Bill) McCann (Chair), Michele MacKinnon (Vice Chair), Jill Humphreys, Colette Shulman, Lauren Weber, Anne Weisberg (Remote)

Members Absent: Jen Freed, Breezy Grenier, Connor McGowan

Other Attendees: None

Call to Order: Chairman B. McCann called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

M. MacKinnon made a motion to approve the October 8, 2025 minutes.

Seconded by: A. Weisberg

Vote For: All in favor

Correspondence:

None at this time.

New Business:

a) Co-sponsored Program Ideas with Library / NCLC

M. MacKinnon spoke with Ashleigh Blake (Executive Director, Sherman Library) last week who asked if the commission would like to do another program. She was unsure if the request was for this year or the next year. She added that the commission is confirmed with Christine Cook for an in-person program at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 18th for a discussion on dragonflies. She will verify that the library has the slot secured on their calendar of events for 2026. M. MacKinnon advised the commission typically conducts two programs per year – one in the spring and one in the fall. Thus, they will need to derive a fall program for 2026.

B. McCann spoke with the Naromi Board at the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC). The board shared a couple of ideas they envisioned for partnering with the commission. The first program is related to the commission's recently created hiking trail guide,

[“Hiking Around Sherman”](#). The idea was to hold a public forum with representatives from the trail properties (NCLC, Great Hollow, Deer Pond, Sherman Park and Recreation) whereby each group would talk about their own trail systems and what is available for people to come and enjoy. Perhaps there would be a sponsored hike at one or more trails after the forum. The board will assign individuals to work and collaborate with the commission on the program if interested. Commissioners discussed how the concept could be fleshed out and how to generate interest for the program. It was agreed that B. McCann will let the Naromi Board know the commission is interested in pursuing the concept and brainstorming further.

B. McCann advised they also expressed interest in the LIDAR maps but there is no actionable concept to be discussed at this time.

b) Pollinator Garden Report

M. MacKinnon spent three hours at the pollinator garden a few weeks ago. She remarked that whomever went down during the summer and eliminated all the Japanese stiltgrass did a great job. J. Humphreys advised that she and her father (Mike Humphreys, Inland Wetlands Commission) removed the stiltgrass.

M. MacKinnon advised that the five new shrubs did well and had enough water over the summer. In addition, the Joe Pye weed is doing great and is almost six feet tall. She reported that the annuals that the schoolkids planted are also doing very well. L. Weber will post photos of the pollinator garden taken by other commissioners to the commission’s Facebook page.

M. MacKinnon added that the gray dogwood shrub originally eaten by the deer has rebounded. However, there are some causes for concern. The small grasses planted last spring have died out (15 plugs) and thus won’t be able to grow and hold up the perennials (e.g., goldenrod). The perennials will need to be cut back by mid-June, which will ensure they grow back sturdier and shorter. As well, the butterfly plants fried during the summer and she is not sure if they will come back next year. B. MacKinnon asked if they will need to plant more next year. M. MacKinnon said they should and before the footprint of the garden is expanded. She did collect seeds that day and will do some winter sowing. The seeds will begin to sprout but won’t be ready to plant until spring of 2027.

c) Reach Out to Local Project Managers Regarding Use of Native Plants

M. MacKinnon and C. Shulman were at an information session for the proposed new Senior Center, which will be located at Colonial Field, in addition to the new Holy Trinity Church. They started to discuss the need to request native plants. C. Shulman believes the new Senior Center will need a lot of good landscaping to fit in. C. Shulman also inquired if the church has a budget for landscaping. M. MacKinnon said the plan was to include native plants, however, it is unclear if there was money for landscaping or if it would require parishioner donations. Per M. MacKinnon there is an opportunity to guide the process as the chair of the Senior Center Building Committee is also a member of the church.

Commissioners concurred it would be a good idea to have a meeting with all parties to discuss. The commission worked collectively to edit a draft letter prepared by M. MacKinnon to go to Holy Trinity Church (and later the Senior Center if approved). M. MacKinnon will finalize and re-circulate. B. McCann will speak to D. Lowe to give a heads-up and option for ‘cc. The commission also agreed to revisit if the commission’s formerly drafted native plant guidelines

could become officially adopted as a formal policy for town properties vis-à-vis a recommendation.

d) Coburn Road West Construction Project

B. McCann was asked at Great Hollow's Hollowfest by neighbors and others about the construction project on Coburn Road West. The approved plan was not followed by the developer which as a result cut off the Quaker Brook. The matter of rebuilding the existing road did go before the Inland Wetlands Commission for review but did not go before the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission. The plan was approved by the Army Corp of Engineers (ACoE) and the state's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Subsequently, Inland Wetlands advised the developer to return with an as-built plan to determine if would be approved by the ACoE and DEEP. B. McCann just wanted to raise awareness of the matter as it is of environmental concern.

Old Business:

a) Doug Tallamy Program Review

C. Shulman asked how many attended the program. Per M. MacKinnon there were 198 registrations with 119 attending on Zoom at one point. L. Weber asked if it was well attended due to the four organizations collaborating or if it was per Doug Tallamy's own draw. The commission's consensus is that it was both. Commissioners each highlighted what aspects of his talk they found most interesting. The recording is available [here](#).

b) Wildlife Corridor Mapping Update

No update at this time.

Other:

A. Weisberg wants to talk in the future about the spotted lanternfly and bat houses. D. Tallamy had said he thinks the population will die off in a few years. It is unknown if DEEP shares that viewpoint. M. MacKinnon is unsure if our bats will recognize the spotted lanternfly as something natural to eat. However, B. McCann stated blue jays, cat birds and yellow jackets will eat them.

A. Weisberg **made a motion** to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: L. Weber

Vote: All in favor.

B. McCann adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza

Next monthly meeting: Wednesday, January 14, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m., Mallory Town Hall