

Town of Winchester
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
April 7, 2026 - 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 5:05 PM. In attendance: Sally Chesney, Renee Waldron, Addie Mehl, Tom Carter, and Jen Perga. Absent: Amanda Hill.

2. Public Comment - None

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

4. Minutes Approval: February 3, 2026 Minutes and March 25, 2026 special meeting minutes
Motion to approve the minutes: Renee. Second: Tom. Vote: 4 in favor, 2 abstentions.

5. New Business

A. Election of new commission officers: Motion to elect Renee as chair by Tom, seconded by Sally. Vote: Unanimous.: Motion to elect Tom as vice chair by Renee, seconded by Addie. Vote: Unanimous. Motion to elect Addie as secretary by Renee, seconded by Jen. Vote: Unanimous.

B. Reporting to the Board of Selectmen: Commissioners do not plan to report to the BOS in the near future. Tom will ask Bill Hester if he has time to attend meetings in the future.

C. BAR Grant Update:

The Council of Governments received a BAR grant to study brownfield properties along the south side of the Mad River from Case Ave to Lake St. The Town has chosen a firm to conduct the study. The firm will determine any contamination, possibly conduct a Market Study, and Implementation Guidelines for the properties. This is a step towards developing properties along the Mad River.

D. Growing Greener Communities presentation recap:

Commissioners were very pleased with the presentations by the three speakers. Dan Watkins spoke about bees and pollinator gardens, Michelle Winkler discussed native plants, invasive plants and how to support pollinators. Laura Hart showed many before and after photos of rain gardens and bioswales which filter runoff, including those installed at Resha Beach and at the Highland Lake Boat Launch. The attendees had many questions for the presenters. 35 guests attended the presentation in person with about 10 viewers on YouTube. 62 people have subsequently viewed the YouTube video. Commissioners are very interested in setting up another presentation in the fall and possibly in the winter. The CC might partner with AMP, WLT, Beardsley Library, Curious Cat Bookstore. Potential topics include; Nature Journaling, Recycling options at RRDD1 with Todd Arcelaschi, "Morticulture" – the importance of decay with Marjory Winters.

E. Conservation Commission involvement with other towns: tabled

In regards to internal involvement, Commissioners plan to learn about projects in town by following the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (IWWC) and the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC). Kevin is a member of the IWWC and can report to the CC. Tom plans to periodically attend PZC meetings.

6. **Old Business**

A. March 31 Event: See letter D above.

B. Publicizing Conservation Commission Events/Facebook: See above.

C. Chartered Commission Status:

Tom found information from the Town Charter. The information is not very detailed. Commissioners discussed Natural Resource Inventories (NRI) which other towns have initiated at the CC level.

D. Multi-town Japanese Knotweed/Invasive Plant Management: No updates

E. Sue Grossman Ad Hoc Committee: No updates

7. **Communications**: N/A

8. **Other Business**: N/A

9. **Adjourn**

Renee moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 PM, which was seconded by Sally and unanimously approved by the board.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Perga, Secretary