



# 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

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## **Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes February 19, 2026, 7:00 p.m.**

*Members present:* Chris West, Bob Keating, Dan McAuliffe, Brad Jones, Bruce Cote, Ryan Olsen

*Members absent:* Allison Knab, Tim Copeland (alternate)

*Non-members present:* Vanessa Price, Director of Planning and Building; Seth Hickey, Parks & Recreation Director/Assistant Town Administrator; Kyle Hollasch, resident

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **Minutes:**

- Mr. Keating noticed a typo to be corrected.
- 7:10pm Mr. Cote motioned to accept minutes with an amendment, Mr. Keating seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously

### ***Town Landing Use Concerns***

- Guest Mr. Kyle Hollasch, 15 Greta's Way, spoke as a non-member citizen to address his concerns over the current use of the Town Landing at the end of River Rd. Mr. Hollasch has noted increased litter and wooden material waste, such as pallets left by fishermen at the landing site, specifically during times of high-use in Spring, as well as disruption to the ecosystem and eelgrass from excessive foot traffic of fishermen and other guests of the landing. In addition to the litter and ecological disruption concerns, Mr. Hollasch also feels that the parcel has experienced some neglect in patrolling and maintenance, with the exception of regular mowing, and that a lack of signage is leading to excessive use of sensitive areas. Mr. Hollasch informed the Conservation Commission of grants that are available through PREPAA (Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership) that could potentially be used for an environmental and engineering study to determine the best use of the landing, areas to focus environmental protection efforts, and analysis of potential improvements to the landing. Improvements could include: signage to direct traffic away from sensitive areas, a kiosk to provide information of the Landing's historical significance, and improved access points to the Squamscott waterway such as a kayak launch or walking dock. These improvements would not be paid for by the grant, but best implementation of them would be explored by the study.
- Mr. Hollasch volunteered to assist in the writing and coordination of a grant submission to PREPA and commented that the next grant cycle for PREPA would begin in March 2026.
- Committee members had no concerns with the proposal from Mr. Hollasch but commented that next steps would need to be coordinated with the Select Board and that any grant submission would need to be made by the Town of Stratham and not made by Mr. Hollasch himself.
- Mr. McAuliffe made motion to endorse Mr. Hollasch to the Select Board and to proceed with next steps of coordinating a grant submission to PREPA. Mr. Cote seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### ***Trail Management Advisement Committee (TMAC) and Parks Department Update***

- Mr. Seth Hickey provided general updates from recent TMAC and Parks Dept. meetings on issues that were previously presented to the Conservation Commission for input.

1. **E-Bikes:** The Select Board and TMAC are in continued discussions regarding ordinance changes and rules regarding the use of E-bikes on trails and in town. No formal decisions have been made, but previous comments from the Conservation Commission are being considered in those discussions.
2. **Leashed Dog Ordinance for Stratham Hill Park:**
  - a. Mr. Hickey reported on updated statistics of the Park guest traffic, specifically through the Jack Rabbit lane entrance to the park. The attendance counters have noted a significant increase in park usage over the last two years. 2025 showed a 40% increase in park guests over 2024 traffic, and 2026 year-to-date has shown an additional 60% increase over 2025. This is mostly a combination of bicycles and dog walkers, due to high snow pack in the park this year, the 2026 Winter data reflects a higher percentage of dog walkers.
  - b. Mr. Hickey noted that a significant amount of dog waste is being observed in the park and it's a major concern of TMACC. Based on several published studies from other parks in Colorado and other states, it has been estimated that up to 30% of dog walkers do not pick up their dog waste, if those same metrics are applied to Stratham Hill park, that would result in over 3600 piles of dog waste in the park on a yearly basis.
  - c. Mr. Hickey informed the commission that Wagon Hill Farm in Durham is moving to remove its off-leash dog hours as well as other local off-leash parks that are tightening their regulations. This will lead to increased usage and pressure at Stratham Hill Park for off-leash dog use. These recent changes may result in TMAC restructuring its previous recommendations to the Select Board on how to craft new leash ordinances in Stratham Hill Park.

### ***Town and Other Business***

- Reports were received from SELT for Conservation land: Barker #1, Barker #2, 84 Bunker Hill Ave, 94 Stratham Heights Rd, 25/41 Winnicutt Rd, Scamman #1, Scamman #2, and Rear Scamman Rd. The NHDES Dredge and Fill application for the Squamscott Road culvert replacements was also received.
  - No major concerns at any properties with the exception of neighbor encroachment of yard waste at Barker #1 site. SELT will follow-up on that issue, and the Conservation Commission does not have a need for an action regarding the reports.
- 8:40pm - Ms. West motioned to nominate Mr. Cote to be permanent Conservation Commission Chairperson and for her to assume the permanent role of Vice Chair. Mr. Olsen seconded the motion. Motion was passed unanimously
- Commission discussed plans for upcoming Town Clean-up Day. Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup> was suggested as preliminary date, but final date is yet to be decided
  - Discussion held on ways to improve attendance and participation. Mr. Olsen suggested forming a competition format to help drive participation. Increased signage around town was also proposed. Mr. Olsen to provide more detailed format suggestions at next meeting.

### ***Adjourn***

At 7:58pm, Ms. West motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

*Respectfully submitted by Ryan Olsen*