



CONSERVATION COMMISSION
WORKSHOP AGENDA

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

4:00 PM

**Keene Recreation Center,
Room 22**

Commission Members

Gary Flaherty
Barbara Richter
William White
Michele Chalice
Steven Bill

Kenneth Bergman
Bob Milliken, Alternate
Thomas P. Haynes, Alternate
John Therriault, Alternate
Alexander Von Plinsky, Alternate

1. Call to Order

2. Workshop:

- **Conservation Land Protection Criteria** – The Keene Conservation Commission will hold a workshop to discuss priorities for acquiring conservation land, guidelines for acquiring legal interest in conservation land, and potential updates to the Commission's adopted Land Protection Criteria.

3. Adjourn

CITY OF KEENE CONSERVATION COMMISSION LAND PROTECTION CRITERIA

**ADOPTED APRIL 2018
UPDATED FEBRUARY 2026**

Land that supports or enhances the following resources/features should be a priority for the City of Keene Conservation Commission as it makes recommendations to the City Council on land protection and conservation. Land directly abutting existing conservation land is a high priority for protection. Expanding existing conservation areas is an efficient use of City resources and makes it easier to steward and manage land. In addition to abutting lands, the Conservation Commission will review potential land purchases that score high on the Priority Checklist.

The following criteria are a tool for the Conservation Commission and City Council to use when evaluating a project. Any project brought forward for City Council consideration shall meet at least two of these criteria:

1. Protect Surface Water Resources
 - a. Protect drinking water
 - b. Maintain natural frontage on rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs
 - c. Maintain or enhance wetlands, vernal pools, floodplains, buffer areas, and riparian zones
2. Protect Groundwater Water Resources
 - a. Protect drinking water
 - b. Protect land overlying aquifers and aquifer recharge areas
3. Protect Forest Ecology
 - a. Maintain or enhance woodlands in association with other ecological attributesProtect slopes with grades greater than 15%
 - b. Protect the integrity, biodiversity and health of Keene's urban forests
 - c. Expand large unfragmented blocks of forests
 - d. Support responsible forest husbandry.
4. Protect Agricultural Resources
 - a. Support existing farmlands and open fields with prime soils and other attributes that support agriculture or have the potential to support agriculture.
 - b. Land well suitable for agriculture that has state or locally important soils.
 - c. Land that is suitable for urban agriculture, such as community gardens.
5. Protect Wildlife and Natural Areas
 - a. Property with significant tracts of undeveloped habitat and corridors important for wildlife
 - b. Maintain or enhance land containing ecologically significant or rare natural communities or species

- c. Priority land that is identified in the New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan, Natural Resource Inventories, or existing Land Management Plans
 - d. Other lands which increase the diversity and viability of wildlife populations, including fields, riparian areas, land contiguous to existing protected natural areas, and land that can serve as a buffer to developed areas
 - e. Unique geologic features
6. Protect Cultural, Recreational, and Scenic Value
- a. Land that offers opportunities for outdoor recreation by the public
 - b. Scenic views, ridgelines, and other aesthetic areas
 - c. Landscapes that preserve the region's cultural and historic heritage
 - d. Land that promotes connectivity of recreational networks
7. Collaboration and Leverage
- a. To protect land with willing collaborators
 - b. Land with ecological value that is vulnerable to development pressure
 - c. Land where there are landowners willing to support conservation and protection

Further Directions and Considerations

The Conservation Commission and City Council will determine whether the proposed project by itself fully protects the intended resource. If the resource cannot be fully protected without the conservation of additional nearby land, be it a wildlife habitat or a scenic vista, the likelihood of protecting the other properties should be weighed before moving forward with the project.

When reviewing proposed projects, the Conservation Commission and City Council shall give special attention and consideration to proposed projects that attract other funds for the purchase and/or maintenance of the land in question.

All costs associated with preparing a proposal initiated by the Conservation Commission for City Council consideration, whether initiated by the City Government or by a private person or group, will be borne by the City unless a third party, including the landowner, is willing to fund all or part of these costs.

The recommendation put forward by the City Administrator shall weigh the benefits of the proposed acquisition against the broader tax implications and municipal priorities that currently exist in the community.

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The following criteria are a tool for the Conservation Commission and City Council to use when evaluating a project. Any project brought forward for City Council consideration shall meet at least two of these criteria:

1. Protect Surface Water Resources

- a. Protect drinking water
- ~~a. Land overlying aquifers and aquifer recharge areas~~
- b. Maintain natural frontage on rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs
- c. ~~W~~Maintain or enhance wetlands, vernal pools, floodplains, buffer areas, and riparian zones

2. Protect Groundwater Water Resources

- a. Protect drinking water
- b. Protect land overlying aquifers and aquifer recharge areas

~~2.3.~~Protect Forest Ecology

- ~~3.~~Maintain or enhance woodlands in association with appropriate soils and other ecological attributes that support responsible forest management, including the production of timber and other forest products.
- a. Protect Steep slopes (slopes with grades greater than 15%)
- b. Protect the integrity, biodiversity and health of Keene's Urban forests (~~workshop group would like to add~~)
- c. Expand~~Build upon~~ large ~~un-fragmented~~unfragmented blocks of forests
- ~~e.d.~~Support responsible forest husbandry.

4. Protect Agricultural Resources

- a. Support existing farmlands and open fields with prime soils and other attributes that support agriculture or have the potential to support agriculture.
- b. Land well suitable for agriculture that ~~do not have~~ has state or locally important soils.
- c. Land that is suitable for urban agriculture, such as ~~or~~ community gardens.

5. Protect Wildlife and Natural Areas

- a. Property with significant~~large~~ tracts of undeveloped habitat and corridors important for wildlife

- b. Maintain or enhance land containing ecologically significant or rare natural communities or species
 - c. Priority land that is identified in the New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan, Natural Resource Inventories, or existing Land Management Plans
 - d. Other lands which increase the diversity and viability of wildlife populations, including fields, riparian areas, land contiguous to existing protected natural areas, and land that can serve as a buffer to developed areas
- d.e. Unique geologic features
- 6. Protect Cultural, Recreational, and Scenic Value
 - a. Land that offers opportunities for ~~appropriate~~ outdoor recreation by the public
 - b. Scenic views, ridgelines, and other aesthetic areas
 - c. Landscapes that preserve the region's cultural and historic heritage
 - d. Land that promotes connectivity of recreational networks
 - 7. Collaboration and Leverage
 - a. ~~To protect land with willing collaborators Land where there are multiple entities (e.g. surrounding towns or local organizations) willing to collaborate on protection/conservation efforts~~
 - b. Land with ecological value that is vulnerable ~~to development~~ to development pressure
 - c. Land where there are landowners willing to support conservation and protection

Further Directions and Considerations

The Conservation Commission and City Council will determine whether the proposed project by itself fully protects the intended resource. If the resource cannot be fully protected without the conservation of additional nearby land, be it a wildlife habitat or a scenic vista, the likelihood of protecting the other properties should be weighed before moving forward with the project.

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