

Town of Winchester  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
September 2, 2025 - 5:00 PM  
Town of Winchester Town Hall  
338 Main Street – 2nd Floor – P. Francis Hicks Conference Room  
MINUTES

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Chair Kevin Burgio calls the meeting to order at 5:04 PM. In attendance: Renee Waldron, Addie Mehl, Amanda Hill, Tom Carter, and Jen Perga. Absent: Sally Chesney.

**2. Public Comment - None**

**3. Agenda Review -** No changes; motion by Tom, seconded by Jen. Vote: Unanimous.

**4. Minutes Approval:** *August 5, 2025 Minutes*

Motion to Accept: Amanda. Second: Tom. Vote: Unanimous.

**5. New Business**

A. Downtown Tree Removal:

The Commission agreed to send Kevin's letter to the town manager regarding the removal of trees in downtown.

B. Connecticut Trails Day – October 3: Tom reported that there is a trail workshop on October 3rd in Manchester at the Community College. Greenways are the focus of the day. Tom will forward the email to see if anyone from the Conservation Commission would like to attend. He attended last year and said the speakers and workshops were interesting.

**6. Old Business**

- A. Publicizing Conservation Commission Events/Facebook: Addie has set up a Conservation Commission Facebook page. She will use the page to share event information but is also considering posting educational information. Addie's topics include knotweed, the importance of dead trees and snags, and invasive jumping worms. Addie's partner is willing to design a logo/image for the Facebook page. Jen will send a photo of the banner to Addie to see the graphics the CC is currently using.

Kevin is willing to review the posts before they go public. Tom said that Jess Tessman is working on a similar Facebook page for the Economic Development Committee and is starting with historical "spotlights".

- B. Multi-town Japanese Knotweed/Invasive Plant Management: Tom says the "knothead" group is still meeting. A group plans to kayak part of the Farmington River and use the Epicollect 5 app to map knotweed stands along the river. Sally, Addie, and Tom have mapped most of the knotweed locations in Winsted, with 165 sites recorded! The Planning Office has imported the sites onto a road map, and the Town has submitted a grant to DEEP,

requesting \$42,000 over 2 years to fund a chemical application to address the problem. If the Town gets the grant, the maps will be updated in the future.

Jim Rollins is writing a separate grant to address the Department of Public Works Yard. He can hire a State Certified applicator. Addie wondered if any leftover funds might be used for re-seeding. Jen mentioned that many grants for invasive work on Land Trust properties include funds for replanting native species. Kevin suggested that the Facebook page could be used to encourage people to map private or town stands of knotweed using iNaturalist.

Jen wondered if property owners could be alerted that the Town will be spraying knotweed in their area, and they might want to address the invasive on their own properties...though she admitted it would be challenging to try to contact everyone.

Tom stated that a Norfolk citizen who presented at the Hub might be willing to assess properties for private homeowners regarding invasives.

C. Purposes and Goals of the Conservation Commission: No discussion.

D. Sue Grossman Ad Hoc Committee: Tom explained that the committee is sending letters to adjoining Property Owners to get feedback on the trail. Extending Water and Sewer lines might not be possible at this point. An RFQ for the engineering of the trail will be issued once the final route has been selected. Paul Harrington joined the meeting and explained that the Town will get \$500,000 from the DOT to match the Federal grant of \$2 million, but there are strict timelines with the grant. The project must be approved by October 2026 and built by October 2027. The water and sewer project could complicate timing and risk losing funding. In the meantime, property could be set aside for the water and sewer pipes that may be installed at a later time. There is a counter on the Sue Grossman Trail that has recorded roughly 70,000 people per year using the trail.

E. Plans for Fall Festival on September 27:

Jen has emailed Candace requesting a space at the FFF. It will be located near other conservation groups, including the Winchester Land Trust and the Highland Lake Watershed Association. Renee will bring her tent and tables. Sally plans to get her poster of invasives. Addie might bring a button press so that kids have an activity to do. Tom has two banners. Kevin can staff the table in the early afternoon. Another banner is stored in the Friends of Mainstreet's office with the CC "grabbers" and cleanup materials.

8. **Other Business** - Town Manager Harrington stated that the trees across from the Dairy Queen will be replaced. There is an Eversource Grant of \$2,500 for this purpose.

9. **Adjourn**

Amanda moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 PM, which was seconded by Tom and unanimously approved by the board.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jennifer Perga, Secretary