



**Town of Sherman
Conservation Commission**
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Members Present: William (Bill) McCann (Chair), Michele MacKinnon (Vice Chair), Jill Humphreys, Lauren Weber

Members Absent: Jen Freed, Breezy Grenier, Connor McGowan, Colette Shulman

Other Attendees: None

Call to Order: Chairman B. McCann called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Unable to approve the November 12, 2025 minutes due to lack of quorum.

Correspondence:

The commission received correspondence from the town's business manager, Liz LaVia, outlining the budget process and associated timelines for fiscal year 2026-2027.

In addition, the commission received correspondence from the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC). The organization is announcing a new membership program, the "Municipal Commission Affiliate Program". The goal of the program is to provide educational, networking and grant opportunities to municipal commissions engaged in local conservation efforts. The program also offers discounted fees for attendance to the council's events. Annual dues for a commission of Sherman's size and operational expenses would be \$100.00. B. McCann will raise at the next meeting for a decision by quorum regarding potential participation.

Commissioners also briefly discussed the potential benefits of becoming a supporting member of and attending conferences held by the Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions (CACIWAC).

New Business:

a) Re-Appointments

B. McCann was sworn in by C. Aruza for his next term on the commission at 7:34 p.m. Prior to the meeting, A. Weisberg shared via email that she must resign from the commission as she is fully engaged in her campaign for representative to the Connecticut state congress. B. McCann will forward her resignation letter to Don Lowe (First Selectman). The commission briefly discussed reaching out to potential candidates for appointment to the commission in light of the new vacancy. J. Humphreys reached out to one candidate that accepted an invite to the next commission meeting on February 11th, while B. McCann and M. MacKinnon will reach out to others they believe may be interested in joining the commission.

b) New Budget Review

B. McCann reiterated that the budget this year is similar to last year in that it is for clerk's fees only. For reference, the budget for the prior fiscal year was \$1,900. He then explained additional budget requests should be forwarded to the business manager for approval by the Board of Selectmen on a case-by-case basis. However, the recommendation is to put forth anticipated budget requests (e.g., programs, events, etc.) at this juncture of the budget process. The commission discussed and identified the following additional budget requests: \$500 for co-hosted educational programs; \$400 for the pollinator garden and Weed Warriors and \$250 to support the Community Expo.

c) Sherman Community Expo 2026

The Community Expo will be held on May 2nd this year and will coincide again with the annual budget referendum. Per L. Weber she spoke with Linda Hubbard (Acting Chair, Commission for the Arts) and they will not be able to fund advertising for the Community Expo next year. She and L. Hubbard will meet next week to move forward with planning for this year's event. L. Weber said the largest upfront effort involves contacting participants; drafting public relations communications; and reserving the Town Green with owner Gary Goldring. She said the day of the event would require the next greatest effort and will require everyone's assistance.

A discussion ensued about the criteria that should be followed to ensure participants and their booths are aligned to the goals of the event. It was decided that it should remain a cultural event with an educational focus. Commissioners then discussed promotional ideas for the expo. L. Weber suggested an event passport with raffle. The raffle could offer prizes such as White Silo wine; coffee from Sacred Grounds; tickets to JCC or Sherman Playhouse events; etc. It could also help to track attendance.

Old Business:

a) Library Programs Update

M. MacKinnon advised there is a new date for the spring program with Christine Cook on dragonflies. The new date is Saturday, March 28 @ 11 a.m. as the library is unavailable for the originally selected April date. She went on to add that there is an opportunity for promotional materials to be passed out at the event to publicize the Community Expo. M. MacKinnon also offered to deliver a presentation in the fall on invasives and will speak with Ashleigh Blake (Executive Director, The Sherman Library).

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

The letter crafted by M. MacKinnon that was sent to Holy Trinity Church regarding collaboration on ensuring native plants are used for the landscaping has not received a response as of this date.

c) Wildlife Corridor Mapping Update

No update at this time.

Other:

Other discussion included plant swaps and L. Weber would like to revisit the free certification program offered by Sustainable CT. B. McCann suggested reaching out to D. Lowe next year after construction begins on the new senior center.

L. Weber **made a motion** to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: J. Humphreys

Vote: All in favor.

B. McCann adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza

Next monthly meeting: Wednesday, February 11, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m., Mallory Town Hall