Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH
Meeting Minutes–September 2, 2025

Note: Minutes are subject to review, correction, and approval by the Commission. Review, correction, and approval of minutes generally occur at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Swanzey Conservation Commission was called to order by Chair Cheri Domina at 4:03 p.m. Committee members present: Chair Domina, Mark Scalera, Bob Goodrich, Jay Ward, Nancy Karlson, Bonnie Hart, Bud Winsor and alternate Jane Johnson.
Also present: Stephon Mehu, Assistant Town Planner, Victoria Ames, Richard Lane

ABSENT

Alternate Wally Smith

MINUTES

- The commission members considered the meeting minutes for August 4, 2025. There was a **motion** by Scalera to approve the Minutes as presented. There was a second to the motion by Goodrich and no further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

PUBLIC INPUT

Domina said that a worker on Hale Hill Road photographed a timber rattlesnake there this summer, which was verified by NHF&G. They are endangered in NH. The snake was unharmed.

NEW BUSINESS

Review for Planning Board / ZBA / Town

Special Exception for a large building at a residential lot on Katie Lane. Discussed the nature of the use—does not appear to be a business but applicant said dogs will be trained there. Their own dogs? If there are many dogs on the property, how much dog waste is generated, and is it disposed of properly without creating a public nuisance or environmental hazard? The building will be within 250' of Martin Brook, but outside the 150' mark.

Ward made a motion we forward our question about the dog waste. Winsor seconded. All in favor—motion approved.

Withdrawal of Water Ordinance—Ward presented a draft ordinance to ban withdrawal of water from Swanzey Lake and Wilson Pond for companies filling up trucks, people filling swimming pools or fish ponds, etc. The town should be able to control use of town property, and people filling and washing out trucks is endangering water quality and levels. He is concerned about public safety issues at Wilson Pond as well. Winsor suggested including fireponds. Could also include the Ashuelot River. Ward will run the proposed ordinance by Selectmen.

Mehu said that he has had complaints about people using town hydrants to fill trucks, but Goodrich said people are allowed to pay to use them.

Ward also said he asked NH DES to survey Wilson Pond for invasive plants, but they said they don't do private ponds. The NH Fish & Game website has Wilson Pond listed as "partial access" even though boat launch is public. He said the state needs to update their information and change that to public access. Johnson suggested contacting our local legislators to talk to Fish & Game for us and straighten it out.

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OLD BUSINESS

Facebook & Web Page—Domina said she's taken no action yet.

Mt. Cresson Trails—Domina met with Joe DiRusso and he said the DPW will rebuild the parking lot very soon. She said they discussed whether to use gravel with recycled asphalt that the town has, or buy new gravel. She asked DiRusso for a quote for new gravel, which is $801, and favored that so that we don't bring in asphalt or invasive weeds. Members agreed.

Motion made by Ward to approve spending $801 from the Mt. Cresson fund for parking lot gravel. Winsor seconded. No more discussion; all in favor. Approved.

Wetland Conservation District amendments—Discussed latest version from the work group, and whether to use setbacks vs. buffers. Lane and Ames said the Planning Board will not accept buffers and recommended we go with setbacks. However, the Current Use law allows landowners a tax break for up to a 100 ft. buffer—nothing for setbacks. The DES model ordinance uses buffers. Goodrich suggested we give applicants a choice of either a buffer or a setback, and everyone liked that idea. Everyone suggested measurements they found reasonable. Domina will take the numbers suggested and work up some new language.

Next Meeting: To be announced. Planning Board joint meeting is Sept. 11.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Scalera to adjourn, second by Ward, without further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.*** Adjournment occurred at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Cheri Domina, Chair

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