

Town of Winchester  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
May 5, 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 Renee Waldron calls the meeting to order at 5:02 PM. In attendance: Sally Chesney, Kevin Burgio, Addie Mehl, and Tom Carter. Absent: Jen Perga and Amanda Hill

**2. Public Comment - None**

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

**4. Minutes Approval: April 7, 2026 Minutes**

Sally suggested amending minutes to take out “see above” after section B of “Old Business” and add “intermingled in previous discussion in ‘New Business’”

Motion to approve: Renee. Second: Kevin. Vote: unanimous

**5. New Business**

A. Banning Rodenticide: tabled until next meeting

B. Report from the Clean-Up (and Torrington Clean-Up):

Winchester Clean-Up had a great turnout of about 40 people including the Boy Scouts. The dump truck was pretty much filled with bags full of trash. Tom had possible suggestions for the next clean-up: provide map segments to expand clean-up efforts to different areas and add multiple drop zones for trash; approach various businesses and organizations around town to get involved, as well as schools, especially if students require volunteer hours; additional poster placement around town. Renee provided additional grabbers and suggested that the commission find a more suitable place to store CC items (since quite a lot of materials have accumulated) that can be accessed easily by everyone- possibly Town Hall. Renee also mentioned that the commission should consider adding additional clean-ups throughout the year, as all needed materials are acquired, and it would be nice for the community. Tom reported that the Torrington clean-up had a great turnout, and he would like to see people from both towns going to both with more coordination with other towns/associations. Addie to make a Facebook post thanking clean-up participants and donors.

C. VoxBox project suggestions:

VoxBox is a national program to get HS students involved in civic projects. Kevin will contact Melissa Bird at the American Museum of Tort Law to see if VoxBox is running this year, if they need ideas for projects, and to follow-up on the River Smart Pledge.

D. River Smart Pledge compliance:

Businesses who participated in the River Smart Pledge should be responsible for keeping their sections of the rivers clean. See above. Kevin to follow-up on status for later discussion.

6. **Old Business**

A. Multi-town Japanese Knotweed/Invasive Plant Management:

Things are a bit slow right now, but there is discussion about combatting invasives other than Knotweed. The working group has been good for multi-town synergy and collaboration on shared goals. Colebrook is creating a letter for residents regarding invasive awareness and removal options. Addie, Renee, and Sally will work on making “monthly invasive” educational posts on FB.

B. Sue Grossman Ad Hoc Committee:

The committee has applied for an additional grant for the rest of funding required for the project. Currently waiting on several easements still needed to proceed.

C. Reporting to the Board of Selectmen:

Currently, the BoS is deep in town budget discussions, so this would not be the best time to report at any meetings. Will continue to cc Bill Hester, as well as Terry and Glenn on commission communications with the town. No need for further discussion. Will be removed for the next meeting.

D. BAR Grant Update:

Grant covers Case Street to Lake Street buildings and lots being assessed for contamination due to previous industrial use. Study is currently ongoing by a firm. The report will be used to advise private property owners and developers.

E. Growing Greener Communities presentation recap: remove; discussed last month

F. Conservation Commission involvement with other towns: remove

G. Publicizing Conservation Commission Events/ Facebook:

Anyone can post about events freely. Educational posts to be “fact-checked” by at least one other member of commission. Sally, Addie, and Renee to work on “monthly invasive” educational posts on FB.

H. Chartered Commission Status:

The Conservation Commission is in the charter as discovered by Tom. It was included when mandated by the state. There are standards recommended by the state that the commission will look further into and discuss how to meet, such as compiling inventories of natural resources and species of special concern. To be discussed further.

7. **Communications:** N/A

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

9. **Adjourn**

Sally moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:59 PM, which was seconded by Kevin and unanimously approved by the board.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Addie Mehl, Secretary