



## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

### AGENDA - AMENDED

Monday, April 17, 2023

4:30 PM

Room 22, Parks & Recreation  
Center

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### Commission Members

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair  
Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair  
Art Walker  
Councilor Robert Williams, Ex-Officio  
Eloise Clark  
Steven Bill  
Kenneth Bergman

Thomas P. Haynes, Alternate  
John Therriault, Alternate  
Brian Reilly, Alternate  
Lee Stanish, Alternate

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 20, 2023
3. Report-outs
  - 1) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Subcommittee
  - 2) Outreach
  - 3) Invasive Species
  - 4) Land Conservation
4. Potential land purchase: Route 9/Washington St. Ext. (TMP#s 229-006-000 & 218-042-000)
5. Discussion Items:
  - a) Airport proposed wildlife control fence update
  - b) Conservation Commission speaking events
  - c) 2023 New Hampshire Drinking Water Festival
  - d) Wantastiquet-Monadnock Trail Coalition – request for Keene Conservation Commission member representative
  - e) Educational resources for invasive species removal
  - f) **Keene Meadow Solar Installation**
6. Discussion on agricultural land conservation and food security (Rowland Russell)
7. New or Other Business
8. Adjourn – Next meeting date: **Monday, May 15, 2023**

1 **City of Keene**  
2 **New Hampshire**

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5 **CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
6 **MEETING MINUTES**  
7

**Monday, March 20, 2023**

**4:30 PM**

**Room 22,  
Recreation Center**

**Members Present:**

Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair  
Eloise Clark  
Councilor Robert Williams  
Art Walker  
Ken Bergman (via Zoom)  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate  
Steven Bill  
Lee Stanish, Alternate  
Deborah LeBlanc, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner  
Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,  
Recreation, and Facilities

**Members Not Present:**

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair  
Brian Reilly, Alternate  
John Therriault, Alternate

8  
9  
10 **1) Call to Order**  
11

12 Vice Chair Madison called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM. Roll call ensued, and Mr. Bergman  
13 stated that he was alone in the room where he was calling from. The Vice Chair welcomed a  
14 guest, Charles Ferrando, who is a member of the Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship  
15 Committee.  
16

17 **2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 21, 2023**  
18

19 A motion by Mr. Walker to adopt the February 21, 2023 meeting minutes was duly seconded by  
20 Mr. Bill. The motion carried on a unanimous roll call vote.  
21

22 **3) Keene Meadow Solar Station**  
23

24 The group of presenters introduced themselves: Ari Jackson (Director of Development –  
25 Glenvale Solar), Tyler Holmquist (Senior Project Development Manager – Glenvale Solar), Eli  
26 Leino (Attorney at Bernstein Shur in Manchester, NH), Amanda Dupuis (Bernstein Shur), Tracy

27 Tarr (Wetland Scientist with GZA GeoEnvironmental), and Amy Sanders (Civil Engineer with  
28 Fuss and O'Neill).

29  
30 Mr. Jackson led the presentation. He recalled a meeting with Ms. Brunner and other City Staff in  
31 December 2022. At today's meeting, the goal was to present this project to both the  
32 Conservation Commission and the Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Committee, and to  
33 answer any questions. He said that Glenvale Solar is an independent solar developer focused on  
34 affordable solar and energy storage projects in New England; they have a larger scale focus on  
35 developing affordable clean energy for the region. As an early-stage developer, Glenvale Solar  
36 works to find the best sites for these solar projects, works with the communities that host the  
37 projects, works on the local/state/federal permitting processes, and works with the local utility  
38 and grid operator. Mr. Jackson said that his team's experience dates back 15 years and includes  
39 500 megawatts (MW) (the New England peak energy consumption is approximately 38  
40 gigawatts [GW]) of projects around New England. He said the goal of this project is to generate  
41 clean, affordable energy, and to have a positive impact on the communities that host these  
42 projects. To achieve "quality over quantity," Mr. Jackson said Glenvale Solar works on a small  
43 number of projects and pursues them with a high level of commitment, in collaboration with  
44 local experts.

45  
46 Mr. Jackson provided an overview of this project. Glenvale proposed 50 MW of ground mounted  
47 photovoltaic modules and 50 MW of battery electric storage. The project would be sited on 240  
48 acres across two undeveloped lots, which collectively total more than 480 acres. He said there  
49 was a long list of site characteristics that Glenvale explores when trying to identify sites. One  
50 characteristic is the existing electric infrastructure. He said these properties sit at the intersection  
51 of two high voltage transmission corridors, one of which is owned by Eversource and the other  
52 by National Grid. He said that once the electricity on the property is identified, they consider  
53 other factors including: whether the site has suitable dry acreage and sloping to support solar  
54 development and how it is zoned (they try to keep projects remote to avoid potential abutter  
55 concerns). They avoid farmland. Glenvale often works on sites in active forestry, which is the  
56 case for these two properties in question. In addition to timber harvesting, Mr. Jackson said these  
57 two parcels have other uses including maintained hiking, mountain biking, and snowmobile  
58 trails. He said that access to this site is from Old Gilsum Road.

59  
60 Mr. Jackson continued explaining that in practical terms, 50 MW of solar would power  
61 approximately 14,000 NH homes annually—average energy consumption in NH is just under  
62 600 kilowatt hours per month. He said that this solar array would have an annual carbon dioxide  
63 offset that would be approximately 88,000 acres of forest or 15,000 passenger vehicles  
64 (according to the Energy Information Agency). Mr. Jackson said the design of the solar array  
65 was dictated by avoiding natural resources, specifically wetlands and vernal pools. He added that  
66 all stormwater runoff would be managed onsite. At the end of its life, this project would be fully  
67 decommissioned in accordance with NH state law; the modules would be removed and the site  
68 would be returned to its natural condition. Mr. Jackson said there were benefits from being a

69 significant taxpayer locally, as well as requiring very few municipal services. The project is  
70 anticipated to create 125 construction jobs.

71  
72 Next, Mr. Jackson described the design considerations. He showed the initial conceptual design,  
73 with more details on wetlands, vernal pools, and abutters, as well as where the panels and  
74 converters would be located. The project is designed around vernal pools and streams, and to  
75 minimize direct wetland impacts. There are limited areas where the proposal is to convert from  
76 forested wetland to scrub-shrub wetland. At construction, pollinator habitat would be established  
77 with a meadow condition. Game fencing would be used so small animals could pass through the  
78 project and connectivity would be maintained through the main wetland complex at the center of  
79 the project. Mr. Jackson said the project would have minimal visual impacts and would not  
80 create noise and odors, and there would be minimal traffic during operation, though there would  
81 be traffic during construction.

82  
83 Mr. Jackson continued describing the project timeline. During spring 2022, there was a vernal  
84 pool and wetland assessment, which was the basis for the current design. The lease agreement  
85 for one of the two properties was completed during summer 2022. To have the project approved  
86 and understand the electrical impact on the grid, a queue position with the regional grid operator  
87 was established in fall 2022. In April 2023, the project would be presented to the Zoning Board  
88 of Adjustment for variances, particularly due to the size of the project. Construction is planned to  
89 begin in 2026. Between now and when construction begins, all of the necessary permitting would  
90 be handled, Glenvale would pursue interconnection studies with the Grid Operator to understand  
91 impacts on the grid (a slow process), and they would seek a contract to sell the energy. Ms.  
92 Brunner had introduced Mr. Jackson and Bob Hayden, the representative from Standard Power  
93 who is managing Keene's Community Power Program. Mr. Jackson said there had been initial  
94 discussions about how this project could align with that program, but Glenvale's project is  
95 further down the road. Still, Mr. Jackson said that if there was a process for Glenvale to bid  
96 energy, they could do so competitively, which is part of their reason for working on larger sites.  
97 Mr. Jackson welcomed questions.

98  
99 Mr. Bill asked what the letters on the plan represented. Mr. Jackson replied those were just for  
100 ease of referring to a particular area. Mr. Bill asked if all those lettered areas would have solar.  
101 Mr. Jackson said yes and that the solar panels would be in rows, with space between the rows,  
102 and space under the panels to establish a meadow condition. The lettered areas would have the  
103 modules, the inverters, and stormwater management.

104  
105 Councilor Williams asked if the plan displayed was indicative of the density of the panels. Mr.  
106 Jackson said yes, that it was an illustration and not a technical drawing, but it was approximately  
107 to scale. He said the width between the panels is approximately the width of the actual panels.

108  
109 Discussion ensued about whether a motion was needed from the Commission on this project. Ms.  
110 Brunner said the presentation was informational at this point, but the Commission would receive  
111 and make recommendations on any NH wetland referrals for this project, as well as any local

112 surface water conditional use permits needed. Ms. Brunner added that there would be further  
113 opportunities for public comment. Mr. Jackson agreed that there would be site plan approval and  
114 public information sessions.

115  
116 Director of Parks, Recreation, and Facilities, Andy Bohannon, noted that there are many trails on  
117 these privately owned properties, and he asked if there was plan from the property owners to  
118 reroute or allow those trails to continue existing on the property. Mr. Jackson said yes, the plan is  
119 to reroute any impacted trails, and if that is not possible, work with the community to offset their  
120 displacement elsewhere. Mr. Bohannon noted that the proposal takes the project up the Old  
121 Gilsum Road on the western side by Timberlane Drive, which would create a lot of traffic. He  
122 asked if there was consideration of utilizing the opposite side of Old Gilsum Road. Mr. Jackson  
123 said they had not explored that option. He continued that there would be traffic during  
124 construction but that during commercial operation, the traffic would be minimal. Mr. Jackson  
125 said he was willing to explore alternate access if that was preferred. Mr. Bohannon recalled that  
126 Old Gilsum Road is a Class VI road, and the property owners have a right to use Old Gilsum  
127 Road to access their properties. Still, Mr. Bohannon said there had been a lot of work on that  
128 road in recent years and more traffic is not ideal. He said that if Glenvale plans to use the road  
129 for access, they should have a pedestrian plan because the road is used extensively for hiking and  
130 mountain biking.

131  
132 Mr. Ferrando lives near the lower part of the forest. He said that Old Gilsum Road gets very wet,  
133 which he said that Eversource did a lot to try to mediate. He had no issue with the solar  
134 installation, but wondered if there was a plan to take care of the road and not create new runoff  
135 issues. Mr. Jackson said the wetlands survey looked at the road as well and if there was a need  
136 for stormwater buffers or road improvements, that was possible. Mr. Leino agreed that Old  
137 Gilsum Road is a Class VI highway and there are certain City rules pertaining to site access and  
138 there are state laws that allow landowners—like the ones Glenvale is leasing from—to ask for  
139 permission to fix the road for things like drainage. So, as the project moves forward and  
140 engineering plans continue, Mr. Leino said roadway management was not out of the question to  
141 secure the project’s safety and so that other users of this road are not hurt by this activity. Mr.  
142 Ferrando said he saw the surveyors and asked what they were measuring. Ms. Sanders replied  
143 that the surveyors were looking at the right-of-way. Mr. Ferrando agreed that Old Gilsum Road  
144 is heavily used, especially on the weekends.

145  
146 **Mr. Bill asked what type of construction** equipment would be brought on site. Mr. Jackson said  
147 that early on, the site would need to be cleared with typical forestry equipment (e.g., skidder). He  
148 said there is very little impervious surface (i.e., cement) for the battery storage and substation.  
149 Otherwise, you’re looking at bringing in trucks to carry in the equipment and the modules  
150 themselves. Mr. Bill said the modules appear to be substantial units and asked if they would be  
151 rotated. Mr. Jackson said that most of the modules would be on trackers that rotate with the  
152 position of the sun and on steeper parts of the site, there is a “fixed tilt.” Mr. Jackson said that  
153 one module is 8’ by 4’. The trackers are approximately 9.5’ high and the fixed tilt modules are  
154 approximately 12.5’ high.

155 Ms. Clark was disappointed that two organizations were not notified and invited to this  
156 presentation: 1) the Monadnock Conservancy, who is an abutter to this project, and 2) the  
157 Society for the Protection of NH Forests (she suggested contacting Brian Hotz and/or Jack  
158 Savage), who oversees the conservation easement for the Goose Pond forest. Ms. Clark invited  
159 members of both organizations. Pete Throop of the Monadnock Conservancy was present at this  
160 meeting, though he said he was there as a citizen and not as a representative of the Conservancy.  
161 Mr. Throop and Ms. Clark agreed that the Monadnock Conservancy should be informed of this  
162 work. Mr. Leino mentioned that for the Zoning Board application the Monadnock Conservancy  
163 would be notified as an abutter.

164  
165 Ms. Clark continued noting that this is an industrial application for a large, forested tract in the  
166 middle of the Rural District. Thus, she asked Ms. Brunner what process this would have to go  
167 through to have a fair hearing. Ms. Brunner replied that large scale solar is allowed in the rural  
168 district with a conditional use permit, but it is limited to 20 acres maximum size, which means  
169 this project requires a variance from the Zoning Board at their April 3 meeting. Also, because  
170 this parcel only has frontage on a Class VI road, they need permission from the City Council to  
171 get a building permit on that road. Additionally, this project would have to undergo a site plan  
172 review that considers surface waters, hillsides, and conditional use permits with the Planning  
173 Board. Other variances could be required depending on the final design. Ms. Brunner said that  
174 impacts proposed to wetlands would require a NH Wetlands Permit, and an alteration of terrain  
175 would be needed. Ms. Clark asked how many of the aforementioned steps would include  
176 opportunities for the public to comment. Ms. Brunner said the public should have a chance to  
177 comment at all the steps she listed, but she was unsure whether that was the case for the City  
178 Council review. Councilor Madison added that the City Council would probably refer the matter  
179 to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee, which would also have public input.  
180 Mr. Bill asked when these hearings would occur. Mr. Jackson said that the variance would affect  
181 the design, so once the variance is received, they would proceed with the other items like the  
182 conditional use permit.

183  
184 Mr. Bergman asked the expected lifespan for the solar operation; he assumed that Glenvale  
185 would be the owner and operator of the facility although the land is leased. Mr. Jackson said they  
186 expected a minimum lifespan of 30–40 years and potentially as long as 70 years, which is how  
187 long the lease is for. He said Glenvale Solar is a small team of 14 people, which is why it is ideal  
188 for them to find sites that work well and do the permitting. They are less well suited to managing  
189 the construction or to be the long-term owner of the project. Glenvale would solicit feedback  
190 from the community and ensure that their values and concerns are observed by any future owner.  
191 Mr. Bergman said that Glenvale is a planner and designer but not a long-term owner or operator,  
192 and Mr. Jackson agreed. Mr. Jackson said a typical long-term owner for a project like this is, for  
193 example, managing a pension fund and seeking a stable return over a long period of time.

194  
195 Ms. Stanish asked for more details on the batteries. Mr. Jackson referred to the plans and pointed  
196 out an area adjacent to the utility corridor, where the larger of two areas would be used as a  
197 substation and the other is for the battery storage. Currently, Mr. Jackson said the market favors



198 lithium-ion batteries, which come in metal storage containers. He said the fire protection is all  
199 managed internally and they can be trucked in and out for easy replacement. Mr. Jackson noted  
200 that the batteries provide a number of services to the grid locally: reliability, reduce costs, relieve  
201 congestion, and provide energy during peak times. Ms. Stanish asked the life span of the lithium-  
202 ion batteries compared to the solar panels. Mr. Jackson replied that they degrade at 1–2%  
203 annually and they would be replaced as the project continues to operate. He would find the exact  
204 lifespan and report back to the Commission.

205  
206 Mr. Haynes strongly suggested using the east side of Old Gilsum Road as the entrance point. He  
207 said that if investing a lot of money in rehabilitating Old Gilsum Road, it might be more cost  
208 effective coming from the east side. Mr. Haynes thought using the west side would be more  
209 disruptive to recreation on the road. He added that roads and wildlife are not a good combination,  
210 and he encouraged the planners to think about Old Gilsum Road as a wildlife corridor for larger  
211 animals.

212  
213 Mr. Throop noted that the properties on both sides of Old Gilsum Road are conservation lands  
214 with high wildlife values, which he said should be considered when determining an access  
215 corridor. Mr. Throop said he thought there had already been disturbance and improvements to  
216 the access from Court Street, which he said was something to consider. He mentioned that he  
217 was a former Keene City Planner and focused a lot on Goose Pond and the many development  
218 proposals along RT-10. He said there was a lot of potential to disturb that Goose Pond landscape,  
219 which should be taken into consideration. While he did not see impacts to the steep slopes, he  
220 said they were important to consider as well. Mr. Throop also expressed concern about  
221 stormwater management. Mr. Ferrando and Mr. Bohannon agreed that the access from Court  
222 Street does not connect all the way up to Old Gilsum Road, but Mr. Ferrando said [Eversource]  
223 made improvements to Old Gilsum Road. Mr. Throop added that it would be worth looking at  
224 whether any portion of Old Gilsum Road from Belvedere Road was discontinued; he was unsure  
225 whether any part of the Class VI road was in Gilsum.

226  
227 Mr. Bill asked what was known about the biodiversity of this area and whether species had been  
228 surveyed. Mr. Jackson replied that there had been a vernal pool survey and a preliminary wetland  
229 assessment. Ms. Tarr said GZA GeoEnvironmental was retained for a wildlife assessment and  
230 studies were underway. For a project like this, she liaises with NH Fish and Game. There is a  
231 pre-application meeting to mitigate impacts that could include conservation easements or other  
232 projects the City is interested in GZA pursuing. Wildlife was at the forefront of mitigating any  
233 impacts.

234  
235 Councilor Williams asked if there were other examples of projects of similar scale and type like  
236 this in New England that the Commission could look into. Mr. Jackson said yes and referred the  
237 Commission to the project page on [Glenvale Solar's website](#). He said that Maine had seen more  
238 solar development than NH, with projects 50%–100% larger than this one, as well as projects of  
239 similar size and smaller. He cited two similar size developments in Fitzwilliam and Hinsdale,  
240 NH.

241  
242 Mr. Leino asked Mr. Jackson to speak about the efficiency of doing a larger project like this  
243 versus the same amount of coverage across several smaller projects. Mr. Jackson said that a  
244 founding principle for Glenvale Solar is that they do not want it to be a tradeoff between  
245 affordable energy and clean energy. He said they have had many smaller projects, but that bulk  
246 energy can be provided in a cost-effective way. He continued that one large project versus the  
247 same energy across many smaller projects allows them to be much more competitive in a bidding  
248 process to supply homeowners and business owners with electricity.

249  
250 Ms. Clark wanted to know how well the representatives understood the tradeoffs of a project of  
251 this scale in the midst of one of the most robust and diverse wildlife habitats in Keene and  
252 Cheshire County. She said that the Cheshire County Forester, Matt Kelly, says that the red oaks  
253 in Cheshire and Sullivan Counties are some of the finest qualities in the world. She continued  
254 saying that underlaying those red oaks are prime forestland soils that this project would be  
255 bulldozing, pulling up all the stumps, and turning the area into a meadow. Ms. Clark said a  
256 meadow could sound great but when the soil biota is disturbed to the extent proposed for this  
257 project, she said there would not be creatures left to use the vernal pools. She said the wildlife  
258 biologist should know that. Ms. Tarr replied that vernal pools are her specialty. Ms. Tarr  
259 continued stating that she did not think it was accurate to characterize this project as  
260 “bulldozing.” She mentioned installation methods and how wetland soils are preserved. Ms.  
261 Clark said they would not be leaving the tree stumps to resprout. Mr. Jackson said in the  
262 wetlands, yes, where they proposed the conversion of forested wetland to scrub-shrub, the panels  
263 themselves would be several feet off the ground at the lowest point. He said there would be  
264 vegetation management twice annually. Mr. Jackson said the intent is to preserve as many of the  
265 wetland functions and values as possible, and said it was very different from [the response was  
266 cut off]. Ms. Clark said she was speaking beyond wetlands and about the landscape of the red  
267 oak forest and the flora and fauna that depend on those trees. She said those oaks would be  
268 essentially wiped out with an industrial scale development in the middle of the Rural District.  
269 Mr. Jackson said he understood there were tradeoffs and this would be one of them. He  
270 continued stating that his team thought there was a strong case for clean energy generation and  
271 that they work with people like Ms. Tarr to protect as many natural resources as possible. In light  
272 of these tradeoffs, he said they thought a site like this was very well suited for this type of  
273 development. He added that it would be decommissioned at the end of its life.

274  
275 Mr. Bergman wondered if anyone planned to, or had surveyed, the use of the vernal pools by  
276 amphibians, which live in the woods and migrate to the vernal pools. Ms. Tarr said Gove  
277 Environmental Services documented two vernal pools in the northern portion of the property.  
278 She will assess the vernal pools this spring, after which she would provide more information to  
279 the Commission.

280  
281 Mr. Bill asked if all the areas shown in grey on the plans would be clear cut. Mr. Jackson said  
282 yes. Mr. Throop asked if the areas shown would be the extent of the cutting, and Mr. Jackson  
283 said yes, it is approximately 240 acres. Mr. Ferrando stated his understanding that a lot of this



284 site had already been forested/cut. Mr. Jackson said both properties had active forestry as  
285 recently as 2014.

286  
287 Mr. Bergman said he heard the phrase “vegetation management,” which he assumed referred in  
288 part to the new grassland areas around the solar units, and he asked the method for managing that  
289 vegetation. Mr. Jackson replied that they would not use herbicides unless there was a compelling  
290 case for managing an invasive species. He said that they would trim the vegetation mechanically  
291 twice per year.

292  
293 Ms. Clark asked for more information on the fencing and the mention of allowing certain  
294 wildlife through; she asked what sizes of wildlife would be able to access the site, noting that  
295 there are many wildlife corridors through this area. Mr. Jackson said the fence would not encircle  
296 the entire project area as shown on the plan. He said fencing is required along the northwestern  
297 portion and he mentioned another area but did not specify the location. He said it would be game  
298 fencing, which has clearance at the base that allows smaller animals to pass through but not deer  
299 or moose. Wildlife would also be able to pass through the wetland area that is between the two  
300 arrays, which he demonstrated on the plan. He said the game fencing would also be around the  
301 substation and battery storage, which are required to have barbed wire at the top per the National  
302 Electric Code.

303  
304 Mr. Haynes asked about the plan for Old Gilsum Road, where the solar array seems to be near to  
305 the road, and asked whether there would be any buffer. Mr. Jackson said yes, at that location the  
306 solar panels would be visible from Old Gilsum Road. Mr. Haynes asked if trees could be left to  
307 mask the arrays from those using Old Gilsum Road for recreation. Mr. Jackson replied that a  
308 buffer is required around the whole property. Mr. Leino recalled that these are preliminary  
309 drawings until the Zoning Board hearing. Mr. Haynes suggested considering that buffer from  
310 Old Gilsum Road for those who want to enjoy the forest.

311  
312 Mr. Bill asked if there were ways to have wildlife corridors between the lettered parcels of solar  
313 panels shown on the plans. Mr. Jackson was unsure. He suspected it would be difficult but would  
314 look into it.

315  
316 Mr. Bergman asked for more details about stormwater runoff management. Ms. Sanders said the  
317 project must meet the requirements for the alteration of terrain permit and the City of Keene. She  
318 will be looking at peak flows, treatments of the gravel surfaces, and trying to create low impact  
319 development with bioretention areas. She said infiltration is always a great way to treat and  
320 reduce the volume of runoff. She said it might be a series of detention ponds, infiltration, buffers  
321 for treatment, etc. She said it would evolve as the design progresses, but they would be held to  
322 those criteria.

323  
324 Mr. Throop referred to the variable topography on the map and to the sections marked “H” and  
325 “E”, where he said there appeared to be steep slopes that should be considered. He said he knew  
326 of prior development proposals for this property and said there are thin soils where the bedrock is

327 close to the surface. Mr. Throop said that prior development did not work out in part because of  
328 the steep slopes and in part because they could not manage the wastewater and stormwater.  
329 These were all things that he said this solar development would need to consider. Mr. Throop  
330 added that he uses this area for recreation, especially along Old Gilsum Road, which gets a lot of  
331 traffic. He said that a visual barrier between the solar panels and Old Gilsum Road would be  
332 beneficial to the citizens of Keene who use this area. Mr. Throop also talked about the density of  
333 the panels and mentioned how much space stormwater management takes and he was unsure  
334 where all that infrastructure would go on the site; he did not want to see an increase in the  
335 forested area being cut to accommodate the treatment. Mr. Jackson said there would be a soil  
336 survey and geotechnical analysis done on site. He continued that the limit of clearing also  
337 includes several acres for stormwater management. Ms. Sanders agreed and said the limit of  
338 clearing included shade for the panels, the stormwater management, the roadways, and the panels  
339 themselves. Mr. Jackson said the plans were conceptual and did not perfectly depict the buffer  
340 around the project and between the rows.

341  
342 Vice Chair Madison asked where this site is in relation to the watershed boundaries between  
343 Beaver Brook and Goose Pond. Mr. Jackson said he would have to follow up on that and  
344 confirm. The Vice Chair said his concern would be with not wanting any of these stormwater  
345 runoff structures sending water into the surrounding watersheds.

346  
347 Ms. Clark asked what type of roadways would be on site and Mr. Jackson said gravel. Ms. Clark  
348 asked if the roads would be raised. Mr. Jackson said no and referred to the stormwater  
349 management system. Ms. Clark asked if the gravel roads would be a part of that management  
350 system. Ms. Sanders said there would most likely be a gravel road with ditches and swales on  
351 either side to carry the water off the roadway and into a buffer or some other type of stormwater  
352 management system. Ms. Clark asked about the water shed from the solar panels. Ms. Sanders  
353 said it would be tricky.

354  
355 Ms. Stanish asked if any lighting would be installed. Mr. Jackson said there would only be one  
356 low watt, downcast security light near the battery storage area.

357  
358 Mr. Bill asked what percentage of the area would be covered by solar panels. Mr. Jackson said  
359 that if looking straight down at the site from an aerial perspective and all the space between the  
360 rows and around the roads was eliminated, it would be approximately 75 acres of panels.

361

362 **4) Report-Outs**

363 **A) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Subcommittee**

364

365 Mr. Haynes said that the Subcommittee met last month and worked on a final draft of the paper  
366 map handouts to be available at trailheads. The week before this meeting, Mr. Haynes and others  
367 began hanging trail signs and would continue. The Subcommittee had worked on a scope of  
368 work for the loop trail maintenance and they would walk the loop trail with contractors on April  
369 30 so they can understand the work needed. The Subcommittee would begin evaluating those

370 contractor applications mid-April. Mr. Haynes hoped that the work would be approved to begin  
371 by mid-May after it is reviewed through the City Council's Committee process.

372  
373 Mr. Haynes said that when the Subcommittee meets next month, they would begin organizing  
374 some more volunteer workdays. He wondered if the Commission should have a booth to share  
375 information and recruit volunteers at Green Up Keene on April 23. Ms. Brunner noted that Green  
376 Up Keene no longer has materials pick-up at Railroad Square but has a drive through process at  
377 Public Works. Instead, she said the Commission could have a booth at the Earth Day Festival,  
378 where the Energy and Climate Committee would have a table and she could check to see if they  
379 would include Conservation Commission materials at their booth. Councilor Williams said that  
380 in the past, the Commission had included information on invasives volunteering in the bags of  
381 information Green Up Keene participants get at Public Works. Ms. Clark said there is a good  
382 opportunity for engaging with the public at the Earth Day Festival and the Commission agreed to  
383 pursue that opportunity.

384  
385 Vice Chair Madison also suggested pop-up outreach, which he used to do with the Park's  
386 Service. He said they could set-up a table on the weekends in the parking lot at Goose Pond to  
387 solicit volunteers while they are there hiking. Mr. Haynes liked this idea.

388  
389 **B) Outreach**

390  
391 Mr. Haynes said the work group did not meet last month. He said that Ms. Clark registered the  
392 Commission for the elementary school NH state water festival that is in Keene this year on  
393 Wednesday, May 10. Mr. Haynes would be there to help Ms. Clark and Ms. Stanish should be  
394 able to help as well. Anyone else on the Commission is welcome to come. Mr. Haynes  
395 concluded the work group report by reminding the Commission of the spring Goose Pond  
396 Through the Seasons bird walk on May 28 from 8:00 AM–10:00 AM; Mr. Haynes would submit  
397 the press release soon.

398  
399 **C) Invasive Species**

400  
401 Councilor Williams said he was waiting to finalize an invasives schedule until he finds out the  
402 Council's schedule of special meetings for the downtown infrastructure project. In general, he  
403 said he learned last year that there tends to be better participation on weekday evenings,  
404 particularly on holidays like Indigenous Peoples Day.

405  
406 Mr. Haynes asked if Councilor Williams had a flyer/information to share with the Green Up  
407 Keene materials. Councilor Williams said he included information on the Garlic Mustard  
408 Challenge in past years but there was no new location identified for that event this year. Mr.  
409 Haynes suggested a flyer on invasives that people can find in their yards and how to remove  
410 them. Councilor Williams wants to also encourage people to pull invasives along the Rail Trail.  
411 The Councilor hoped to finalize some dates for this year's invasives activities before Green Up

412 Keene and would create something to include with those materials. My. Haynes said he would  
413 look into some of the University of NH Cooperative Extension's invasives resources.

414  
415 Vice Chair Madison recognized a Keene resident who said she recently reached out to her  
416 neighbors in east Keene about why the City or neighborhood had not done anything about the  
417 bittersweet that is prominent along waterways. She cited Victoria Avenue as an example where  
418 the bittersweet is too thick for wildlife to traverse. She wanted to know if private citizens could  
419 cut invasives on public property. Councilor Williams said he usually works with City Staff so  
420 that they know where the cutting is happening and they help to haul away bags of the invasives.  
421 He said that the Director of Parks, Recreation, and Facilities, Andy Bohannon, would be best to  
422 contact for work in parks and the Public Works Director, Kürt Blomquist, would be better for  
423 roadsides. Councilor Williams thought he was the member of the public's ward Councilor and  
424 offered to speak with her more to ensure the right people are advised.

425  
426 Mr. Bergman said he believed the railbed and the buffer zone on either side on the embankments  
427 are owned by the state but that the City has some permission to use it for recreation or other  
428 purposes. He said the state periodically chops things down along the railbed but he was unsure  
429 who supervises or decides that. He mentioned the railbed near Monadnock Marketplace where  
430 there are a lot of wet areas that had been chopped down but he was unsure by whom. Vice Chair  
431 Madison thought it was likely that the City was doing that clearing.

432  
433 **D) Land Conservation**

434  
435 This work group had not met since the last meeting.

436  
437 **5) Discussion Items:**

438 **A) Airport Proposed Wildlife Control Fence Update**

439  
440 Ms. Brunner had no updates. Mr. Bergman had no updates but would reach out to Airport  
441 Director Hickling before the next meeting for an update.

442  
443 **B) Conservation Commission Speaking Events**

444  
445 Vice Chair Madison reported that he had a good conversation with John Therriault about doing  
446 an event on pollinators for the Pollinator Palooza in June.

447  
448 **C) 2023 NH Drinking Water Festival**

449  
450 Vice Chair Madison is an organizer and would be a judge this year. He recommended that  
451 everyone attend. Ms. LeBlanc asked what the festival was. Vice Chair Madison described it as a  
452 big science fair on water for kids.

453  
454

455       **6)    New or Other Business**

456  
457       Councilor Williams told the Commission about proposed changes to the Fireworks Ordinance  
458       that would be going through the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee in April. The  
459       changes would remove the restrictions on fireworks so that fireworks would no longer have to go  
460       through a permitting process any longer. He had a lot of concern about this change for the  
461       environment in terms of fireworks scaring wildlife and impacting habitats, in addition to air  
462       quality issues, and chemicals and particulates entering water supplies.

463  
464       Ms. Brunner mentioned a communication she received from Rowland Russell, who works for  
465       Antioch University New England, about a presentation to the Conservation Commission on food  
466       security. Ms. Brunner would put this on next month's agenda.

467  
468       Ms. Clark noted that the Joint Planning Board-Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee  
469       sent the Ordinance proposing to change the minimum lot size in the rural district from five-to-  
470       two acres forward to the City Council. This would likely be heard by the Council at their first  
471       meeting in May and there would be an opportunity for public comment.

472  
473       **7)    Adjournment**

474  
475       There being no further business, Vice Chair Madison adjourned the meeting at 5:57 PM.

476  
477       Respectfully submitted by,  
478       Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker  
479       March 27, 2023

480  
481       Reviewed and edited by,  
482       Mari Brunner, Senior Planner