Lancaster Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 9th, 2026
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

QUORUM

Chair Sam Mayne opened the meeting at 1742H

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

Appointments: None

Old Business:

DOW Fund for Trees: This is a reminder that funding for trees was opposed by the Budget Committee and subsequently cut, so if the LCC intends to plant any trees this spring then a vote to withdraw funds from the DOW Fund should occur; it is confirmed that the LCC is the conservator of said funds. The original proposed budget included $2000 for trees. Chair Mayne pointed out that the original budget also covered the free-trees-for-planting program that was not favored, so he was inclined to vote to withdraw less than $2000. The only tree earmarked to a public place was a blue spruce for Soldier's Park. Gibbs asked if more trees were going to be planted in the park near the chessboard. LUC Irving responded that Tricia does want more trees, but she doesn't want to double dip between beautification and LCC, so she would like to be notified whether LCC is going to plant in a specific location. Gibbs felt that it would be nice to get some shrubs or leafy, cover trees in that area.

Sam Mayne moved to withdraw from the DOW Fund up to $1000 for replacement native trees in town parks. Vickie Gibbs seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. *Motion passed.*

List of Approved Native Tree Species: Chair Mayne understood that this list was going to be generated by the volunteers and brought to the LCC to approve; the LCC is happy to help with a tree initiative but is not going to invest time into researching and compiling a list. Gibbs was concerned about not having a list for the Planning Board's reference, especially because landscaping and green space is a large component of the downtown zoning. Chair Mayne will either provide a link or find a list and forward an existing list—an applicant can always ask for an exception if it becomes an issue. LUC Irving said that the Site Plan Regulations were last updated in 2019 and will need another update soon in which she would like to incorporate the list.

Easement Monitoring Reports: The reports were reviewed in December. Chair Mayne wanted to discuss the Southworth/Haslanger easement because he was not comfortable signing off on the addition of sand to the beach area of the pond as there is very clear language in easement about protecting water quality of that pond. Adding sand will add phosphorus which decreases water quality. The remedy is not to excavate the sand because any impact has already occurred, but both landowners should be notified that any excavation or addition of material within fifty (50) feet of the water must be approved. For example, there is risk of cyanobacteria bloom or even *E. coli* to the water quality (and Southworth said that everyone in the area swims in that pond). LUC Irving said that she always refers clients with pond projects to the State as they typically need to submit a Dredge and Fill Application due to being regulated as wetlands. Southworth commented that there had been some discussion about testing the water. Gibbs emphasized that requesting water testing over a period of time will show trending data indicating degradation of quality. Chair Mayne countered that there is a lot of data noise which can be minimized when testing during certain times, typically in the spring. The best scenario is when the sediment is in the water column but it might not really settle out because of how shallow it is. There is some degree of stratification as the summer goes on where cool water and sediment settle down, but sampling should happen while it is still turning. He hesitates to assign much weight to baseline testing. To have any meaning, the testing would have to be done over a long time (it could be tested once now and again in 20 years before detectable changes would be actionable).

Gibbs moved to have the LCC send the landowners a letter notifying them to not engage in similar actions and first seek approval. Chair Mayne seconded the motion. Southworth abstained. All in favor, none opposed. *Motion passed.* Southworth asked whether the testing should have been part of the motion. Chair Mayne responded that the previous resolution was that the LCC would do the testing, but if she agrees to do the testing, it is voluntary. Southworth said that it begs the question of what do you do if the results come out clearly showing bad water quality? Gibbs said to stop swimming in it. LUC Irving said that it would likely have to be referred to someone for remediation. Chair Mayne said that the controlling test result would probably be the ppm of phosphorus. Chlorophyll can be tested as well. The limiting factor for plant growth will be either phosphorus or nitrogen, usually phosphorus. Nitrogen is more likely to leach and affect groundwater. Southworth agreed to do the sampling and have them tested.

Budget Update: The submitted budget will be flat from 2025. The knotweed funds were moved to the Highway department's line item.

Master Plan Goals & Objectives: Out of the Natural Resources section of the Master Plan, there were a number of goals and objectives for the LCC. LUC Irving would like the LCC to choose at least one project for 2026; her preference is the Invasives Eradication Plan. Chair Mayne said that Kathy Jean Lavoie possessed most of the information for knotweed so Irving agreed to follow up with her and see if she can draft a skeleton for review. Mayne further said that invasives plans and policies are species specific. Having an overall strategic plan for eradication of Japanese knotweed is applicable to the program that Lavoie spearheaded but there are other

species that should be addressed in a more comprehensive policy: oriental bittersweet, honeysuckle (#spp), garlic mustard, common/glossy buckthorn, wild (poison) parsnip, giant hogweed, wall lettuce, and in wetland areas, purple loosestrife, milfoil, ~~cattail~~ [RLI 8/10/2026], and common reed aka phragmites. Gibbs has concerns about locusts but they are on the watchlist and not deemed invasive. An objective would be to put up guardrails addressing what makes a certain spot a priority to treat. Public property would be #1, then properties that abut public property because that is an easy route to reinfestation. Then consider contiguous patches, those that are high in the watershed, and so on. Gibbs wondered if property owners could be required to sign a 3-year access plan. Mayne thought that there did not seem to be anything restricting that as a condition of paid treatment. Gibbs thought that transfers of property would have to be addressed. Mayne mentioned that perhaps the Town would pay for two years of treatment, knocking down established patches to a size that could be managed by the property owner, then the owner would be responsible for continued treatment. The Budget Committee would probably appreciate a strategy so that there is some establishment of control over sites and a foreseeable cost. Given that the commitment is typically four (4) years, it could lead to substantial expenditure if sites continue to be added to the treatment plan. Maintenance of an eradicated patch could be handled by hardware store herbicides for poison ivy. Upper CT CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas) has a list of priority species that the LCC could reference.

New Business:

Dark Skies Policy: LUC Irving referenced the statewide policy in Maine that was recently passed. Chair Mayne pointed out that the ME policy applies to new publicly funded construction, so it does not apply to private properties nor is it retroactive. Gibbs countered that the Planning Board could use this policy to control lighting and light pollution in private site plans; LUC Irving said that permitting could also use this policy for Land Use Permits. The Zoning Ordinance regarding signs does already require downward shielded lighting. Gibbs also mentioned that reduced lighting must be balanced with public safety needs.

Scenic Byways Overlay: This is a goal to get the Town's scenic byways mapped so that there can be a GIS overlay for the online mapping. Further, the Scenic Byways Committee of North Country Council has campaigned for towns to identify and submit for designation more routes.

Steep Slopes: For any construction, a steep slopes policy would control development on grades over a certain percentage. Irving referenced the Savage Subdivision/Kelsea Drive which would probably not have been approved if a steep slopes policy were adopted. Southworth asked if this would also apply to logging operations; Irving felt that it would only apply to construction because the forestry regulations control logging operations.

Communications directed to Commission:

Wildlines Brochures: LUC Irving forwarded State informational brochures

Alteration of Terrain: Peckham Industries, formerly AB Excavating, is seeking an AoT for a Laydown Area. Permit AoT-2989 was issued 2/2/2026. Lot disturbance other than that shown on the approved plans shall not commence until after the roadway has the base course to design elevation and associated drainage is complete and stable. LUC Irving noted that the serial expansions that have been completed on this parcel are well beyond the Planning Board's approved site plan, even crossing parcel boundaries, so all Boards should be flagging this property for Review for Compliance.

Dredge & Fill Application: 8 Mary Elizabeth Lane

NHDES has issued a permit with a condition to restore the area and remediate. LUC Irving shared an email chain with NHDES containing conversations about the wetlands with Mr. Anderson and a recommendation from Land Use for him to consult NHDES before he started any construction. Irving opposed the permit because Anderson had knowledge of the potential issue and went ahead with construction anyway, asking for forgiveness after-the-fact. Code Officer Chris Gagnon inspected the home for purposes of obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy and denied the applicant's request until the wetland area was restored per NHDES regulations. This denial was shared with NHDES.

Portland Pipeline Statutory Permit-by-Notification: The Land Use Office did not get copied on this permit last fall so when residents started calling Land Use asking about the project, LUC Irving requested the permit from NHDES. The pipeline is installing buoyancy control measures along the pipeline; you can see the construction off Corrigan Hill just below the church where the landslide and flooding occurred during the storm event in 2024.

Application for Construction of Modified Underground Storage Tank System: The truck stop on Bridge Street is re-piping the fuel tanks.

Letter of Deficiency: NHDES inspected a stone ford installed in the bed and bank of Garland Brook on land owned by Lee Chaudry. No permit is on record for this dredge and fill. The property owner is ordered to submit a restoration plan and remove the stone ford.

Gibbs moved to ADJOURN at 1833H. Mayne seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. *Motion passed.*

By: Robin Irving

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

Approval Date: 8/10/2026