Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Conservation Commission Meeting
Whitcomb Hall, Main Street, Swanzey, NH
Meeting Minutes—August 3, 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 4:00 p.m. Committee members present: Chair Cheri Domina, Nancy Karlson, Bob Goodrich, Bud Winsor, Mark Scalera, Bonnie Hart, Alternate Jane Johnson. Johnson was seated for Jay Ward. Others present: Asst. Town Planner Stephon Mehu; Joe Parisi, Swanzey Lake Protective Assoc. President; Mike Kowalczyk, Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative; Lynne Borofsky, Wantastiquet Monadnock Trail (WMT) Coalition board member.

Absent: Jay Ward

MINUTES

The commission members considered the meeting minutes for July 6, 2025. **Scalera makes a motion to accept minutes. Johnson seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed.**

NEW BUSINESS

Membership—Suzanne Whittemore has decided not to join the Commission, said Domina.

Review for Planning Board / ZBA / Town

- **Airport Road, variance and special exception (ZBA)—**The ZBA already granted these at their July 20 meeting. The proposed home is beyond the wetland setback and the driveway is in Keene. A variance was granted to build a residence in the Business district, and the SE for building in the floodplain; developer showed maps indicating it was above the flood zone. No further comments.
- **Rabbit Hollow Road subdivision, Richard Whitney (PB)—**Mehu discussed the landowners' willingness to improve the road to Class 5 for 1,000 ft; Selectman already approved this, with a plow turnaround. No comments on the subdivision. Some discussion on not wanting to see the road paved in the future.

Wantastiquet Monadnock Trail (WMT) Coalition— Lynn Borofsky presented educational information regarding the trail, specifically the sections located in Swanzey. She said we've been donating for 6 years; other nearby town CC's do as well. Trail started in 1999 and completed in 2018. As we are part of the coalition (including partners such as SPNFH, Monadnock Conservancy, Horatio Colony Trust), Borofsky invited us to attend their meetings. Our donation is also membership dues.
Domina made a motion to provide the $150 donation. Scalera seconded. No further discussion. All in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Ashuelot Rail Trail Signage—Mike Kowalczyk presented a map and budget for signs needed for The Ashuelot Rail Trail. They received a donation from a private donor to fund a portion of signs for Cheshire Rail Trail, and Home Depot has donated posts for that trail. Funds are still needed for the Ashuelot section of trail in Swanzey; 68 signs are needed including campground, covered bridge, parking directional, stop and stop ahead (in compliance with snowmobile laws), and wayfinding signs. They are expected to last 10-15 years. 4x4 pressure treated posts are required by the state. Total cost: $4,111. Mike offered a second alternative to reduce cost by sourcing stop and stop ahead signs from CNS printshop; that would reduce his request to $2,536. Domina asked if he has asked for donations from other sources. Scalera suggested asking the campground for a donation for the campground signs needed, and asking Hamshaw's for post donations. Windsor asked for a deadline. Mike said no deadline, but that no work is allowed when snowmobiles have access to the trail.

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Scalera makes a motion to donate up to $1,500 to fund signs only (minus the stop/stop ahead signs). Windsor seconded. No further discussion. All in favor.

Old Home Day & Caterpillar Lab—Domina asked if the Caterpillar Lab was indeed there, after we donated to bring it. Johnson asked why the Old Home Day committee didn't have enough funds to pay for that. Hart said it was there, but away from the main vendor tents.

On-Call Engineering Grant support—Joe Parisi (president of Swanzey Lake Protective Association) and Bud Winsor discussed pursuing this grant from Southwest Regional Planning to stabilize Talbot Hill Rd. Work that was previously done is effective, but not enough for a 100-year flood. The grant is for transportation improvement and would partially fund conceptual engineering work including a high-level engineering study. The maximum award is 11.5k while anticipated costs are 15-20k. Sthe Town would need to come up with about $8,000. WRPC will award $35,000 in funding for 3-4 projects, Parisi said. This Grant would put the town in a position to apply for a larger grant to complete work. The grant would need to be applied for by the town. SLPA needs to go back to the selectboard to ask what portion of the costs the town can cover if they decide to participate and support the grant project. SLPA would like the Conservation Commission's formal support. Domina asks if the town has input on what the end goals would be for the road. Parisi says yes, and a stakeholder meeting is needed to determine a final goal. The engineering plan would provide options. Water runoff and protection of East Shore Road (and hence Swanzey Lake) are primary concerns. The objective needs to be to protect East Shore Road due to grant obligations. Parisi would like a letter of support addressed to the selectmen to gain their support. He expresses that we should move forward quickly as the grant is first come first serve. Domina will provide a letter by the end of the week saying we are in support and will contribute a donation to the town's match for the project (no amount voted on). SLPA is also working on two grant opportunities with SWRPC to implement FB Environmental's recommendations in the Watershed Management Plan: EPA's 319 grant, and a FEMA Hazard Mitigation grant. Hoping to address runoff at Pilgrim Pines and updating failing septic systems around the lake. Parisi estimates there are at least six systems around the lake in failure—but that was self-assessed from a survey. Richardson Park needs runoff addressed, but the plants have been sitting with Fieldstone for a long time, said Mehu. He needs an estimated cost to apply for funding.

Open Space Plan Update— Jeff Littleton expects to get us a revised plan in 2 weeks, Domina reported.

Swanzey Lake/ Wilson Pond— Scalera says the heavy rain seems to have knocked down the bladderwort growth in the middle of the lake, but it's still a nuisance. It is rootless and large amounts are blowing around the lake and piling up in coves; difficult to boat through. Domina asked what causes it to proliferate; Scalera suspects it was accidentally introduced. Chopping it up causes new plants to sprout. Scalera would like a figure for what it would cost to treat the pond. Windsor suggested reaching out to Amy Smagula at NHDES for further assistance with identification and recommendations. Jay Ward is also looking into it.

Next Meeting: Domina will look into using Whitcomb Hall Sept. 8 vs. Labor Day.

ADJOURNMENT

Karlson makes a motion to adjourn. Winsor seconded. No further discussion. All in favor. 6:03pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Bonnie Hart & Cheri Domina, Chair

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