Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH
Meeting Minutes–October 6, 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 4:00 p.m. Committee members present: Chair Domina, Bob Goodrich, Jay Ward, Nancy Karlson, Bonnie Hart, and alternate Jane Johnson. Johnson was seated for Winsor.
Also present: Stephon Mehu, Assistant Town Planner, Victoria Ames, James Lane, John Noonan from Fieldstone, Jeff Littleton of Moosewood Ecological (via Zoom)

ABSENT

Mark Scalera and Bud Winsor

MINUTES

- The commission members considered the meeting minutes for meetings on September 2 & 7, 2025. **There was a motion by Karlson to approve the Minutes for both meetings as presented. There was a second to the motion by Goodrich and no further discussion. All were in favor. *Motion passed.***

PUBLIC INPUT

J. Lane of Keene discussed an interest in conservation of his land. Domina will arrange a site visit for commission members to meet him onsite.

NEW BUSINESS

Review for Planning Board / ZBA / Town

A. **Special Exception for a telecommunications tower accessed from Flat Roof Mill Rd**. Goodrich asked if electricity can legally be run down a class 6 road owned by the town. Can it cross another person's property? Mehu said they already have an easement or are getting one to do so. Discussed whether it will be in the airport's path; may need FAA approval. Tower will be 165'. Domina asked if it the easiest access is being used; Mehu said it's easiest to come from the south on the existing dirt road. The property is 60 acres, has been logged heavily. Domina asked whether the access road will be gated or improved. Mehu said the road would have to be changed from class 6 to class A to gate it. There will be no real improvements to the road. Commission had no concerns.

B. **Expedited DES Wetlands Permit—Asher Construction, Safford Drive.** This contractor bay project received approval last year from the Planning Board; the Board then approved the addition of a gravel parking lot with conditions limiting its use this summer, said John Noonan from Fieldstone. They will begin construction soon. They are requesting the ConCom sign off on an Expedited DES Wetlands Permit for a small wetlands crossing with a culvert to get to the gravel parking area.

Johnson made a motion to allow Domina to sign off on the permit; Ward seconded. All in favor—*motion approved*. Domina signed.

C. **Special Exception/Variance for Multifamily house at 536 Old Homestead Hwy.** Mehu said they'd just received this application for owners to add a third unit in the basement. Commission had no issues.

Cheshire Co. Conservation Commission Potluck October 16, 6-8 pm @ Whitcomb Hall! Panel Discussion: Building Resilient Stream Crossing. Domina said she would attend, and invited others to RSVP.

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NHACC Annual Meeting November 1 (early bird rate until Oct. 24). Domina and Winsor interested in attending.

Motion by Johnson to approve up to $120 for two members to attend the NHACC Conference. Ward seconded. All in favor – motion approved.

Annual monitoring of Honey Hill & Mt. Cresson & more—Ward and Goodrich will walk the Cresson boundaries October 16 and would like to invite the public to join them. They will do some PR. Domina and Hart will monitor Honey Hill again. Discussion about various town properties and which ones we should be checking on. Domina did a spreadsheet a couple winters ago, but we should be able to get a list from the new town database. Will there be info on the purpose of the properties? Is this something Moosewood could do for us?

OLD BUSINESS

Final Open Space Plan scope of work—Jeff Littleton spoke to the Commission via Zoom and discussed the final steps in completing our updated Open Space Plan. Still left to do: GIS mapping and analysis, including updated natural resource maps, the creation of conservation focus areas and story mapping. That will be accomplished this fall. Then the final Conservation Plan will be drafted by January, with a final plan and public presentation due in March 2026. Discussed whether there are particular questions Swanzey wants to address, such as steep slopes, connectivity. Littleton said he will have maps to show us by the end of November, and a draft plan in January. We had signed a contract for $16,000. He will attend our Dec. 1 meeting to discuss the maps. Littleton also offered to review our wetlands ordinance.

Wetland Conservation District amendments – Discussed the latest revisions, approved some minor changes and Ames recorded our edits. First public hearings for warrant items start in November. The town attorney will review the amendments tomorrow; Domina will attend Thursday's Planning Board meeting.

Ward made a motion to accept the edited version of the WCD amendments; Johnson seconded. All in favor—*motion passed*.

Mt. Cresson Trails—Domina said she's not sure if the parking lot work is complete, but Meadowsend said they'd send a crew to do the trail work Oct. 9/10.

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

Swanzey Lake/Wilson Pond News—Ward reported that Wilson Pond had high E. coli readings in August. How long was the water unsafe for? Mehu retested, and it was lower but still elevated in Sept. Ward sent a draft of his Withdrawal of Water Ordinance to the Selectboard. He suggested that Mehu as public safety officer consider an ordinance prohibiting swimming at the boat launch. He also spoke to the state regarding the public status of the pond—it should be listed as public. No resolutions yet.

Partridgeberry Lane Property—Ward said he hopes to connect with the landowner before next meeting to arrange a site visit. Mehu suggested we look into the Land & Water Conservation Fund to develop the property for public use.

OTHER BUSINESS

Alternate Wally Smith passed away August 31 – We are really going to miss him! Received several donations in his memory. Finance Dept. recommended we do an IMO line in a separate ledger to keep track, said Mehu. Domina will talk to them to set it up. Karlson said she'd write thank yous.

National Flood Insurance—Mehu mentioned he wanted to sign up for the Community Rating System program in the NFIP, he is writing a letter of intent. That would get Swanzey residents a discount on federal flood insurance.

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CT River Sportsmen's Club—Mehu said that the DES came out to look at the site and determined the club did an unpermitted dredge and fill there. Next they will send staff from the remediation dept.

Next Meeting: November 3

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Johnson to adjourn, second by Karlson, without further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.*** Adjournment occurred at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Cheri Domina, Chair

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