

**Shutesbury Conservation Commission****Minutes – May 28, 2026**

Approved – June 11, 2026

*Virtual Meeting*

**Commissioners Present:** Michael McDuffie, Mare Fox, Beth Willson (Chair), Bob Douglas, Scott Kahan

**Commissioners Absent:** None

**Other Staff Present:** Matteo Pangallo (Land Use Clerk)

**Others Present:** Tom Siefert, Diane Adams, Gregg Adams

**Call to Order:** 7:04pm

This meeting is being recorded and all members are participating remotely.

**Comments from the Chair**

Willson reports that the applicant at 36 South Laurel Drive has asked for a continuance to the next meeting on June 11 at 7:15pm.

Willson shares that she has been working with Kestrel Land Trust on the acquisition of the Footit property and Kestrel is hoping to close in July. She notes that there are questions about a well and an easement, but otherwise it is moving ahead.

**Review and vote on minutes of May 14, 2026**

Motion to approve the minutes of May 14, 2026: Fox; second: Douglas. Vote: McDuffie - aye; Fox - aye; Douglas - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

**Site Visits Update**

Fox reports a visit to 101 Leverett Road, where the Commission reviewed the wattles and verified that the wetlands are more than 100 feet from the work area. She noted that they discussed with the owners that adding trails beyond the work area might require clearance from the Commission. She will send the rest of the Commission her photographs from the site visit.

Willson will return to the library site to measure and evaluate the catch basin and produce a plan for the landscape architect.

Willson notes that 230 Leverett Road has requested a site visit. Fox will be away until June 8 and unable to attend. Willson states the Town Administrator is unable to attend and asks Pangallo to reach out to the owner to set up a Commission site visit without the Town Administrator.

### **Land Management Update**

Kahan reports on the South Brook bidding process and that a site visit is scheduled for potential bidders next Thursday. Pangallo shares the timeline for the bidding process.

Kahan notes that the next project will be establishing a trail plan for the southern portion of West Quabbin Woodlands. He will be meeting with Kestrel Land Trust to discuss options there.

Willson notes that any Commissioners and members of the public can attend the 4pm June 4 site visit for the trail project at South Brook.

### **Continuance of public hearing for Notice of Intent for reconstruction of a single-family home and septic system with associated site improvements, portions of which are located within the Buffer Zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands, at 36 South Laurel Drive, Parcels A-41 and A-50 (DEP #286-0311)**

At 7:17pm, Willson notes the applicant has requested a continuance to June 11 at 7:15pm.

Motion to continue the hearing for DEP #286-0311 to June 11 at 7:15pm: Douglas; second: Fox. Vote: Fox - aye; Kahan - aye; Douglas - aye; McDuffie - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

### **Discussion of draft regulations for Conservation Commission administered lands**

Kahan reports that about a year and a half ago he drafted regulations in response to a request from the public for signage and control of problems at Town Beach regarding left property and garbage. He explains that in consultation with Town Counsel the Commission had once established signage, but those signs have since been vandalized and removed.

Kahan explains that his goal in these regulations was to allow more things than not but to prohibit things that might cause damage to the resource area and contradict the Town's priorities.

Kahan shares the draft regulations and notes that Town Counsel should review these before they are adopted. He reviews the contents of the draft regulations.

Willson notes that “passive regulation” would not include snowmobiles, which are usually used on many of these conservation lands. Kahan notes there is a section later allowing snowmobiles.

Kahan invites discussion about how to identify specific permitted uses on signage.

Fox asks what “designated” means in the section on snowmobile use and Kahan explains that this would be an opportunity for the Commission to choose to adopt signage to allow or not allow such usage on specific trails. Kahan explains that under the current system, with no signage or regulations, snowmobiles could drive anywhere through the Conservation Areas.

Willson is in favor of having these kind of general regulations and then possibly developing specific rules for specific Areas or trails.

Willson asks if there should be provisions about invasive species mitigation in Conservation Areas and Kahan notes he was trying to keep the regulations generalized.

Kahan reviews the list of prohibited activities and the Commission discusses how to shape the regulations to protect against both deliberate and inadvertent resource area damage.

Douglas brings up the issue of metal detectors and Kahan suggests adding language that such usage must be consistent with state law, particularly in regards to historical objects.

Kahan describes the section on incompatible recreational uses and Willson notes that Article 97 of MGL would prohibit such development anyway.

McDuffie asks whether this section would prevent groups of people from using an Area. Willson notes that in Amherst, a form was developed to collect information about such use and respond accordingly. A similar process could be used in Shutesbury. Kahan simply deletes the incompatible uses section entirely.

Douglas suggests allowing a special permit to allow camping on Conservation Areas in certain cases and Kahan will revise accordingly.

Douglas asks if there is a dusk-to-dawn prohibition for access and Kahan answers there is not. Kahan notes that snowmobilers are often out at night.

Pangallo notes that the prohibition on leaving personal property at Town Beach should be generalized to prohibit leaving property on any Conservation Area without authorization.

In the section on Access and Signage, Willson notes that including language prohibiting access after dusk and before dawn may help limit the Town's liability.

Kahan suggests reviewing the section on Penalties with the Police Chief and the section on Additional Remedies with Town Counsel.

Discussion also follows regarding the regulation of dogs, with the Commission deciding it is important to ensure waste removal and control of dogs while in Conservation Areas, based on consultation with Town Counsel.

McDuffies asks if dogs are allowed in Lake Wyola. Fox notes they are not allowed at the State Park or on the Association beaches, but she is not sure about the two Town Conservation Areas. Kahan thinks there is no specific restriction against dogs in those areas—the only restrictions are driving off trail and dumping or leaving personal property.

Willson proposes keeping this on the agenda for the next meeting and getting it ready to submit to Town Counsel. Kahan adds it should also be sent to the Police Chief. Pangallo asks if there will be a public hearing and Willson indicates there should be once the draft is ready.

### **Unanticipated Business**

There is no unanticipated business.

### **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn: Douglas; second: Fox. Vote: McDuffie - aye; Douglas - aye; Kahan - aye; Fox - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

**Adjourned:** 8:11pm

### **List of Documents Used:**

- Draft of Conservation Area regulations