



CONSERVATION COMMISSION

AGENDA

Monday, September 16, 2024

4:30 PM

Room 22, Recreation Center

Commission Members

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

Deborah LeBlanc, Alternate
Thomas P. Haynes, Alternate
John Therriault, Alternate
Lee Stanish, Alternate
Eloise Clark, Alternate

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 19, 2024
3. Report-outs:
 - a) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Subcommittee
 - b) Invasive Species
 - c) Land Conservation
 - d) Pollinator Updates
4. Discussion about a citywide approach/strategy for invasive species management
5. Discussion Items:
 - a) NHACC Intern opportunity
 - b) Airport proposed wildlife control fence
 - c) Keene Meadow Solar Station project update
 - c) NHDOT Route 101 Project
 - d) Master Plan Update
 - e) Outreach
6. New or Other Business
7. Adjourn – Next meeting date: **Monday, October 21, 2024**

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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5 CONSERVATION COMMISSION
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Monday, August 19, 2024

4:30 PM

Room 22,
Recreation Center

Members Present:

Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair
Councilor Robert Williams (arrived at
approx. 4:40 PM)
Art Walker
Ken Bergman
Steven Bill
Barbara Richter
Eloise Clark, Alternate
Thomas Haynes, Alternate
John Therriault, Alternate
Deborah LeBlanc, Alternate

Staff Present:

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Members Not Present:

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair
Lee Stanish, Alternate

8 **1) Call to Order**
9

10 Vice Chair Madison called the meeting to order at approximately 4:30 PM.
11

12 **2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – June 17, 2024**
13

14 Revisions: Lines 185–186, change “fence” to “fenced-in area.” Line 211, replace “grasslands”
15 with “grasshopper.” Line 102, “an extension of the Loop Trail” should be changed to “near the
16 junction of the Loop Trail.”
17

18 A motion by Mr. Walker to adopt the June 17, 2024 meeting minutes as amended was duly
19 seconded by Mr. Bill and the motion carried unanimously.
20

21 **3) Report-Outs:**

22 **A) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Subcommittee**
23

24 Mr. Haynes reported that at the end of June, there was one good week of work with trail builder,
25 Lew Shelley, focused on the Lower Drummer Trail: reroutes, water bars, pruning, and closing

26 off a trail. Additionally, the Subcommittee worked to build a new kiosk at the North Trailhead.
27 In July, the Subcommittee had two scheduled workdays and two non-scheduled workdays,
28 predominantly focused on the Lower Mattson Trail (e.g., water bars and reroutes). To date in
29 August, Mr. Haynes reported that the Subcommittee’s scheduled workday was canceled due to
30 rain, so instead, they met with the City’s new Director of Parks and Recreation, Carrah Fisk-
31 Hennessey, and Frank “Pepper” Anderson, the Parks and Recreation Superintendent, to discuss
32 the Stewardship Subcommittee’s work and goals. Mr. Walker and Mr. Bill agreed that both staff
33 members were very open to and supportive of the Subcommittee’s ideas, including the concept
34 of a bridge over the lower end of the spillway.

35

36 Councilor Williams arrived.

37

38 Mr. Haynes also reported that last Saturday the Subcommittee had a scheduled workday with
39 volunteers on the Mattson Trail; one more day of work on this lower section of the trail would
40 likely complete the Subcommittee’s summer 2024 goals for that section. Once that section is
41 complete, work would shift to the Lower Drummer Road Trailhead, which Tom noted needs a
42 lot of work.

43

44 Mr. Haynes continued, reporting that last Sunday he led a Goose Pond Through the Seasons
45 walk. He took the group on trails that are less commonly used, calling it an adventure and good
46 fun.

47

48 Ms. Clark asked where the Subcommittee was sourcing volunteers. Mr. Haynes replied that the
49 Subcommittee meets for work on the second Friday of each month, though some volunteers are
50 invited. Workdays are on the third Saturday of the month, and he emails a list volunteers (~ 14–
51 15) to invite any who are available. He is happy to add anyone else to the email list.

52

53 **B) Invasive Species**

54

55 Councilor Williams reported on two successful invasive species events that were held since the
56 last meeting. First, volunteers worked on the large area of Japanese knotweed between Beaver
57 Brook and Ellis Harrison Park for the second year in a row; a lot pulled from the first year had
58 regrown, but it is easier to pull the second year. The area of knotweed pulled was expanded this
59 second year in preparation for a third year. The crew planted two birch trees (one funded by the
60 Conservation Commission and one from Councilor Williams’ yard) in the area where knotweed
61 was removed. Councilor Williams would like to revisit the site in the fall to clear out other things
62 that might be growing and to do some seeding. He had noticed at a different location that orange
63 jewelweed competes well with knotweed once the top layer of knotweed is removed. So, he
64 planned to scatter orange jewelweed seeds in Ellis Harrison Park. He recalled that part of the
65 Conservation Commission’s goal in this invasive species technique is to find native species that
66 replace the knotweed and prosper.

67

68 Councilor Williams also reported that in July, volunteers worked on knotweed in the Woodland
69 Cemetery for the third year in a row. It was clearly visible where the effort had made an impact
70 over time, making it feel less hopeless, which is possible with this challenging invasive. He plans
71 to continue at this location in future years.

72

73 There was no invasive event planned for August. The next event would be in September (date
74 TBD).

75

76 Mr. Therriault noted that jewelweed is a good source of pollen and nectar for native bumblebees.
77 He added that in his research on knotweed eradication, he learned that glyphosate herbicide can
78 be useful (a version of the common Roundup; there is also a lower concentration version called
79 Rodeo recommended by the Department of Agriculture). After the first frost, the knotweed
80 should be cut to 4–5” above the ground and ends are painted with the glyphosate (within 30
81 minutes after cutting), which is absorbed into the roots, killing the plant. According to the studies
82 he read, it seemed to be a measured use of herbicide with proven effectiveness with less
83 regrowth and labor the second year. Councilor Williams was interested in using this technique in
84 locations outside of watersheds but noted that NH law requires such application on public lands
85 to be performed by a certified professional and he was unsure whether there was someone
86 certified on City staff.

87

88 Mr. Bill asked if the strategy was to keep cutting the tops off the knotweed to weaken the root
89 systems enough that they would ultimately fail. Councilor Williams said yes. Mr. Bill asked if
90 knotweed has very long roots. Councilor Williams said it is less about the length of the roots and
91 more that they are big/chunky, so weakening them makes them easier to pull out.

92

93 Mr. Bergman mentioned the area where volunteers had removed water chestnut from the creek
94 along Airport Road (just past the Terminal), noting that it was pretty clear of the invasive this
95 year. Councilor Williams said that was positive news, as that work was a few years ago.

96

97 Mr. Bergman recalled a past question from Ms. Stanish on educating the public about eradicating
98 knotweed on private property, and whether educational materials existed. He asked if anyone had
99 worked on that effort. Ms. Richter thought she might have offered to help, so she said she would
100 revisit available resources from the Department of Agriculture and the University of NH
101 Cooperative Extension. The Commission agreed that posting resources on its City webpage
102 would be helpful to the public; the webpage already linked to the NH Guide to Upland Invasive
103 Species. Ms. Clark said she would resend links to various resources.

104

105 Ms. Richter added that she learned that the beetles that control purple loosestrife had been very
106 successful, to the extent that beetles no longer have to be released; the beetles only feed on the
107 loosestrife, not other plants.

108

109 **C) Land Conservation**

110

111 No updates.

112

113 There were also no updates on the acquisition of the property along the Washington Street
114 extension. The City Manager was involved in that ongoing effort.

115

116 **D) Pollinator Updates**

117

118 Mr. Therriault reported that there were no updates on the Edgewood neighborhood pollinator
119 garden; they continue working on their plan. He mentioned that the early goldenrods were out.
120 He noted feeling strongly about knotweed both ways: it is a good source of nectar for pollinators
121 in the fall, but it is a challenging invasive. He thought asters would appear soon, toward
122 September 1. He thought Keene had a good environment for pollinators and that there had been
123 good weather for pollinators, despite the humidity. Mr. Bill asked if the pollinator populations
124 were doing well. Mr. Therriault replied that it was hard to measure, and he could only judge
125 observations in his yard, where he had seen several varieties of bumblebees, which indicates
126 fairly healthy populations (including honeybees, with minimal infestation of mites).

127

128 Mr. Bergman asked if honeybees compete with native bees. Mr. Therriault said yes. Mr.
129 Bergman asked about impacts on native species due to the widespread use of honeybees for
130 agriculture, for example. Mr. Therriault replied that because there is minimal industrial
131 beekeeping (i.e., keepers with 150+ hives) in this small region—there are only about two dozen
132 beekeepers in Keene—there would not be a significant impact from those honeybees as in other
133 parts of the nation.

134

135 **4) Discussion Items:**

136 **A) Airport Proposed Wildlife Control Fence**

137

138 No updates.

139

140 **B) Keene Meadow Solar Station Project Update**

141

142 No updates.

143

144 **C) NHDOT Route 101 Project**

145

146 No updates.

147

148 **D) Master Plan Update**

149

150 The Master Plan update was moving forward and was still in Phase 1 to develop the community
151 vision. Ms. Brunner reported that at the Master Plan Steering Committee's most recent meeting
152 on August 6, the group identified the key themes for the Master Plan, and they would continue
153 working on that at their next meeting on September 3 at Heberton Hall (guests are welcome for

154 the workshop-style session). On Saturday, October 5 (9:00 AM–12:00 PM), there would be a
155 “Future Summit” to unveil the Master Plan vision and transition to Phase 2; she invited
156 Commissioners to this Summit as a great way to get involved (with no further commitment
157 implied).

158

159 Mr. Bergman recalled that housing is an obvious issue of concern for the Master Plan. He asked
160 whether the general mission and other goals of the Conservation Commission would be
161 highlighted in this Master Plan. Ms. Brunner replied that through the community survey,
162 community members felt very strongly on that topic. Of the 600+ responses of what people like
163 about Keene, the second highest response was the natural environment. That community input is
164 summarized on the [Master Plan website](#). Because Chair Von Plinksy had been traveling, the
165 voice of the Commission might not have been as strongly present at the past few Master Plan
166 Steering Committee meetings. Vice Chair Madison added that it is important for Commissioners
167 to attend these community meetings not just representing this Commission’s interests, but as
168 concerned community members.

169

170 Mr. Bill asked if it would be logical to have a joint meeting with the Master Plan Steering
171 Committee for more direct interaction. Because the Master Plan Steering Committee has 16
172 members, Ms. Brunner thought it would make the most sense for the Commission to attend a
173 Master Plan Steering Committee meeting (first Tuesday monthly at 6:00 PM, usually in Council
174 Chambers).

175

176 **E) Outreach**

177

178 No updates.

179

180 **5) New or Other Business**

181

182 Discussion ensued about the George Street Bridge and a document that was distributed to the
183 Commission via email. Mr. Bergman said it seemed like there were many issues to be addressed
184 before there would be approval, including a lot of engineering analysis and reporting. He asked if
185 the Commission would hear a follow-up on this, given that the Commission chose to not deny
186 the waiver. Ms. Brunner did not think any further action was required, but she was unsure
187 whether the NH Department of Environmental Services would send the permit back to the
188 Commission for its review again. Vice Chair Madison was also unsure. Ms. Clark’s experience
189 with the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee was that they would not get to revisit the
190 issue, but would be kept informed.

191

192 Discussion on the George Street Bridge continued. Vice Chair Madison thought it would be
193 reasonable to ask the Public Works Director to report back to the Commission at the October
194 meeting (close to the 60 days) with an update on the status of the permit if there are substantial
195 changes. If there are not substantial changes, the Vice Chair thought it was reasonable for the
196 Commission to receive a communication indicating that all issues were addressed. Mr. Bergman

197 mentioned feeling ill-equipped to ensure the Commission is not missing anything and did its due
198 diligence. Mr. Bill also mentioned things like typos in the report, or a legend missing from a
199 map. The Vice Chair clarified that the Commission’s role was to make advisory
200 recommendations as conservation expert representatives of the citizens of Keene, not to point out
201 things like typos in the report, which City staff and the hired contractors would be focused on.
202

203 While reviewing issues related to the George Street Bridge, Ms. Richter looked at the Beaver
204 Brook Restoration Plan, which indicated that the George Street Bridge is substantially smaller
205 than the natural bankfull channel. She quoted, “*When the bridge requires replacement, a single*
206 *span open bottom bridge wide enough to accommodate the bankfull channel and active*
207 *floodplains along both sides is recommended.*” She wondered if that was something this
208 Commission or the City needed to consider. Mr. Bergman thought he recalled that the proposal
209 was for a longer bridge and thus, a wider span across the channel. Vice Chair Madison’s
210 recollection was that it would be longer than full bank width. Ms. Richter also noticed that NH
211 Fish and Game found wild brook trout upstream and downstream, making it particularly critical
212 to ensure this remains an aquatic passage for brook trout.
213

214 Mr. Haynes recalled that in the past, there was a requirement for the Conservation Commission
215 to annually monitor the lands it oversees, and he asked if that was still the custom. Vice Chair
216 Madison said that organizations like the Monadnock Conservancy oversee parcels for which they
217 have easements, but those were not the properties Mr. Haynes was referring to. Ms. Clark said
218 the City itself holds conservation easements on several (approximately 3–5) small properties;
219 landowners had donated these parcels to the City over time. In that case, Ms. Brunner did think
220 the Commission was responsible for annual monitoring to ensure the easements are being
221 upheld. Ms. Richter recalled that she had been working with Chair Von Plinsky on a
222 comprehensive list of City conservation lands—whether owned by the City, perceived as owned
223 by the City, conservation easements, public parks, etc. That work is challenging and ongoing, but
224 having that list will help to guide any regular monitoring required. She wondered if anyone on
225 City staff could help.
226

227 On the topic of property monitoring, Ms. Brunner suggested an upcoming opportunity to submit
228 a proposal for graduate student projects at Antioch University New England or undergraduate
229 internships at Keene State College, the latter of which has a new Sustainability Coordinator, Kate
230 Witte. The Commission agreed that this could be a great student project, and Ms. Brunner would
231 connect Ms. Richter with Ms. Witte. This year, Ms. Brunner also suggested submitting more
232 than one Antioch proposal as it depends on student interests in a given year. Mr. Bergman
233 recalled the goal/need to have an inventory of conserved lands in Keene, but it had been hard to
234 compile that inventory with the bits of data different formats across various lists. Ms. Richter
235 said the City had a general spreadsheet, but it was challenging and time consuming to sift
236 through. Ms. Richter offered to prepare a write-up for soliciting KSC interns. The Antioch
237 projects require a more formal proposal; if selected, costs like travel or equipment would be
238 required. Mr. Bill recalled that there are also junior/senior seminars at KSC in the Sustainability

239 program that could potentially have related student projects as well. Mr. Bergman and Mr. Bill
240 offered to help Ms. Richter and Chair Von Plinsky with this effort as needed.

241

242 Vice Chair Madison suggested tabling the topic of property monitoring for now and to review it
243 again in September.

244

245 Mr. Bergman asked—if the City’s purchase of the Washington Street Extension property is
246 successful—whether it would have an easement placed on it. Ms. Richter suggested a deed
247 restriction for conservation for the benefit of the public to be managed by the Conservation
248 Commission (or City); this would provide a level of protection in posterity, especially if
249 purchased with the Conservation Land Acquisition Fund. Vice Chair Madison thought the deed
250 restriction would be automatic by using that Fund to purchase the property. Ms. Richter said to
251 be safe, it can be good to clarify when transferring the deed. She added that there could also be a
252 conservation easement, like Goose Pond has with the Society for the Protection of NH Forests,
253 with associated fees.

254

255 **6) Adjournment – Next Meeting Date: Monday, September 16, 2024**

256

257 There being no further business, Vice Chair Madison adjourned the meeting at 5:24 PM.

258

259 Respectfully submitted by,
260 Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker
261 August 26, 2024

262

263 Reviewed and edited by,
264 Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Mari Brunner

From: NHACC <Barbara@nhacc.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 1:12 PM
To: Mari Brunner
Subject: NHACC Has Funds for CC Interns



Denise Coulson, Plaistow NH

Funding Available for Interns

Would you like to work with an intern on a conservation project but don't have the money to pay a stipend? NHACC received a grant from the Davis Conservation Foundation to make funds available to towns who would like to work with student interns. If you are interested in hiring an intern in the Spring

of 2025, your commission can apply for the opportunity to work with a student intern to help complete an environmental project in your community. **Applications are due Friday, October 11.**

The Community Conservation Interns program was created by NHACC to provide commissions with the ability to identify a project, how to scope it with realistic expectations, and how to then complete the project with an intern's assistance. Interns will gain knowledge and practical experience through real life projects. The NHACC intern program will connect students from local universities with Conservation Commissions to help complete local conservation projects while providing experience to budding professionals. Funding for intern's stipend will be disbursed by NHACC.

Guidelines for towns

If you would like to host an intern in 2025, we request that you commit to providing guidance and mentorship to your students. Your commission should be prepared to;

- Give Intern a clear project and supportive manager and environment
- Outline the project and assign mentors ahead of time
- Demonstrate a clear project objective
- Give interns ownership and direction
- Designate a town contact for questions

NHACC will create a cohort of interns and town volunteers who can learn from each other and provide feedback on training materials and lessons learned. If you are interested in working with an intern in the Spring of 2025, complete the attached application form describing your project.

Apply Now

Applications are due Friday, October 11. The NHACC Education Committee will evaluate all submissions and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors for approval. Feel free to email Barbara@NHACC.org, if you have questions or need more information. We look forward to receiving your proposals.

Visit our Website

NHACC.org

Our mailing address is:

54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301

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