Lancaster Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 8, 2025
25 Main Street 2nd FL Conference Room, Lancaster NH

Commission Members Present: Chair Sam Mayne, Nancy Southworth, Vickie Gibbs
Commission Members Absent: Mike Webster, Sam Sabean
Others Attending: LUC Robin L. Irving, Town Manager Jessica Cyr

QUORUM

Chair Sam Mayne opened the meeting at 1730H

Minutes: Gibbs moved to APPROVE AS WRITTEN the September 8, 2025 meeting minutes. Mayne seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted to APPROVE AS WRITTEN the September 8, 2025 meeting minutes, none opposed. *Motion passed.*

Appointments: Town Manager Jessica Cyr proposed shifting the requested funding for knotweed to the Highway Department's line because she sensed that the perception is that the Town is spending more or double-dipping and, if the spending comes from one line, it will not be as confusing to those closely examining the budget lines. The line being funded more than last year can be justified by its purpose of clearing up the waiting list, and status will be reassessed for the next year. Mayne requested input regarding future added sites because he felt that the knotweed at the elementary school should be addressed; the restoration project's funds will be exhausted. Further, if the Selectboard would be on board with treating the school's knotweed, Mayne felt that it made sense to also include Trividia located next to the school because their knotweed is encroaching the school property and will eventually take over, especially in the floodplain area. There are five (5) sites on the waitlist and the additional $2000 should be able to cover spraying of those 5 sites plus the school/Trividia. All members of the Commission were agreeable that the funding amount of $2000 be removed from the LCC's requested funds in contracted services and moved to the highway department's knotweed line.

Cyr further stated that the Budget Committee was averse to the requested funds for trees. The perception is that, given a tight budget, opening opportunities to new programs would not be easy to sell to the taxpayers. LUC Irving commented that while the committee did not express concern over the requested ash treatment funds, the request to fund planting trees in public spaces as opposed to private properties did not seem to be a deciding factor—the opposition was focused on added services. The committee's recommendation was for the LCC to request funding for trees from the Dow Fund. TM Cyr has found a document that tracks management from the Unity Club to the LCC, so the LCC has the authority to manage the fund. Mayne felt like the tree line had gone into two different directions, first to purchase trees for residents to claim and plant, and secondly purchasing trees for placement in parks. LUC Irving confirmed that, however, the 'purchase of trees' was not broken down into those separate categories in the

line items, so the committee only sees the bulk purchase. LUC Irving mentioned that Tricia Frenette wanted to know what was dedicated to public trees because she would adjust her beautification monies as a result. TM Cyr explained that Beautification received a number of donated trees of which one of was for Soldier's Park—whether that was a blue spruce was not known, but her donated trees might not be in kind with the variety that was there previously that did not thrive. TM Cyr asked if the requested tree funds include any trees regarding the Centennial Tree recognition effort? LUC Irving responded that there is $300 under the education line to pay for the tree plaques. TM Cyr said that the donated trees in conjunction with a park maintenance line proposed at $35,000 might be able to assist the tree planting effort throughout public land in town. The traffic circle is another site proposed for tidying up and tree planting. All Commissioners agreed that $2000 would be removed from the budget proposal and that amount would be requested from the Dow Fund for tree planting. Gibbs wanted to confirm whether the trees had to be committed to public land. LUC Irving responded that the mission would be for 'community programs.' TM Cyr mentioned that next year is America's 250th anniversary and there is a tree behind the monument that was dedicated in 1776, and the event may be an opportunity to incorporate tree plantings into the celebration. Public messaging may be impacted when efforts are not sponsored specifically by LCC. LUC Irving expressed frustration with the reluctance to support the LCC's intent to broaden their exposure; Mayne noted that the request may have been higher than last year but it is less than the request in 2018, so this year's total is not unprecedented. The total budget fluctuates and is not unusual.

TM Cyr thanked the Commissioners for their support and volunteerism regarding work on the trails. She emphasized that there is the need to maintain and expand what we have for available resources, to get people outside to promote health, and to help people connect and recreate with different areas throughout the community. Management supports the long-term goals for the trails. Gibbs said that the trails are definitely being used. LUC Irving remarked that the budget committee, being concerned with the total, is more likely to accept a request for the trails provided the knotweed and trees funds are removed. TM Cyr thinks that the efforts to liaise with organizations like the AMC, building and rolling out the Trails Committee this year, and being receptive to community members who are concerned about trees is commendable—she will assist with what she can. Lancaster is known for its admirable parks and green spaces, and the Town should continue to support them for future generations. Several trees were planted this year and it might be worth highlighting in the town report—in dedication to whom? Why are they not thriving? Etc.

Town Manager Cyr left the meeting at 1755H

The Commissioners further discussed the proposed budget. Given that the LCC has such a small budget, they expressed frustration over the resistance to recommend funding of the purchase of trees for a planting program and especially toward maintaining the trails. Both of these programs benefit a wide array of community members and both programs further conservation principles

and education. Following this discussion, all members of the Commission agreed to request a level-funded budget.

Gibbs suggested getting quotes for both a spring and fall mowing of the trails—this would keep it passable. One high growth section is off Reed Road and it appears that this area was mowed by the landowners. Off Causeway in the Town Forest where it really needs two mowings, it appears that a brushhog could get out there as the road is driveable. Weed whacking is sufficient in most other areas. LUC Irving said that there are 2 budget lines that could be targeted toward mowing; if level funded, the contracted services line stays at $2000 of which $600 is slated for ash treatment, and the education line stays at $1200 of which $200 is slated for brochures and $300 is slated for tree tags…this leaves $2100 for projects in contracted services. The Commissioners agreed to move that $700 in education to the contracted services line. Irving mentioned that there were no dues budgeted last year yet there was a $250 invoice for a membership; this was paid out of clerk/administration, but could be taken from advertising as well for next year.

Old Business:

Conservation Easements

- Nothing new with the town water supply
- Nothing new at Hirsey
- Nothing new at Stowell
- Peaslee added a greenhouse to attempt to grow all winter. Mayne spoke with Peaslee about the road management issues and she seemed to be fairly indifferent to any resolution, so without enforcement authority on the part of the Town, the reality is that nothing likely will get done
- Southworth/Haslanger no new issues
- Southworth/Scobie on board with the proposal to do the land swap

Annual easement reports will be generated in Q1 and will need to be approved.

New Business:

Dredge & Fill Application: 8 Mary Elizabeth Lane

LUC Irving previously presented this application to the Planning Board. PB Chair Nadeau opined that some of the work had not been accurately characterized. In the meantime, NHDES has issued a permit with a condition to restore the area and remediate. One of the abutters has contacted both the Land Use office and DES to object to the permit. LUC Irving explained to DES that, when the house was permitted in 2023, she had fairly extensive email correspondence with the landowner expressing the Town's concern over wetlands therefore it is not as if the landowner had not been given notice and a recommendation to contact the Wetlands Bureau. LUC Irving expressed to DES her disagreement with permitting of the subsurface system in light

of a condition to restore the area. Gibbs asked if the Town has a wetlands ordinance—LUC Irving responded that the Town defaults to the State. The Town does have a floodplain ordinance.

House on North Road across from Forbes Farm: The Land Use Office issued a permit requiring the structure to be elevated. The landowner had been told by the seller that the parcel was buildable and at no time had there been disclosure that the land was in the floodplain. The seller even contacted the Town and asked for a map to confirm and learned of the error. The new landowner has obtained a LOMA and the location of the home was modified to be outside the floodplain.

Zoning Ordinance Amendments: Most amendments are to incorporate the recently passed bills regarding ADUs. Gibbs recommended addressing rights-of-ways as access to interior subdivided lots ('bubbles' of land). Gibbs feels that the ordinance should prohibit that kind of development. LUC Irving intends to re-propose the Conservation Subdivision amendment; that model should address this problem. Gibbs also suggested changing density in the Agricultural District to allow one single-family-dwelling plus the ADU per lot and eliminating the '3 dwellings per acre.' Gibbs lastly expressed frustration with Planning Board 'dismissal' of Conservation Commission's recommendations or concerns and would recommend putting a provision in procedure that would require submission of plans or reports to the CC for comment and approval. The LCC should have more control over when conservation issues get waived in a PB case. LUC Irving will continue to copy cases to the Commissioners.

Mayne moved to adjourn at 1832H. Southworth seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted to adjourn at 1832H, none opposed. *Motion passed.*

By: Robert Irving

Robin L. Irving, Land Use Coordinator for the Lancaster Conservation Commission

Approval Date: 2/9/2026