

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, April 20, 2026**

**4:30 PM**

**Room 22,  
Recreation Center**

**Members Present:**

Gary Flaherty, Chair  
Barbara Richter, Vice Chair  
William White  
Councilor Michele Chalice  
Steven Bill  
Ken Bergman  
Bob Milliken, Alternate (Voting)  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate  
John Therriault, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Alternate

**SITE VISIT: At 3:30 PM, before the meeting, a quorum of Commissioners conducted a Site Visit of the property located at 315 Old Walpole Road.**

**1) Call to Order**

Chair Flaherty called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

**2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 16, 2026**

Revisions: Line 556, change “till” to “still.” Line 560, correct the word “printer.” Line 579, change “the area” to “Bretwood Golf Course.”

A motion by Vice Chair Richter to adopt the March 16, 2026 minutes, as amended, was duly seconded by Councilor Chalice and the motion carried unanimously.

**3) Planning Board Referral**

- A) PB-2025-21 – Subdivision & Surface Water Protection Conditional Use Permit – Applicant Cardinal Surveying and Land Planning, on behalf of owner Fernando Marguerite Cyr, proposes to subdivide the property located at 315 Old Walpole Rd (TMP# 210-027-000) into an ~7.94-acre lot and an ~2.70-acre lot. A Surface Water CUP is requested to allow the access**

**driveway for the new lot to cross the wetland buffer. The parcel is located in the Rural District.**

Chair Flaherty welcomed the applicants, Wendy Pelletier from Cardinal Surveying and Design and Josh Joslyn from Graz Engineering, on behalf of the property owners, Fred and Marguerite Cyr. Ms. Pelletier began with the Subdivision plan, showing the entire lot and the new lot as proposed. In blue she showed the wetlands. She showed a yellow area that is about 0.5-acre between the buffer and steep slope area, which is where the new house and septic system would go. Per staff's request, she did not show the driveway on the subdivision plan. She showed the pond and the culvert in question.

Mr. Bergman noted that one of the heaviest vehicles to go through there will be the septic trucks. He asked whether the culvert preparation will be sufficient to support the trucks as well as the construction equipment. Mr. Joslyn said yes, the culvert is a 12-inch high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe and there is typically two or three feet of cover over that is proposed as typical for any roadways.

Councilor Chalice asked what the driveway would be; how much gravel and what inspection would be involved? Mr. Joslyn said there would be about one foot of gravel under the whole driveway that is compacted in six-inch lifts. Then, there will be another four inches of crushed gravel, another four inches of crushed stone, and then the pavement on top of that. Councilor Chalice asked if the driveway would be a flat top. Mr. Joslyn said yes, if the homeowners choose to do pavement now, otherwise there would be another layer of gravel on top of the crushed stone. He said that is the typical profile over the culvert itself: 12 inches plus or minus on the edges is how the grading would be laid out, with two-to-three feet over the culvert. Mr. Joslyn pointed out the elevations: the top of the culvert at 586.4 feet at the low end and 588.7 feet for the final grade over the driveway, so just over 2 feet of gravel over the culvert on the low end and 2.5 feet on the high end.

Councilor Chalice asked if the applicants were tasked with creating the parking area as well. Mr. Joslyn said yes, the driveway does not open up until outside the 75-foot buffer, which he showed on the plan. He showed some parking in front of the garage as well as a turn around. The plan shows four parking spaces. Councilor Chalice noted that the liquid tank for the septic field would be right adjacent to that, so there should be minimal disruption when it needs maintenance. Mr. Joslyn agreed that the actual building site itself is fairly small as far as the disturbance that would be occurring.

Next, Mr. Joslyn showed the Surface Water Overlay Plan, where they proposed a silt fence basically all the way from the road and around the building site on the south side and around the driveway on the north side; they only propose enough silt fence for minimal driveway grading, the corridor, and to create the swale. Then, the whole driveway slopes up to the high point right before the bend, so it is all cross pitched to a swale down on the south side, where it is anticipated to go from the stone level spreader down at the road before it enters the ditch on the road. He showed the grading around that culvert and 75 foot buffer before the driveway opens up to demonstrate that they proposed a berm on either side if the driveway is paved or an embankment berm if it is not paved, which will capture all the water from this driveway and shed

it across that crossing. Mr. Joslyn showed the spot grades to demonstrate where water would go into the swale and then into another area that will have a stone level spreader from the driveway, creating a big bowl for the water to dump into before it gets filtered out into the wetland.

Vice Chair Richter wondered how much they would be widening the existing driveway or if they would mainly be increasing the height. Mr. Joslyn replied that it would be mildly increasing. He said an 11-foot-wide driveway was proposed all the way up; it would typically be 12 feet wide, but they kept it as close within the limits as possible. Vice Chair Richter asked about the existing driveway width, stating that it was hard to tell. Ms. Pelletier called it more of a path. Mr. Joslyn said it was close to 10 or 11 feet at this time and would not be changing much.

Mr. Therriault said the water that comes from the building lot and the driveway after the culvert would ultimately feed into the wetland. As far as the paved surfaces, Mr. Joslyn said yes, not from the building itself. Mr. Therriault posed a wetlands engineering question to the Commission, asking whether there was any concern about salt runoff from the driveway affecting the wetland over time. Chair Flaherty thought that it would be negligible if applied properly. If the salt is doubled or tripled and applied all at once, he said there would be harm, but Councilor Chalice said that would be after the fact of this. Still, Mr. Therriault said the Conservation Commission was making a recommendation to the Planning Board and could recommend, for example, that it be classified as a no-salt zone. Chair Flaherty thought they could discuss that when voting.

Mr. Bergman asked about the silt fence and asked if it would be fabric and just for the construction phase. Mr. Joslyn said that was correct, it would just be in place until everything is stabilized. Then, he showed how on many of the side slopes, they proposed to use a wildlife conservation seed mix instead of grass; it is a mix of wildflowers that takes better on the slopes, grows faster, and provides a little bit better buffer than just a lawn. Regarding snow removal, Mr. Bergman asked if the owners anticipated using snow blowers or a plow and if so, where the snow would be dumped. Mr. Joslyn said it is a plowable driveway and assumed the snow could be dumped in the turnaround area or other spaces that are outside the 75-foot buffer.

Councilor Chalice asked, in the State of New Hampshire during the construction period, what the on-center is for the silt fence stakes (e.g., every 12 inches?). Mr. Joslyn thought every 2 to 3 feet. Then Councilor Chalice thought it would be possible to have coir roll on the lower side of the silt fence during construction to ensure no silt goes underneath it. Mr. Joslyn said yes, and that they always expect to tow the fence 6 inches into the ground as well, so silt slipping under would likely not be much of an issue. They typically like to spec compostable silt socks vs. coir rolls. Councilor Chalice said it was fine, noting that it would be great on the uphill side.

Mr. Bill asked whether the culvert will be maintained by the new owner and the asked the potential for it to be clogged; it seemed like a lot of vegetation could wash into the culvert and he wondered about putting a grate on it to keep that from being a problem. He had seen several bad cases of culverts clogging, with poor results. In Mr. Joslyn's experience, grates make the problem worse because the smaller holes allow clogging of items that would otherwise would have passed through the culvert. He recommended the best solution would be riprap in front of it, but that just adds more fill to the wetlands. Mr. Bill said there were no good solutions. Mr. Joslyn

replied that there really are not, however not much water runs through there, so there would not be very high velocities unless during a 50-year storm and even then, the culvert would only fill halfway. So, he did not anticipate many issues for clogging.

Vice Chair Richter asked if it would be crushed stone or an actual paved driveway. Mr. Joslyn said he left that optional, which was why some details offered both. He showed paved and gravel cross sections for the driveway. He noted that the berm would have a 4-inch reveal if pavement and a 6-inch embankment berm if gravel instead.

Chair Flaherty asked if the applicant needed a statement from the Conservation Commission for the State of New Hampshire and the City's Planning Board reviews. Mr. Joslyn said yes. Ms. Brunner said typically they come in two separate forms, including a referral from the state for the Wetlands Permit. However, she thought this was an after the fact permit and Mr. Joslyn agreed, noting that in some towns the state is fine with a letter from the Conservation Commission on the application, which Ms. Brunner said was an option. Chair Flaherty said yes, if everyone was in favor of it.

First, Chair Flaherty wanted to do a straw poll to see how many voting Councilors were in favor of the project, before making individual recommendations. Five of seven Councilors raised their hands.

Councilor Chalice asked a clarifying question. She was not necessarily in favor of the subdivision but felt they had the legal right to do so. She felt more comfortable being asked if they met the legal requirements for the subdivision vs. being in favor of the project. With what Chair Flaherty knew of the City's Zoning Ordinances, he said he looked over the plans and believed they met the requirements, stating they were off the hook for a lot of things that a commercial operation would be for a single family subdivision; they would not have to answer to or address a lot of things. Ms. Brunner said she is not the staff person who reviewed this application. She thought she heard Councilor Chalice asking for the straw poll to be about whether they met all the subdivision regulations vs. personal preference. Councilor Chalice agreed, stating that if the poll was about whether the applicant met all the requirements for the subdivision she would vote yes. Chair Flaherty asked if that was the Planning Board's (PB) decision about whether the applicant met all the requirements. Ms. Brunner said the PB would ultimately decide on the application, and they would look to the Conservation Commission for input on the Surface Water Protection Criteria specifically.

Chair Flaherty looked to the Commission for specific recommendations to the PB about the application. Mr. White suggested light salt application on site or no salt because of the risk of salt damage to the wetlands. He wanted some language in the guidance for how salt should be used for snow removal. Vice Chair Richter thought there were best management practices for salt application. Councilor Chalice thought so at the state level and wondered about requesting that the homeowners follow those practices for salt use. Vice Chair Richter asked how to clarify that. Ms. Pelletier asked how that recommendation would be enforced. Vice Chair Richter said it would be a suggestion and hopefully informational, suggesting that the Conservation Commission could provide a link to the best management standards for anyone who buys the property. Unfortunately, she said there would be no recourse for not following it. Ms. Pelletier

said it should be a recommendation written onto the plan, not a requirement. Vice Chair Richter said the Conservation Commission letter would have that recommendation. Chair Flaherty said they could use something like calcium chloride too, which is not as damaging; there are alternatives. Councilor Chalice asked if the Commission could request that it be written on the plan and Ms. Brunner said they could recommend it to the PB.

Councilor Chalice recommended the seed mix that the applicant mentioned, calling it a great idea and recommended using it during a particular time of year because of the tree cover and amount of shade, so the seeds can establish. If seeded during the middle of summer, she said they will not get enough sun to do anything. Councilor Chalice asked about the timing of the construction, so that the seeds will have a chance to establish before leaf cover. Mr. Joslyn said he typically expects to seed within the spring growing season. Councilor Chalice asked how dense the tree cover and shade is where the road is proposed. Mr. Cyr replied that they do not get sun at their home until 8:30 or 9:00 AM.

Mr. Bergman asked about the ultimate downstream dissemination of runoff from the lot: would it mostly be percolating into the soil or going into a gully along the roadway, which then leads to something bigger? Chair Flaherty said it depends on the time of year and how intense the storm is. He said a lot of it will infiltrate when the ground is dry (e.g., August) but not other times of year (e.g., April). Discussion ensued briefly about the proposed level spreader. Chair Flaherty noted that under the existing conditions, the gravel there was fairly hard packed and almost as impervious as pavement, so he did not see a lot of sedimentation for erosion, and thought the site was pretty stable (with disturbance). Mr. Bergman added that the site is not near a major creek or stream. Chair Flaherty thought the small stream would dry up in a normal year. Mr. Joslyn only believed there is flow onto the neighbor's property, but he never followed it down. Ms. Pelletier said that is something the PB would be looking at too, because the applicant cannot increase the amount of runoff from the property. Ms. Brunner added that the City Engineer requested an updated drainage report. Mr. Joslyn said he asked about an updated culvert calculation but had not heard back from him for clarification. Ms. Brunner said she would follow up with the City Engineer.

Chair Flaherty reviewed the recommendation about salt and added one more about being attentive to invasive species and any soil that comes on and off site.

The following motion by Councilor Chalice was duly seconded by Mr. White, as amended. On a vote of 7-0, the Conservation Commission recommends the Surface Water Conditional Use Permit for PB-2025-21 with the following recommendations: (1) utilization of road salt best practices on the driveway, (2) invasive species management during construction, and (3) monitoring the silt dam weekly, with repairs as needed by the developer.

Homeowner Marguerite Cyr thanked the Commission and asked clarifying questions about what happens with this at the state level. Discussion ensued briefly. Ms. Brunner spoke about the local process and the Planning Board meeting on April 27, 2026, when the Conservation Commission's motion with those recommendations will be shared with the PB. The Planning Board may or may not incorporate those recommendations into their final approval, which is the applicant's local approval. The state's process is separate. The City would normally write a letter

or an e-mail to the State, which includes the recommendations made by the Commission. Discussion continued briefly, explaining the PB process to the homeowners. The PB could provide either a conditional approval or final approval. It is usually a conditional approval unless the applicant meets the PB's typical conditions ahead of time, which includes the submittal of paper copies of the plans and owner's signatures on the plans, for example. They could try to submit everything ahead of time for final approval the night of, but if the PB chooses to add a condition, the applicant would have the risk of modifying the plans again. Mr. Cyr continued asking questions about his specific PB application.

Councilor Chalice said the state's approval of the application is not tied to the local process. Ms. Brunner said that is correct. Ms. Pelletier said the Planning Board needs to see the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services' approval first (prior to Final Approval of the application). Vice Chair Richter said to pass the Conservation Commission motion on to Mr. Joslyn to keep that process moving before the PB meeting.

Ms. Pelletier, Mr. Joslyn, and Ms. and Mr. Cyr left the meeting.

**4) Report-outs:**

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

Mr. Haynes said the Subcommittee met on April 10, 2026 and talked about a lot of what was already covered in the March 2026 minutes. The Subcommittee had begun its normal spring maintenance of cleaning out water bars and taking trees out of the way, etc. They also started on one of the two trails that they wanted to focus on this year: the Mattson and the Lower Drummer Trails. The Subcommittee started the more serious work on the Mattson Trail. Work is still scheduled with the youth group in June 2026. Mr. Haynes reported that the representative from the Harris Center was unable to come to the Subcommittee's last meeting. So, he said the Subcommittee was just waiting in terms of the outreach portion with the Harris Center.

Mr. Haynes reported that there would be a ribbon cutting on the Goose Pond spillway bridge on Saturday, June 6, 2026 at 10:00 AM. The Parks and Recreation Department would develop the invitation list (i.e., donors and contributors, the Mayor). The Subcommittee discussed logistics about people who might need a ride up the hill and other things like limited parking, so he said that it was still in the works. Parks and Recreation would handle a fair amount of the logistics.

Mr. Bill mentioned that the ramp to the bridge may or may not be completed by the ribbon cutting ceremony. Mr. Haynes agreed that the City Engineer felt the plan they considered would be logistically too difficult because of the amount of gravel that would have to be hauled in on the spillway to fill in the ramp area. So, Mr. Haynes said the ramp was on hold until some other ideas develop, so it would not be completed before the ribbon cutting. However, the bridge is totally functional; bikers can still just ride through the spillway, so that is not an issue for them. At this point, he said this was a part of a bigger piece of making the pond accessible to all people.

Mr. Bergman mentioned that the Subcommittee did not quite meet its fundraising goal. Mr. Haynes said they were only a little short. The total goal for the project was \$20,000: Savings

Bank of Walpole (SBW) matched the Subcommittee's fundraising dollar for dollar up to \$10,000 and they raised \$9,750. So, they were we were \$250 short in the individual goal of trying to match the SBW dollar for dollar. He said the Subcommittee felt good about the fundraising as a group of non-marketing people. Mr. Bergman asked the final bridge cost and Mr. Haynes said \$22,653.60, which is split between materials and the Public Works Department, as well as a standard fee for delineating the wetlands, and then design and construction. Mr. Bergman asked if they were still accepting funds. As far as Mr. Haynes knew, there had not been a donation since the push for initial fundraising, so someone could make a contribution at this point. He noted some of the signage was still erected about "helping us build a bridge" but the bridge was now completed.

### **B) Invasive Plant Species**

Mr. Milliken met with Ms. Brunner and Councilor Williams to learn about all the invasive plant species locations he had been monitoring and caring for, as well as upcoming dates for places they had been to in the past. Mr. Milliken went out the week before this meeting and surveyed all the locations except the Airport because it would require a boat to access the watercress. Mr. Milliken provided the Commission with a report on what he found at the various locations (table with locations, type(s) of invasives, and removal dates and aerial images of each site with invasive plants circled in red). Sadly, he said a lot of the places were just marked by Councilor Williams as Japanese knotweed sites, but Mr. Milliken found a lot of other invasives there too. He referred to the new site near Ash Swamp behind Willowbrook, noting that it required a machete to cut the multiflora rose and burning bush to access the knotweed. He said that it would be a big site. He said that at the Old Stone Arch Bridge most of the knotweed had been eradicated by this effort, which everyone agreed was great.

Councilor Chalice reported going down the Rail Trail and tried a technique of putting tin cans with six-inch lawn stakes over the stumps of invasive plants that have been cut to prevent sun from reaching the small sprouts. They agreed to see how well it would work. Mr. Milliken reported successfully eliminating some glossy buckthorn in Vermont with just a tarp, noting that it does work, so they would monitor this site. He thought about something to mark the cans, so people do not collect them, thinking they are trash.

Mr. Milliken reported another good thing is that a large patch of Japanese knotweed in the Willowbrook area could give the Commission an opportunity to try some different approaches in managing this invasive effectively (e.g., covering with plastic or somehow disrupting the wood, a mesh approach, etc.). He hoped to have maps soon to keep track of and actually watch all the knotweed go away, similar to his work in VT, where you can see that the work is paying off; it does take some time. Discussion ensued about how there is no way to spray the larger knotweed near Willowbrook because it is a future well site. Ms. Brunner agreed that there will be well head protection. Ms. Brunner clarified this location is along White Brook near the Willowbrook Association; it is on City-owned land and there is no well there yet but it is a future site along the Brook. Mr. Milliken discussed how difficult it was to access the site and there was a suggestion of using a drone to survey. Discussion continued briefly on different access points (e.g., a gate at Bent Court), but all of which require hacking through vegetation to access the site.

Mr. Milliken said he would start developing dates for the 2026 invasive species events and email them to the Commission. It was still too early for a lot of things to grow. He visited Ladies' Wildwood Park and all he saw was knotweed, which was dead. Others noted that the City had sprayed the knotweed there, calling it a victory. Mr. Milliken did not see any regrowth at all.

Returning to the earlier conversation about accessing the site near Willowbrook, Mr. Therriault suggested visiting the 4th hole about halfway up the fairway at Keene Country Club, where the vegetation is a little thin, and there is a small fence. Mr. Milliken noted good news that a lot of volunteers from Willowbrook want to go out and help, so he hoped to at least educate them on pulling up knotweed and monitoring to really get a grip on what is out there. He thought the Commission should look at the Bent Court area with multiple rows of burning bush because nobody was complaining about that area.

Mr. Milliken also led a discussion about Robin Hood Park. He watched a Council meeting about construction planned at the Park (e.g., fixing the pool). Right behind the pool, on the embankment that goes to the pond, there is multiflora rose and bittersweet choking out the trees, which have grooves in them from the invasives. He wondered if there was some way to revise or write into that Robin Hood contract to pull those invasives out at the base. Councilor Chalice was unsure whether that contract could be revised. Discussion ensued about whether doing that would destabilize the slope down to the pond and whether the multiflora rose was planted for stabilizing. Councilor Chalice thought the mature trees would still be enough to maintain the slope. However, Mr. Milliken said a lot of those trees had serious choking from the invasives. Councilor Chalice wondered how to make a request like this. Mr. Milliken heard during the meeting that there was still extra money in the project. Councilor Chalice said the FOP Committee and City Council approved the first part of the project. There would be a meeting at the Park because the pool work is very specific, but there are other site things that have not been decided. As one person at the upcoming meeting, Councilor Chalice said she would mention it because she agreed that the City Manager mentioned there still being some leeway.

Mr. Milliken thought the previous Japanese knotweed work at Robin Hood Park was successful because it was only a very small patch now. Vice Chair Richter agreed that there was progress but said there were still some patches along the trails and she thought the Commission should remain proactive with this site, especially with the pool construction, etc., otherwise it would be too late in their planning process. She was unsure whether it meant writing a letter to City Council to say that as a part of the Commission's review of site it has been monitoring and controlling that it noticed the knotweed. Chair Flaherty asked if that would be doable. Ms. Brunner said the Commission certainly could do that. They could also reach out directly to the Parks and Recreation Director Carrah Fisk-Hennessey to see if that would be a quicker approach. Mr. Milliken said he felt comfortable contacting the Parks and Recreation Director (copying Councilor Chalice) and including all the photos he took. Councilor Chalice said she would follow up with the site visit.

Mr. Bergman asked about the Norway Maple listed under Robin Hood Park; was that a mature tree/trees or a small cluster? Mr. Milliken said he tried to find the "mother tree" (mature tree that spreads seeds) but could not, and Councilor Williams could not remember where it was.

Councilor Williams thought it was the main one creating all the small ones, but Mr. Milliken did not locate it. Everyone agreed to be on the lookout when active in the Park.

If seeking more information on knotweed, Mr. Haynes suggested that contacting the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board could be helpful; they had been managing a huge patch of knotweed pretty well for a few years.

### **C) Land Conservation / Easement Monitoring**

Vice Chair Richter had nothing to report but thought she would start easement monitoring in the near future.

### **D) Pollinator Updates**

Councilor Chalice reported on her article in the Monadnock Shopper News in the Woods and Gardens Column, reminding the community about Keene's Bee City status. Mr. White said he saw it. Councilor Chalice said it included a list of all the different spring and summer things happening in the area that have any connection to pollinators in general, which bees are a part of, both honeybees and native bees. She said there is a lot going on right now. Councilor Chalice was also pleased to attend the Bee City USA Presentation for this region. She said there were four/five presentations on other Bee Cities and projects; she called it fabulous. Most were aligned with the universities in their areas and graduate students. She said there were wonderful resources for signs. Councilor Chalice requested access to the great handouts on each type of weed and what to do with them, so the Commission can use those in the future.

Councilor Chalice also reported that she would be attending the first part of the Monadnock Food Co-Op Earth Fest on April 25, 2026, with information from the Xerces Society. She will be right next to Mr. Therriault and his honeybees. She had a list of related activities to share in the area and region, Ms. Brunner provided some of the activity materials that Xerces Society has for children, and Councilor Chalice had handouts from the Xerces Society to share as well.

Ms. Brunner mentioned that when she was recently tabling at the Keene State College Earth Festival for the Community Development Department, she had a great conversation with a young bee enthusiast. Ms. Brunner let her know about the Monadnock Beekeepers Association and apprenticeships. So, Ms. Brunner thought the Commission may be getting another inquiry and said the woman was very excited.

Mr. Therriault noted that the Bee City USA sign had gone up in Ashuelot River Park. He mentioned the proposed subdivision area and wetland discussed during the Planning Board referral earlier in the meeting. He noted that one thing he did not see was any trees mature enough to have wild beehives. If he had seen a couple of trees that were big enough to have wild beehives, he would have wanted to go back on a day above 50 degrees to see if there was any flight activity, so they could alert the developer that those trees should be taken down carefully and a beekeeper should be consulted to rehome the colonies. Councilor Chalice asked whether the Commission had completed that sort of tour for the red pine removal and Mr. Therriault

replied that none of those red pines are mature enough (the trees must be 60–75 years old and be of a certain size).

**5) Discussion Items**

**A) Land Protection Criteria amended February 2026**

Discussion ensued about whether the Commission was voting on the amended Criteria or having another Workshop. The Workshop planned for today was postponed because of the Site Visit. Discussion continued about scheduling a Workshop on the amended Criteria before the next meeting, because there would be another Site Visit. Ultimately, the Commission decided to tentatively hold its next workshop on the amended Land Protection Criteria on Tuesday, May 19, at 4:00 PM.

**B) Red Pine Scale – Harvesting and Replanting plan Informational Resources**

**i) Website: [KeeneNH.gov/red-pine-scale-information](http://KeeneNH.gov/red-pine-scale-information)**

Ms. Brunner said this was informational and provided a link to the website with a lot of details.

**ii) Letter Sent to Abutters of Dinsmoor Woods**

Parks and Recreation Director Fisk-Hennessey also shared a letter that was sent to all the abutters to Dinsmoor Woods because they will be the most impacted. The letter explained the project and rationale, and was provided in the Commission’s meeting packet. Councilor Chalice wondered if the fact sheet provided to City Council was also provided to the Commission. Ms. Brunner did not think so. Councilor Chalice wanted to share it because it included valuable information and frequently asked questions. She would email it to Ms. Brunner to send to the Commission. It is short enough to keep on hand and share with others because she said it will be a traumatic project. Councilor Chalice noted that about 30 people came out one afternoon and had a lot of questions. The project would commence the week after this meeting as soon as spring break begins and Maple Avenue would be shut down. She said this would be a very harsh visual change for people. She wanted to make sure everyone could have their questions answered.

Mr. Bergman mentioned the knotweed on Maple Avenue too. Councilor Chalice said this project would help to see what comes up in terms of invasives when the area is completely open and said maybe that could be rolled into that in the future. Mr. Bergman wondered if something could be added to the contract at this point in that regard and Councilor Chalice said no, hoping the area may be disturbed enough to address the invasive. Mr. Therriault said nature abhors a vacuum; anytime there is disturbed ground, if it is not overseeded with something, then nature will fill the void. He said he would be happy to buy a bunch of wildflower mix and broadcast it; it would not cost the City anything and would provide reasonable protection from worrying about what will happen two years from now with invasives if too late. He said the best time to broadcast is right after the ground is graded. Chair Flaherty agreed that it is the best time to stabilize. He asked who to contact about permission to do this. Ms. Brunner said Director Fisk-Hennessey, who is working with the forester that came up with the plan. Ms. Brunner was unsure whether they were already planning for some type of reseeded. Councilor Chalice said she could very clearly tell

the Commission they were waiting to monitor what comes up because there is quite a bit of understory already there. She said they were not thinking about the ground level and she would love to see some type of seeds. So, Councilor Chalice suggested talking to Director Fisk-Hennessey, as the Councilor thought it could be a fun project for the Commission.

**C) Vernal Pools on Lot 9 off Old Gilsum Road**

Chair Flaherty reported that he visited the lot off Old Gilson Road by the water tower (to a location off the hiking trails that he described with maps to the Commission) about three weeks before the meeting to look at vernal pools and the pools he looked at were still iced in. He went one week later and they were cracking; there were a lot of wood frogs making noise. So, he checked the physical location of these pools and said they met all the criteria of vernal pools. Vice Chair Richter noted that it is important to protect vernal pools. Mr. Haynes said there are some trails among the vernal pools, but they do not go to the vernal pools, and some were diverted further away from the pools, so people do not walk through them. He said it is a part of the maintenance. Chair Flaherty noted that you can register vernal pools with New Hampshire Fish and Game, but he did not recommend it because upland vernal pools are extremely rare. There are three. This is the lot off Old Gilsum Road the Commission purchased two or three years prior. The Commission continued reviewing the map and adjacent parcels they had purchased in recent years. Councilor Chalice asked if they appeared on the National Wetlands Inventory and Chair Flaherty said this was just a City GIS map; Ms. Brunner added that it was probably from City flyover data. The Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Committee has some components about vernal pools. Discussion ensued briefly about species that could exist at these vernal pools. The Committee thanked the Chair for surveying the sites.

**D) Draft Letter to Keene Country Club re: Best Management Practices for Turf Adjacent to Water Bodies**

Mr. Bill suggested removing the second paragraph that he felt was not relevant to the Keene Country Club; he thought it had been fine for Bretwood Golf Club. There is no section in the Ashuelot River anywhere near to the Keene Country Club course. Mr. Bergman asked about the source of information for “long-term field studies conducted by a professor at Keene State College on the dwarf wedge mussel.” He thought it referred to Cliff Lerner. Mr. Bill said several things came up and as part of his geomorphology work, they worked in the Ashuelot River and he noted during that work there were gravel beds (i.e., prime habitat) right by Bretwood Golf Club. The Commission agreed it made sense to remove that part since it was not in reference to Keene Country Club.

A motion by Mr. Bill to accept sending the letter to Keene Country Club, minus the second paragraph, was duly seconded by Mr. Bergman. The motion carried unanimously.

**6) Amendments to the Rules of Procedure: Vote on Draft Rules of Procedure Presented at the March 16 Meeting**

Ms. Brunner noted that it requires a two-thirds majority of the voting Commissioners to adopt Amendments to the Rules of Procedure, which the Commission reviewed at its March 2026

meeting. Mr. Bill thought that #18 should say “These rules may be amended or new rules adopted by a two-thirds vote of all *voting* members appointed.” Ms. Brunner also noted an update to #3, that minutes are due within five *business* days.

A motion by Mr. Bill to adopt the Rules of Procedure, as amended, was duly seconded by Mr. White. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 7–0.

7) **Correspondence:**

**A) Northeast Vegetation & Mosquito Control - Mosquito Control Program Notice Letter**

Mr. Bill asked if they are required to post that public areas have been sprayed. Ms. Brunner knew very little about it and would have to get back to him. Mr. Therriault knew that at Surrey Dam they post when they spray, but he could not say they do that everywhere. As a registered beekeeper, he is notified by certified mail whenever the City of Keene is going to do any insect control. He received a letter from the company saying that they are using a granular *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) in the tax ditches and in the areas that require treatment; there would be no aerial spraying to broadcast the granules, which dissolves and kills larvae. Mr. Bergman asked if that is the bacterium itself or just their toxic product, and Mr. Therriault was unsure. He said nothing the beekeepers do would be harmful to bees.

Mr. Bill’s question was about whether a member of the public using Ashuelot River Park or another treated area would know per a sign. Chair Flaherty and Councilor Chalice said private contractors usually post signs whenever they spray. However, Mr. Therriault noted that Bt is not harmful to humans and there would be no aerial spraying. Mr. Bill thought the letter left it open to other treatment too. Mr. Therriault said the letter he received only spoke about granular application. Mr. Bergman quoted the letter in the meeting packet: “Additional products have been permitted should the need arise but are not anticipated.” Mr. Bill said if he had kids playing there, he would want to be aware there had been some treatment; on public/City property, he thought it should be required. Vice Chair Richter noted that there was a contact person listed on the letter for questions and a City Councilor could probably reach out. Discussion continued about how licensed applicators of conventional biocides usually have to post under conditions, but Mr. Bergman said this is a different kind of material being disseminated and very narrowly targeted. Councilor Chalice agreed to reach out to the contact on the letter to ask whether they have a notification procedure.

**B) Society for the Protection of NH Forests – Annual Membership Renewal Request**

The Commission discussed that there was no specific request for annual renewal made by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests. Ms. Brunner thought some years were normally \$125 or \$150, she would have to look back. Mr. Haynes was unsure the Commission had donated during some years. Mr. Bill suggested reviewing past minutes. Councilor Chalice recalled she still wanted to use some of the Commission’s Budget to purchase seeds. Chair Flaherty noted there should still be funds remaining after a donation of \$100 or so. He added not wanting to

over buy seed either because of its shelf life. Mr. Haynes suggested tabling this until next month to see what the Commission's precedent in the past was.

Ms. Brunner reported \$700 remaining from the Commission's Budget of \$2,000; the Budget will expire if not used by June 30, 2026. The Commission had used its Fiscal Year Budget to date on the Bee City Sign, the Bee City Membership renewal, and New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commission dues. She said there had not been any honorariums yet this year and Mr. Haynes did not envision any. So, Ms. Brunner said it seemed there might be more money left over this year than normal. The Commission agreed to table this donation and budgeting until the May 2026 meeting.

### **C) NH Turtle Rescue – Turtle Road Crossing Education and Resources**

Mr. Bill wondered if there would be a way to post their contact number on the City's website somewhere in case a member of the public has an issue. Ms. Brunner would ask about posting it on the Conservation Commission webpage, but she thought it would probably be better on social media. Councilor Chalice suggested both and Vice Chair Richter noted they have a great website to link. Discussion ensued briefly about whether there should be a link to them on Nature Groupie, but Vice Chair Richter explained Nature Groupie is not a bulletin board, it is specific to volunteer days and events. She thought this would be great for the Conservation Commission webpage for anyone learning about big turtles. Chair Flaherty would be attending a Turtle School in Walpole, New Hampshire, in May 2026.

### **8) New or Other Business**

A motion by Mr. White to have Gary Flaherty and Bob Milliken serve as alternates on the Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Subcommittee was duly seconded by Councilor Chalice. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Haynes said this will provide the option for quorum backup in case he or Mr. Bill are absent.

Mr. Haynes presented a parcel to the Commission along the Greater Goose Pond Forest, driving up Timberlane Drive just off Elm Street, where there is a fairly large clear-cut 13.1-acre lot that was proposed for development. He said it is for sale now, appraised at \$130,000, and the price on it is \$799,000. It says that it has been approved for 36 units, with six buildings approved, and all they are waiting for is drawings. His sense was that it was not really accurate information. Mr. Haynes knew the lot was approved at one time, but they did not follow through. Ms. Brunner said that developers still had a Conditional Use Permit that would expire on April 22, 2026 and they could submit an extension. It was approved as a Cottage Court development; it was originally proposed as a Conservation Residential Subdivision, but they changed it to a Cottage Court after getting three extensions for the former. She said the development originally came to the City approximately six years ago. Mr. Haynes said he was putting it out there, noting the Commission did not have the funds for it. Councilor Chalice asked if it was a property that was just logged and Mr. Haynes said no, this is in the Drummer Hill area.

Mr. Therriault said that with the Bee City USA Sign going up and the Annual Report, he hoped to have the Commission meet during the summer for a group photo in front of the sign. Chair

Flaherty suggested that anyone good with photoshop could place in any Commissioners who could not be present; Mr. white said his wife is. Councilor Chalice suggested doing it during Pollinator Pallooza at Ashuelot River Park in June 2026. Mr. Bergman suggested matching t-shirts.

Mr. Bill mentioned the concept of the Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Committee becoming a larger committee, noting that if it wanted money, then those members would bring that to the Conservation Commission, but it could still involve people, which was a part of the goal—to have others besides the Conservation Commission involved on it. Mr. Haynes thought about discussing it at the next meeting. Vice Chair Richter thought the Commission discussed that it is okay to have advisors on the Subcommittee who are not members, as a part of the amended Rules of Procedure. Ms. Brunner quoted an email from Deputy City Manager Andy Bohannon, who was a part of creating the Subcommittee: “When we established it, Rhett and I agreed that it was to be led by the Parks and Recreation Director, as they would be overseeing all the projects, meaning the Parks and Recreation Department. They just need to capture a minimal minutes, they are acting on the Stewardship Plans only, and all the funding is coming from Parks and Recreation.” So, Ms. Brunner said the group is not handling any money or making decisions about funding. It is basically an advisory committee to the Conservation Commission. They report out at every meeting to the Conservation Commission, and they work with Parks and Recreation to implement the Plan that was adopted by Council. She had some conversations with the City Attorney and in Ms. Brunner’s opinion, doing something else would overcomplicate it because if it is anything other than a Subcommittee, it has to be appointed by City Council. She thought it was working well right now. So, her advice was to remain as a Subcommittee, knowing they are technically supposed to be taking minutes and posting agendas. Mr. Haynes noted they added a couple of alternates if needed. So, he thought they were in fine shape to carry on as they had been, following guidelines. Vice Chair Richter recalled they can add non-Conservation Commission member advisors to the Subcommittee.

Mr. Bill said he toured the Wastewater Treatment Plant (so did others) and said they probably spent two hours with the visitors talking in detail. He talked to the Public Works Director, who said the Commission could come as a group sometime and it would not have to be during regular hours. They told Chair Flaherty the same thing.

**9) Adjourn – Next meeting: Monday, May 18, 2026**

There being no further business, Chair Flaherty adjourned the meeting at 6:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katrinya Kibler, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Mari Brunner, Senior Planner