



CONSERVATION COMMISSION

30 PAYSON HILL ROAD

RINDGE, NH 03461

Tel. (603) 899-5181 Fax (603) 899-2101 TDD 1-800-735-2964

Minutes for Meeting on January 12, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

Ridge Town Office

Members Present: Drouin, Rubendall, Lefebvre, Mellor, Friedman, Rogers, Dickler, Synnott

Public Present: David DelGrudice, Dan Mathieu, Richard Pendleton (Monadnock Conservancy), Mike Kowolczyk (Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative), Nancy Bobell, Sandra Winchester, Stephen Kalt (Monadnock Sno Moles)

OLD BUSINESS

- Pool Pond update – Drouin
 - Members from Pool Pond Association (PPA) presented on water contaminations including heightened levels of PCBs in a loon egg studied by LPC. DES offered to conduct study on fish contamination to help determine PCB origins as was done on Squam Lake. PPA noted that they would not be able to sustain costs of study and publication on study results.
 - Dickler asked clarification on PPA vs town vs state ownership and which entity should be responsible for testing and funding this research and implementation. Association answered that the state owns the pond by legislation but do not have the funds to supply for any testing.
 - Rubendall suggested to put up signs noting the loon egg findings and PCB warnings to alert public of the potential dangers of consuming fish since funds for research and mitigation are not available.
 - Response was that some signs and notices have been posted already, but without state funding to determine the origin of the PCBs
 - Conservation Commission was asked for what viable next steps would be. Drouin suggested posting the findings of the report to alert the public of possible health risks. Given that ice fishing in winter is not funneled through boat launch as in summer, recommendation to find 6-8 public entry points to focus signage in.
 - Mellor suggested pursuing funding from the state for signs.
 - Rubendall asked how the study was conducted and what the scope of the testing was. Testing was statewide and ongoing testing. Lefebvre will add topic to CNBRLAC meeting agenda for additional discussion in that group.
- Report from LUCT sub-committee – Dickler
 - Dickler presented sub-committee's proposed approach as outlined in handout, developed by Dickler, Rubendall, and Lefebvre. Four-prong approach includes public engagement, conversations with key players, Commission-led presentations and finding vocal advocates.

NEW BUSINESS

- Rails to Trails project
 - Michael Kowolczyk, President, Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative – presented on update of trail maintenance especially on the Cheshire Trail and potential connection from Cheshire Trail and Monadnock Trail through New Hampshire via Homestead Rd and Damon Mill Rd in Rindge. Bureau of Trails grants are available for road upgraded maintenance and future trail creation.
 - R. Pendleton from Monadnock Conservancy highlighted the Conservancy's connection to the project and in support of the expansion option.
 - Drouin noted that Conservation Comm has worked with SnoMoles in the past, discussed the goal to move traffic off of Homestead. Pendleton replied that this expansion would be for seasonal cycling use.
 - Mellor noted concern in laying down hardpack as road improvement would alter the environs around the existing Class 6 road. He also noted that improving the road may lead to an increase in traffic through Homestead.

- Drouin added that the Select Board would need to approve any improvements on Damon Mill and Homestead, both being town-owned roads.
- Kowolczyk will proceed to schedule a meeting with a Board of Selectmen in March/April 2026 to propose expansion route and seek approval for road improvements. Commission agreed that exploring Homestead route would be better option, and offered letter of support for Board of Selectmen.
- UNH/NHACC Landscape Scale Project – Dickler
 - RCC was chosen as project recipient, Dickler recommended a preliminary call to understand the criteria and deliverables for the project to determine commission's involvement. Mellor will make call.
- CNBRLAC river project – Lefebvre
 - Project to map along river through Rindge and mark footings, habitats, other survey markings are. This is part of a larger waterway mapping from Rindge to Concord. Next meeting Monday night.
 - Dickler asked if this could be completed by the public, Lefebvre noted that it can and will be due Spring/Summer 2026. Has potential for future canoeing/presentation events for RCC.
- Cheshire County Conservation Fund Opportunity – Mellor
 - Contact district for more information on this public grant, \$1,200 limit for awardees.
- Membership update – Rubendall
 - Rubendall noted discrepancies between committee members and terms listed online, will be addressed in subsequent meetings.

OFFICIAL NOTICES

- ZBA Variance Application – no wetlands impact noted.

Account Approvals & Update

- ArcGIS invoice - signed
 - Friedman provided brief update on the project which is progressing well.

Upcoming Events

- Bird presentation and Conservationist of the Year 1/17, Rindge Recreation Department, 10a
- Full Moon Hike, Tetreault 1/31, 7pm

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES for December 8, 2025, January 6, 2026 and non-public meetings November 10 and December 8, 2025

- Public Session
 - December 8, 2025
 - Mellor moved to approve the minutes of December 8, seconded by Rubendall. Commission voted 7-0, one abstention. Minutes approved.
 - January 6, 2026
 - Lefebvre moved to approve the minutes of January 6, 2026, seconded by Mellor. Commission voted 8-0, minutes approved.
- Non-Public Session
 - November 10, 2025
 - Lefebvre moved to approve Non-Public minutes of November 10, 2025, seconded by Mellor. Commission voted 7-0-1, one abstention. Minutes approved.
 - December 8, 2025
 - Lefebvre moved to accept the Non-Public minutes of December 8, 2025, seconded by Dickler. Commission voted 7-0-1, one abstention. Minutes approved.

ADJOURNMENT

- Commission voted 8-0 in favor to adjourn, meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.

NEXT MEETING: January 22, 2026 at Town Office

Schedule of 2026 Meetings: 2/9&26, 3/9&26, 4/13&23, 5/11&28, 6/8&25, 7/13&23, 8/10&27, 9/14&24, 10/12&22, 11/9, 12/14

Respectfully submitted, Amanda Nardini