Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH
Meeting Minutes—April 6, 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, Bob Goodrich, Nancy Karlson, Bud Winsor, Bonnie Hart and alternates Jane Johnson and Roberta Visser. Chair seated Johnson for Scalera.
Also present: Asst. Town Planner Stephon Mehu; Christina Apgar, President of Old Homestead Garden Club; Megan Ulin for Revision Energy

Absent: Mark Scalera

MINUTES

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

NEW BUSINESS

Review for Planning Board / ZBA / Town

I. PB—Site Plan Review, Revision solar array at airport—Megan Ulin made a short presentation about the project. Discussed particulars. Domina noted that NH Fish & Game has a number of requirements for construction period and continued maintenance, such as mowing, designed to protect threatened species. Fencing inside project will be 4x4" ag fencing, which will allow smaller animals to pass through. Virginia wild rye will be planted under the panels and native plants allowed to populate; no concrete pads. Discussed needs for screening with vegetation; Ulin said that they are studying what the airport will allow under FAA rules. Since we are taking away grassland bird habitat, it would be good if we could at least plant native species of shrubs and plants for screening that will provide insect and bird habitat. Visser asked who will enforce NH F&G's required mowing regime. It would be up to NH F&G and airport management. NHF&G recommends mowing not occur between May 1 and August 1 to protect grassland birds; they request prior notification of mowing events in that period. Actions to take:
   a. Meet with new airport manager to discuss grassland bird and wildlife management
   b. Domina will send a list of keystone plants/shrubs/small trees to Planning Board, with comment that we would like to see a screening of native keystone plants, and we feel it's important that mowing (and other NHF&G) recommendations be followed.

II. ZBA—Variance for Bell's Septic, Old Homestead Hwy across from Monadnock High School—Mehu said the project may be within the Shoreland Zone for the S. Branch Ashuelot River (within 250' but outside 125'), so they are running it by DES for a Shoreland Permit. No comments.

Annual NHFG visit to Swanzey Lake and Musterfield conservation easements—Domina said there is a new NHF&G land steward, Jocelyn Duffy, doing the visits now for their easements. Duffy already went to the properties in March and didn't report any problems, but we will get the official reports via email soon.

NHDES 2026 Source Water Protection Conference June 3—Domina mentioned this might be of interest.

DRAFT

OLD BUSINESS

High School Scholarship—Had two applicants from MRMHS: Charleigh Bohannon and Marlee Carroll-Clough. Both impressive young women. Discussed their applications. We were invited to present the award at the assembly June 10 at 6 pm. Ward and Domina said they would go; Domina will notify school of our decision.

Winsor moved to award the $1,000 scholarship to Bohannon. Goodrich seconded. All in favor—motion passed.

Open Space Plan Update—Domina spoke to Jeff Littleton, who reported that maps and tables are done, and he's assembling the report and recommendations. Felt that we should expect a draft in about two weeks. Domina will forward to all. It will be complete. He will attend our meeting May 4 to discuss.
Domina congratulated all for passage of Wetland Conservation District amendments, by a good margin.

Mt. Cresson Trails—Hart will send out a Doodle poll to set up a site visit in next 2 weeks. We should bring flagging to mark re-route near trailhead for Meadowsend to complete. Also think about what we want for kiosk/maps and path to rail trail.

ConCom Members/Officers—Ward said Selectmen have re-appointed Domina, Winsor and Karlson. Web page still needs updates. We can have three alternates (Johnson, Visser, Karlson), but have a regular member vacancy. Discussed need for secretary. Hart volunteered to take basic minutes for Domina to use.

Ward nominated Domina to be chair for 2026; Winsor seconded. Ward nominated Winsor to be vice-chair; Goodrich seconded. No further discussion. Domina/Winsor slate approved by all—motion passed.

Finance Report for 2025—Domina presented an expenditure report from the Finance Dept. for 2024 to present. According to the town's 2025 Annual Report, we spent $8,176 from the Conservation Fund. Year-end cash balance for the Conservation Fund was $43,560; for Mt. Cresson Fund, $56,363. Land use change taxes for 2025 totaled $33,000 (no transfers to CF showing). Conservation Fund received $525 in memory of Wally Smith.

Tallamy film screening March 19—Winsor did a great job setting up, printing handouts, etc. Domina brought some snacks and did PR. Attendance was about 12 people, but we and Planning Board got some valuable information.

Ward moved to reimburse Bud Winsor $138.83 for handouts; Johnson seconded. All in favor—motion passed.

Swanzey Lake & Wilson Pond news

Swanzey Lake—Winsor reported that two people met with Joe DiRusso re: Talbot Hill Road and SWRPC's On-Call Engineering program. Mehu said Swanzey signed a contract for the service. Talbot Hill and Marcy Hill may benefit. Town began putting boards in the dam April 1. Discussed historical data on ice-out that someone pulled together; it's 2.7 days earlier per decade since the 1960's. This year it was March 26; historically was April 9 on average. State approved a no-wake zone buoy at the lake's south end, to protect shoreline there. Winsor said 3-4 people attempted to ice-fish on Swanzey Lake this year, but it's not allowed (it's a trout lake).
Wilson Pond—Boards went in to the dam April 2 and water is coming up. Pulled debris out of dam. Ward said he will attempt again to call the state and get them to change the lake's listing from "private."

Checklist for Conditional Use review—Domina said she will get something on paper and circulate to everybody, and we can build on that.

Groundwater ordinance—Domina said she will discuss a joint meeting soon with the Planning Board to explore this. Mehu said that the SWRPC could look this over as they audit our existing ordinance.

DRAFT

Partridgeberry Lane property—Ward will get in touch after Hart sends a poll; will set up a date for a site visit.

OTHER BUSINESS

Apgar noted that Swanzey's Master Gardeners need to do **community service** – we should keep that in mind!

Mehu said Swanzey is getting an **Americorps team** this summer – they are filling their schedule for an 11-day hitch. Do we have any projects for them?

Next Meeting: May 4

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted, Cheri Domina, Chair

DRAFT