

Shutesbury Conservation Commission

Minutes – August 13, 2026

Approved – August 27, 2026

Virtual Meeting

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

Commissioners Absent: None

Other Staff Present: Matteo Pangallo (Land Use Clerk)

Others Present: Diane Adams, Gregg Adams

Call to Order: 7:02pm

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

Comments from the Chair

Willson asked Kahan for an update about the trail project at South Brook Conservation Area and Kahan explained how the delineation and planning for the project has been proceeding.

Willson informs the Commission that Tom Siefert has appealed the Order of Conditions for 36 South Laurel Drive. DEP has scheduled a site visit for August 24 at 1pm after which they will review the Commission's decision to issue the Order.

Willson reports that the Amherst Conservation Department is holding two ice cream socials to raise awareness about stormwater erosion and notes the dates, times, and location.

Review and vote on minutes of July 23, 2026

Motion to approve the minutes of July 23, 2026: Douglas; second: Kahan. Vote: Kahan - aye; Douglas - aye; Willson - aye. The motion is approved unanimously.

Site Visits Update

Willson reminds the Commission of upcoming site visits to 36 South Laurel Drive for the Order of Conditions appeal, 74 Pratt Corner Road for a Small Project Permit, and Old Peach Orchard for the annual Conservation Restriction inspection.

Land Management Update

Kahan reports that there will be another Conservation Restriction (CR) inspection at Sumner Mountain and he has contacted the same contractor whom the Commission has used in the past. Their fee is \$350.

Kahan notes that no inspection is required yet for the new CR at H-151 and the Baker Farm CR is handled by Kestrel.

Willson proposes voting on the Sumner Mountain inspection fee. McDuffie asks for a clarification on what the Commission is paying for. Kahan explains that the Commission is responsible for monitoring certain CRs to ensure that provisions in the Restriction are being adhered to. Some of those CRs the Commission can monitor itself but more complex ones require a contractor. In new CRs, the Commission requires the party restricting the property to set aside funding for the inspection. In the case of Sumner Mountain, however, the Commission pays for the inspection. He notes that the contractor the Commission uses for this has done an excellent job in the past.

Motion to approve contract with Charlie Eisman to conduct the annual Conservation Restriction monitoring at Sumner Mountain: Douglas; second: Fox. Vote: Douglas - aye; McDuffie - aye; Fox - aye; Kahan - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Kahan would like to approach the Amherst Conservation Department about mowing at the Rostas-Gang Conservation Area. He notes it is currently overgrown and needs to be brush-hogged. Willson recalls that last year the Commission contacted Brad Bordewieck, Conservation Land Manager in Amherst, about upkeep of the Area. She will reach out to him about mowing. Willson recalls that last year Bordewieck indicated there was no agreement in writing about mowing the Area but that Amherst does it about once a year.

Ratify Emergency Certification for Highway Department Culvert Replacement on Pratt Corner Road

Willson notes the Commission is still waiting for more information from the Highway Department before drafting this Emergency Certification.

Ratify Emergency Certification for hazard tree removal at 16 Gass Lite Lane

Willson shares the draft Emergency Certification and explains that a red maple had broken and fallen over part of the shore of Lake Wyola where people swim and boat. The applicant had a forester evaluate the tree and the Certification allows it to be cut at the base and removed from the resource area entirely with the stump left intact.

Motion to ratify the Emergency Certification for hazard tree removal at 16 Gass Lite Lane: Douglas; second: Fox. Vote: Douglas - aye; Kahan - aye; Fox - aye; McDuffie - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Discussion of draft regulations for Conservation Commission administered lands

Kahan reports on feedback from the Chief of Police and Town Counsel regarding revisions to the proposed regulations. He shares the feedback and explains each of the proposed changes.

Douglas asks for an example of uses that might be recorded on a Conservation Restriction and Kahan brings up examples such as boat use, agricultural uses, rights of way, and so forth.

Fox proposes referring to Elliott Park and the Lake Wyola Conservation Area as the parking area and boat ramp at Randall Road. Kahan notes that people parking trailers next to the boat launch is not so much a concern. Rather, the problem is people leaving items in the park around the gazebo and fire pit and in the woods nearby. Willson and Kahan discuss revising the language to clarify that the prohibition on abandoning or storing personal property is on all conservation lands including at Elliott Park and elsewhere on the Lake Wyola Conservation Area.

Motion to accept the revisions to the Conservation Area regulations and schedule a public hearing on the regulations for September 10 at 7:15pm: Fox; second: Douglas. Vote: Kahan - aye; Douglas - aye; Fox - aye; McDuffie - aye; Willson - aye. *The motion is approved unanimously.*

Willson suggests the next step would be thinking about signage in certain Areas. Kahan notes South Brook would make sense because there has been unauthorized vehicle use there and signs are now missing.

Unanticipated Business

Douglas reports on the work of the new Stormwater Mitigation Implementation Committee. He notes the Committee hired GZA to identify eleven areas of special interest where sedimentation is entering Lake Wyola and he shares the map. He reports on the Committee's education and outreach efforts and collaborations with Franklin Regional Council of Governments. He notes that part of the Committee's charge is water-quality testing and asks what the Commission thinks the most important parameter of testing would be. Willson notes that *e. Coli* would be useful to test for. She explains that she does stormwater sampling for Amherst and there the total suspended solids is particularly important, as well as nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen. She offers to provide her expertise to the Committee. Willson asks if GZA has completed its

study of the locations where sedimentation is entering the lake and Douglas answers that the work is still ongoing.

Kahan notes social media posts regarding concerns about erosion on the dirt roads in town and he explains that on Wendell Road he is seeing ongoing problems. He thinks these problems will grow due to climate change and the costs to manage it will just increase as well. He notes that most of the added sediment is ending up in resource areas such as South Brook. He wonders if there are grants available to find better ways to manage how sedimentation flows off the town's dirt roads and suggests the Commission might help find funding for an engineering study.

Douglas agrees with Kahan and notes that this is precisely the problem the Stormwater Mitigation Implementation COMmittee is looking to solve. Willson explains that FRCOG and PVPC have also received grants to educate towns about dirt road maintenance and about two years ago they provided a report and training to the Highway Department on this issue. She adds that installing new culverts and cross-culverts in more strategic locations would help tremendously. She points out the example of Leverett's recent culvert work on Dudleyville Road which has made a major difference to the road quality and to preventing erosion.

Adjournment

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

Adjourned: 8:08pm

List of Documents Used:

- Emergency Certification for hazard tree removal at 16 Gass Lite Lane
- Draft regulations for Conservation Commission administered lands
- Emails from Chief of Police and Town Counsel regarding revisions to draft regulations for Conservation Commission administered lands
- Stormwater Mitigation Implementation Committee map of Lake Wyola