Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH
Meeting Minutes—March 2, 2026

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 4:05 p.m. Committee members present: Chair Domina, Jay Ward, Mark Scalera, Bob Goodrich, Nancy Karlson, Bud Winsor and alternate Jane Johnson. Chair seated Johnson for Bonnie Hart.
Also present: Roberta Visser

Absent: Bonnie Hart, Asst. Town Planner Stephon Mehu

MINUTES

The commission members considered the meeting minutes for February 2, 2025. **Motion by Karlson to approve the Minutes. There was a second to the motion by Ward and no further discussion. All were in favor; Scalera abstained. *Motion passed.***

NEW BUSINESS

Public input—Winsor invited all to the Monadnock Conservancy's Stories About this Place event in Peterborough March 27.

Review for Planning Board / ZBA / Town

I. ZBA—Special Exception, Eversource A152 Line, Swanzey Flood Plain District—Ward said he'd question whether this can be brought for a decision so close to March 10 voting, if it would be impacted by the new wetland amendments. Would it need a conditional use permit? Domina asked when the work would be done—not clear. She noted there would be impacts on wetlands and a vernal pool and potential turtle hibernation area; members agreed that there is adequate scrutiny and remediation required by the state, noted in the application.
II. PB—Site Plan Review, Dog Daycare/Kennel, 223 Monadnock Hwy—A&O Canine seeking to put an indoor facility on 2-acre lot on Rte. 12, with outdoor space as well. Need to see full site plan—not available. There appears to be a brook to rear of the lot—how far will the dogs be fenced from it? What's the topography? How will dog feces be disposed of? Will send comments to Adam Paquette.
III. PB—Boundary Line Adjustment betw. Meads and Mt. View Cemetery—no concerns
IV. PB—Richard Algeni Minor Subdivision Application (Tax Map 104 Lot 10)—no concerns

Scalera suggested we ask Paquette to include our comments to the Planning/Zoning boards in their entirety in the packet when it's important, rather than paraphrase.

Tallamy Film Screening—Winsor said Whitcomb Hall is available on March 19 & 26; members chose March 19, as we could have the upstairs room. Time would be 7 pm. Winsor will make sure projector is available and someone to run it and reserve space; Domina will do PR.

Finance Report—Discussed report on Moosewood Ecological expenditures since 2023. We had 3 contracts: June 2023 for $10,000; November 2023 for $24,500 and April 2025 for $16,000. These covered the ordinance review,

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wetland evaluation and Open Space Plan. We have paid $38,530 of $50,500 contracted thus far. All from Conservation Fund. Domina hopes to have full reports on Conservation Fund, Mt. Cresson Fund and Land Acquisition Fund by next month.

OLD BUSINESS

Commission membership—Three-year terms for Domina, Winsor and Karlson are ending in March—they need to re-apply. Web page needs updating. Karlson said she'd like to be an alternate, if someone else would like her spot. Agreed we would advertise for one new member. Domina said it appears we can have multiple alternates (Johnson said Keene has five); we don't seem to have bylaws setting a limit. Visser said she wants to be an alternate; she has submitted paperwork to town office; doesn't know if Selectmen approved her yet. Discussed recruiting a teacher to the commission—could be a great connection to local schools.

Open Space Planning

Wetland amendments—Voting March 10. Domina presented a handout she created and passed out at last Saturday's Meet the Candidates event. The Governance Committee is hosting a Q&A forum on the warrant articles this Saturday; Domina said she'd attend to discuss the wetland amendments. Has posted several times on Facebook about the amendments to little fanfare. Members discussed how things are being advertised—what are good ways to get the word out to people not on Facebook? Visser suggested fliers in town mailings. Town Office and Whitcomb Hall signs are good. Johnson suggested WKBK radio.

Conservation Lands Map—Discussed Moosewood Ecological's updated map. Questions: What makes the Humane Society land conservation land? Did they swap land with Yale Forest at some point? Should the airport be noted as Keene municipal land – color coded differently from Swanzey? Wilson Pond boat launch is not on the map, but is a tiny property. Could boat launches be denoted with symbols?

College Scholarships—applications are due by the April meeting. Domina said she's advertised in Shopper News and on various Facebook pages. Guidance Dept. has the flier. Could put in Keene Sentinel.

Mt. Cresson Trails—Discussed access from rail trail – would open access entice snowmobilers onto Cresson trails? We might need some sort of barricade, or make sure trail is narrow enough.

Swanzey Lake/Wilson Pond News—Wilson Pond fishing derby looked busy. Winsor said Swanzey Lake group is meeting with town officials to try to collaborate with SWRPC on On-Call Engineering grant for Talbot Hill Road reclamation.

2026 Workplan—Domina read through the Master Plan Implementation Plan goals and actions—we have accomplished quite a few! Scalera said this year could be favorable to pursue a Wilson Pond watershed management plan. Could SWRPC help? When they audit our ordinances, could we also look at the floodplain ordinance and regulations? How town treats agriculture? Discussed adopt-a-trail program of sorts for monitoring town trails. The Sourcewater Protection Plan was done in 2017—does it need review? A policy to address when town will acquire land or easements could be helpful.

Agreed that the following will be on our agenda in 2026:

a. Checklist for Conditional Use review
b. Groundwater ordinance
c. Town-owned Conservation Lands visits and evaluation for access
d. Rolling out our Open Space Plan – public meetings
e. Public Programs, ex: Plant swap – State nursery
f. Mt. Cresson map & kiosk; Explore town-wide trail map & signs

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OTHER BUSINESS

Discussed warrant item to rezone land near Marcy Hill Road, off Rte. 12.

Johnson noted that Bill Hutwelker is scheduled to talk to the Swanzey Preservation Soc. Tuesday at 6:30, and invited attendance

Discussed Hutwelker and Michael York's incorrect assertions that 50-60% of Swanzey's land is in conservation (at the Meet the Candidates event). Winsor and Jeanne Thieme refuted their claims at the meeting. Domina suggested a Facebook post discussing the difference between Current Use and permanent conservation.

Next Meeting: April 6

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Ward to adjourn, second by Winsor, without further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.*** Adjournment occurred at 6:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Cheri Domina, Chair

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