



TOWN OF STRATHAM

Incorporated 1716

10 Bunker Hill Avenue · Stratham, NH 03885

Town Clerk/Tax Collector 603-772-4741

Select Board's Office/ Administration/ Assessing 603-772-7391

Code Enforcement/ Building Inspections/ Planning 603-772-7391

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes June 25, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Chris West, Allison Knab, Brad Jones, Bob Keating, Bruce Cote, Ryan Olsen,

Members absent: Dan McAuliffe, Tim Copeland (alternate), Kyle Saltonstall (alternate)

Town staff present: Vanessa Price, Director of Planning and Building

Non-members present: Lynn Vaccaro and Claudia Reuss, GBNERR

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Board Empowerment Series Discussion

Ms. Vaccaro and Ms. Reuss of the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve presented the concept of a Board Empowerment Workshop Series, which had previously occurred between 2016-2019. Other organizations potentially involved include the NH Association of Conservation Commissions, the Piscataqua Regional Estuaries Partnership, and the Seabrook-Hampton Estuary Alliance. They are considering applying for funding with the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation to hold workshops starting in 2026 and are looking for feedback as to what information would be valuable, what formats would work, and what other resources would be helpful for the Commission. The goals include engaging new and existing board members, sharing resources and available science, fostering collaboration across agencies and municipalities, and building relationships.

Possible topics include: wetland protection, land protection tools, buffer management and landscaping for water quality, and planning for climate resiliency. Possible formats include regional workshops, single community sessions, field/site visits, single or multiple sessions.

Ms. Vaccaro and Ms. Reuss invited feedback from the Commission and will follow up with a survey.

Conservation Commission Comments:

- Mr. Cote is interested in rules pertaining to Commissions, NH state laws, RTK laws, and how Commissions from adjacent towns communicate. He thinks workshops once a year for new people would be valuable.
- Ms. Knab is interested in understanding recommended buffer and setback distances, which she has found to vary greatly. She thought an on-site demo of distances would be useful.
- Mr. Keating is interested in having universally accepted buffers.
- Ms. Knab thought training on easements, funding, land trusts etc. would be helpful.

- Mr. Olsen had questions as to how we enforce development requirements once the projects are approved.
- Mr. Cote liked the format of the Changemaker Workshops, which were held at different locations and with different speakers.

TMAC Update

TMAC is planning to enable the construction of two new bridges on the Lovell Trail. This will help keep the trail route dry. A volunteer workday will be held July 13 to complete construction, using funds from the bike series. Mr. Keating is now the CC representative to TMAC.

Minutes:

- Ms. West motioned, Mr. Cote seconded a motion to approve the May 28, 2025 minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Mailbox

- Invitation to an event for the NH Preservation Alliance, which had already occurred.

Town and Other Business

- Ms. Price did not have any updates. Ms. Knab noted that the Select Board was moving along with the process of hiring a new town administrator.

Other

- Mr. Olsen asked if the Commission ever took stands on issues of environmental concern. He proposed writing a letter to the federal delegation opposing the sale of public lands. Mr. Cote motioned, Mr. Olsen seconded a motion to write said letter. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Olsen will draft the letter and share with Ms. Knab and Ms. West.
- The Commission discussed issues of attendance.
- Ms. Knab suggested Ms. Price be included in work toward the federal grant for Squamscott Fields. Ms. Price will communicate with the finance administrator.
- Ms. Knab noted the value of the Seacoast Conservation Commission Roundtable and suggested any members who were able to attend the meetings, as well as Ms. Price. She will share the next invitation.

Mr. Jones motioned, Ms. Knab seconded a motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Allison Knab